

**INTERNET USE AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AMONGST
STUDENTS OF AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA AND BAYERO
UNIVERSITY KANO, NIGERIA**

BY

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MAY, 2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and it is a record of my research work. It has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are suitably acknowledged by means of references.

Emmanuel Tsadu GANA

Date

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this thesis, entitled “**Internet Use and the Enhancement of Citizenship Amongst Students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and Bayero University Kano**” written by Emmanuel Tsadu GANA PhD/ARTS/21168/2012-2013 meets the regulations governing the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Development Communication, from the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of Late Prof Jenkeri Zakari Okwori, Samuel Ayedime Kafewo (both under whose tutelage this work started), and late Dr Martins Adegbe Ayegba.

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ABSTRACT

Over the years there have been an overwhelming increase in the use of the Internet by youths all over the world. Information is now at our finger tip as with just one click, users can access a variety of information on specific topics of interest. This has led to the shrinking of boundaries and a polarization of information sources. A wide variety of issues are now discussed in the public sphere occasioned by the Internet. Discussion platforms on social network sites have become avenues for citizens (youths) to interact and share ideas on pressing matters that affect them. With this development the question arises as to whether or not the Internet can help citizens enhance their citizenship. This study therefore explores the place of the Internet in the enhancement of active and effective citizenship amongst students of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria and Bayero University Kano (BUK). Citizenship in this study is premised on the conception of rights and freedom. The rights to expression, freedom to associate freely and express views freely, without being hindered and without infringing on the rights of others. Employing a Mixed Method research design the study uses probability sampling techniques to draw a sample of 1000 comprising 700 ABU students and 300 BUK students. Analysing data collect through Questionnaire (1000 copies), Focus Group Discussion and Observation methods, the study discovered that: youth exercise their freedom as citizens on the Net, youths are politically conscious due to the information they receive from the Net and participate actively as citizens resulting from the interaction and knowledge generated from the Net. The study also discovered that the Net also comes with some negative influences like fraud and misinformation. It concludes by stating that the Net has a lot of potentials for the enhancement of citizenship rights and freedom. Thus, if Nigeria must grow as a nation, citizens must be able to identify groups, spaces, and opportunities that facilitate youths to actively participate as citizens in influencing events and changes in the society especially through the Internet.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Communication technologies have become a prominent feature of the twenty first century. They are critical to commerce, essential to entertainment, and intertwined in our interpersonal relationships (Grant 2008:1). Succinctly put, communication technology is the nervous system of contemporary society, transmitting and distributing sensory and control information and interconnecting a myriad of interdependent units. These technologies are vital; they have the potential for profound impact on virtually every area of human society. Communication technologies have evolved throughout the past two centuries at an increasingly rapid rate and show no signs of slowing down; therefore an understanding of this evolution is vital for any individual wishing to remain relevant in this present age. There is virtually nothing one does at present with no direct link to communication technology. It has taken communication, friendship, education and other vital aspects of human socialisation to a new level in which communication gadgets have become man's most prized companion. Smart phones, computers, iPads, iPods, are examples of communication gadgets that characterise today's communication media. A combination of all these communication technologies form what is referred to as New Media.

The New Media technology can be described as “any of several forms of evolving presentations that makes use of technology and interactivity” (Bennett, 2005:337). This therefore implies that the New Media is characterised by a “new generation of technologies spawned by the marriage of computers and telecommunications... it is the product of convergence of digital technologies encompassing computers,

telecommunication, audio-video, and publishing. It covers mobile phones, personal computers, the Internet, e-mail, imaging technology, digital audio-video, and digital broadcast even and cable television” (Yarhere 2008:259). One can comfortably say that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) present a face of the human society we live in today, evolving out of the effort at meeting up with the demands of communication, and arising from the need to share information by communicating interests, culture and social values across boundaries.

One of the greatest manifestations of this modern communication technology/New Media is the Internet (Salawu 2007:20). The Internet, the network of networks (Baran 2002:68), is noted for its capacity to connect so many computers and users together through a complex network whereby information can be accessed with total disregard for time and space, thus enabling interaction on a far more broadened scope. Communication becomes an interactional process facilitated by the connectivity which the Internet provides through various interposed devices. The Internet, or the Net as commonly known, is best imagined as an interconnected, global network of computers and other ‘computational devices’ such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), phones, and so on (Bell 2009:30).

The interconnectedness occasioned by the convergence of communication technology and given impetus by the Internet, has resulted in a new world communication order in which individuals are bound to each other by communication linkages via new media channels manifesting through smart phones, social network sites, chat applications and personal computers. The implication of this is that individuals are now far more glued than ever before to Internet-enabled devices that allow for quick and easy

communication linkages with friends, families and colleagues. Interaction therefore is 'on the go,' whether sitting, walking, talking or on transit in a vehicle. The New Media has birthed an era of express communication information sharing that has given meaning to the entire existence of this generation.

Thus, without physical movement, we can participate in conversations in many places. Even collaborative work and play can take place where and when we individually wish. At least for periods of time, the new technologies enable us to be our own representations of whatever sex, race, nationality, or tribe we wish to be. Differences, disabilities, defects and dominance seem, at first reading, to be basically irrelevant on the Internet. As such we are witnessing a revitalisation of the society propelled by the Net in which the frameworks of socialisation are being restructured from a bottom up perspective. Seemingly, the Net has immensely improved the quality of life, as social connections that appear impossible or difficult to attain before are now facilitated by the Internet. Geographical locations and time no longer constitute hindrances, while social limitations and conventions no longer prevent friendship or partnership, creating a new world of connections between people either privately - from individual to individual - or publicly, from individuals to the collective mass of many on the Net.

Holmes (1997:1), describing this situation, further notes:

Of the myriad technological and cultural transformations taking place today, one has emerged to provide perhaps the most tangible opportunity for understanding the political and ethical dilemma of contemporary society. The arrival of virtual reality and virtual communities, both as metaphors for broader cultural processes and as the material contexts which are beginning to en-frame the human body and human communication....

Consequently, this new reality of virtual socialisation has transformed communication into a process of constant interaction between devices, practices and individuals, mostly attributed to today's youths. This new consciousness, described by Holmes, results from the heavy reliance of individuals (especially youths) on the Net that have found fulfilment and meaning through interaction via the Net and has greatly impacted the way they think and act. Prensky (2001), Rainie (2006), Gibbons (2007) and Underwood (2007), all assert that the New Media has been such a defining feature in the lives of younger generations that they have created a fundamental change in the way young people communicate, socialise, create and learn.

In terms of the potentials for empowerment of the citizenry towards collective growth through the spread of information and ownership of decision making processes, the new technology has reduced the relevance of old-fashioned hierarchical and formalised communication/organisation. With new technologies, anyone can be a journalist and an activist because "technology makes it possible for anyone to be in the middle of the action" (Veneklasen 2012). By itself, citizenship has certain legal and democratic overtones. Conceptually, it could be said to be wrapped up in rights and obligations, and in owing allegiance to a sovereign state whose power is retained by the citizenry but with rights that are shared by all members of that state. With the proliferation of the New Media usage, the rights of information sharing and gathering and the rights of citizenship participation has become a levelled sphere for all to engage in and utilise towards a greater level of expression for growth and development.

Consequently, life is becoming more digital as a result of the convergence of media technology. Events, meetings, 'forums,' discussions are now conceived on platforms

facilitated by the Internet and accessed through various Internet enabled interposed devices. Citizens have now been given more opportunities to participate in driving the affairs of the society through political and social platforms that provide avenues of expression and addressing issues via the Internet. Many youths now see it as an obligation to be helpful, answer queries, follow up on discussions and put their opinions into the pot of opinions that have over time built the Net into a useful connection to other people around the world. With further spaces of expression created on Social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, YouTube and blogs, it is pertinent to ask, have Nigerians found meaningful opportunities for self expression and collective struggles?

The youth however, appear to be the vanguards of the New Media technology, appropriating it and using it with a fluency that perhaps marvels the much older generation. One of the high points of the characteristics of the Internet use is perhaps the “Occupy Nigeria” campaign against the January 2012 fuel subsidy removal which witnessed an array of protests and mobilisation made possible through the Internet. Protest venues, rally points as well as commentaries against the subsidy were mostly coordinated via Internet enabled platforms, indicating that the phenomenon is not just growing but has come to stay. What however, is pertinent to note is that the Net opens up a new lease of life for individuals who have found importance in its use? Be it for interaction, communication, educational or transactional purposes, the Net is a continuous part of our daily living and social make-up that has created a whole new generation of individuals who owe their allegiance to friendships, networks, groups, partnerships and struggles formed on the Net.

It is said that true development can only be achieved when citizens are truly involved in the process of deciding and implementing it. As such, the concept of citizenship participation has remained central to the idea of development. For society to grow citizens must become active in their communities by participating in activities to help improve the conditions around them. This includes being aware of their rights and making sure that they are able to consciously demand and defend it. However, the citizenship question in Nigeria today is one that is characterised by fears of domination, and denial of self determination. Citizenship as it is legally operative in Nigeria refers to legal rights of people who, by decent or naturalisation, have rights privileges and obligations. Most legal documents such as the constitution hold citizenship as inclusive, and espouse a commitment to upholding rights and privileges for all irrespective of sex, religion, ethnic or other affiliations (Alubo 2005). Irrespective of pronouncements about full citizenship, experiences in Nigeria indicate the same rights and privileges are not enjoyed by all people. In several instances, ethnicity, religion and consideration of indigeneity are used to deny others what rights and privileges are available to some. Part of the contention here is that the gaps and potholes in Nigeria's political practice are challenges to, or better yet measures of the nature of agitation for more inclusive citizenship.

The issue of inclusiveness becomes critical to this study because, the thrust of development communication is on ensuring that citizens become more inclusive in deciding their own growth and development. A lot of participatory development efforts are channelled towards galvanising participation of citizens towards the pursuance of improved conditions of living. By this it is meant that citizens should be able to

participate in decision making processes that eventually lead to the improvement of the wellbeing and betterment of the quality of their lives (Moemeka 1989).

Without the necessary channel for citizens to actualise their aspirations, develop a sense of belonging and belief in the society within which they live, development and change will be difficult. However, the Internet as mentioned earlier, appears to be a liberating force in society today, and is critical to empowering citizens to reflect on their experience in spaces of critical dialogue irrespective of sex, religion, ethnic or other affiliations to bring about self directed change. It is against this background therefore that this study attempts to look at the implication of the proliferation of Internet use in the enhancement of citizenship in Nigeria.

As such, there is no doubt that a critical revolution in human communications is happening. The idea of citizenship, one might add, is being expanded by the increasing influence of free interactivity and connections of individuals made possible by the new communication revolution. In further understanding the idea of citizenship, one can Starkey (2002:7) argues that:

Citizens belong to communities, defined as groupings of people who recognise that they have something in common. What unites them may simply be an acceptance of the legitimacy of the state within which they live. It may also be a strong affective bond based on shared history, ethnicity, religion or common purpose.

From the above position, one can then draw an analogy from activities on the Net to classify individuals who share common interests, have a strong bond and recognise the legitimacy of their participation on the Internet as “Netizens”; citizens of the net. Netizens is a word that has been used to describe individual users who participating in activities on the Net; by sending emails, responding to questions, contributing to

discussions online, making transactions via the Internet and also criticising policies or decisions through protest pages on the Internet. However, to be able to actively function within the space enabled by the existence of the digital technology one has to be proficient in the language and usage of this technology - be it in form of the Internet or other digital devices. Many users, however, are actively engaged in the use of this technology not knowing that they are natives of this technology; people use the Net not realising that they have become Netizens (citizens of the net).

Consequently, with the emergence of the Internet, not only has information been fundamentally democratised, its reproduction has become fully interactive and endlessly plural. As such, it is widely asserted that we live in an information society (Bell 1976, Castell 1996, Mattelart 2003). This view arises perhaps because information has become a commodity for exchange in today's society giving rise to a new mode of life which is oriented towards technological development and the likewise accumulation of knowledge for high levels of complexity in information processing. Thus, information sharing and processing is a characteristic of Netizens, making the Internet something valuable to people around the world.

The Internet, however, has brought about a whole new expression to rights and citizenship. Occasioned by the relatively free and unhindered access to the flow of information, the Nigerian society is now witnessing a growing change in the expression of issues concerning them. There is hardly any individual in recent times that has not been significantly influenced by the emergence of the Internet. Perhaps most significantly is the increasing rate at which youths in Nigeria have become so

accustomed to the use of the Internet, enswathing their every interaction within the possibilities it offers.

The situation is further heightened by the introduction of Internet technology in higher institutions within Nigeria. Institutions such as the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria and the Bayero University Kano (BUK), have a potent Internet infrastructure that gives students' access to the Net with a view to enhancing the academic endeavours of their students. The provision of this is expected to enable students gain access to materials and resources online to strengthen their capacity for research. As such, one of the characteristics of these institutions is that you find students who are at ease with online collaborative technologies (digital natives), students who come to class armed with smart phones, laptops, iPods and technologies which allow them become much more engaged in constructing their own knowledge about the society within which they exist. Being always connected is something natural to them, and they have conversations constantly going with their social networks via text messaging and instant messaging. Interacting with technology and through technology has become part of daily living. This consequently, has potentials for inclusiveness of citizens and development as being connected would imply that they gain access to information and knowledge capable of transforming their lives.

The resultant effect of this situation is that, youths now find more opportunities for the fulfilment of their rights through the Internet. While the fulfilment of the demand of citizenship of a country is significantly conceived in terms of place and space, users of the Net are not bound by space or place, as the shrinking of boundaries and space means that users, irrespective of location, can become members of a community and

share same aspirations and beliefs towards a cause. It is therefore on this premise that this study explored Internet use by Nigerian youths, specifically university students (ABU and BUK students) and the implications for enhancing citizenship.

The Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) is a Federal Government University located in Zaria, Kaduna State, North West of Nigeria. ABU Zaria was founded on 4th October 1962 as the University of Northern Nigeria by the then Northern Region Government of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. Ahmadu Bello University (A.B.U) was established with a vision to be “a world-class University comparable to any other, engaged in imparting knowledge, using high quality facilities and multi-disciplinary approaches, to men and women of all races, as well as generating new ideas and intellectual practices relevant to the needs of its immediate community, Nigeria and the world at large” (abu.edu.ng). The university operates three main campuses: Samaru and Kongo in Zaria, and School of Basic Studies in Funtua, Katsina State.

ABU has grown to become the largest, and the most influential and diverse university in Nigeria. Consisting of eighty-two (82) Academic departments, twelve (12) faculties, and twelve (12) Research Institutes and specialized Centres, the University offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in such diverse fields. As part of its drive to advance the frontiers of learning and break new grounds, through teaching, research and the dissemination of knowledge of the highest quality; the university has succeeded in deploying a robust optic-fibre network linking the major university campuses. The robust ICT infrastructure facilitates delivery of high speed Internet and intranet access suitable for e-learning services, on-line applications and multimedia communication services necessary for students learning. This was done to achieve the mandate of

ensuring that the University takes its place as one of the best ICT-driven universities in Africa and in the world.

Bayero University Kano (BUK) on the other hand came into existence as a result of the Ahmadu Bello College set up in 1960, located within the School of Arabic Studies (SAS), in the old city of Kano (North West of Nigeria). With the establishment of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in 1962, it was renamed Abdullahi Bayero College. In 1964 it moved to a temporary site at the old Kano Airport Hotel, admitting its first set of ten undergraduate students for B.A. degree programme of Ahmadu Bello University. In 1975 the Abdullahi Bayero College was raised to the status of a University College with the right to award degrees on behalf of Ahmadu Bello University and was renamed Abdullahi Bayero University College, with its own governing council. By 1977 all University Colleges in Nigeria were raised to the status of a full-fledged university by the Federal Government and Abdullahi Bayero University became Bayero University, Kano (BUK). BUK has grown over the years into a reputable University with twelve Faculties (12), forty two (42) departments and four Centres. The university has also provided a strong optic-fibre Internet facility for students, to guarantee access to information that will guarantee that the university becomes a leading institution in ICT research and innovation. The university's vision is to attain the height of "a world class University in Africa renowned for its excellence in teaching and research and quality of its products" (www.buk.edu.ng/vision).

Judging by the vision of these two Universities, it is safe to say that both have a clear road map towards ensuring that students/youth receive quality education to become empowered citizens. The provision of ICT infrastructure to enhance the acquisition of

knowledge is testament to the fact that society is becoming information centred. The situation is further weltered as we have now found ourselves at the frontiers of a very brave new world, a world in which technologies have advanced media, and information and knowledge are produced, disseminated and accessed almost with breath-taking urgency and pace. As citizens, we hardly go looking for information these days; it seeks us out, particularly through wireless digital equipment, such as tablet computers, mobile phones, miniature electronic devices which have remodelled the way we communicate as citizens, once we are stitched into the interstices of the digital world. This study therefore focused on these two universities specifically considering the use of internet as a tool for enhancing the expression of citizenship amongst youth in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Around the world there is a growing crisis of legitimacy characterising the relationship between citizens and the institutions that affect their lives. However, as boundaries continue to shrink and render the local into the global, there is the need for caution. This is because we live in an information society, and information of different sorts are becoming available to all who need it through blogs, web posts, texts messages, instant messages and chats. This might constitute a problem for our local culture, learning and knowledge production in the nearest future. Young people continually engage in the use of Internet to meet their needs. They sleep and wake with gadgets in their hands and spend most of their time on the Net in a bid to catch up with the latest trends and news. With all their exposure to information through the Net, it leaves one to wonder what then is the implication of this for the development of effective citizenship in Nigeria? Can the Nigerian youths be termed as a Citizen or a Netizen, and can being a

Netizen bring about effective citizenship? This is a question yet to be answered which constitutes the concern and thrust of this study.

There seems to be a mounting disillusionment with governments; based on concerns about corruption, lack of responsiveness to the needs of the poor and the absence of a sense of connection with elected representatives and bureaucrats. In response to this gap between citizens and their institutions, people especially youths, are struggling to find new forms of citizenship, participation and accountability. Scholars such as Abah, 2005; Ayam, 2005; Okwori, 2005; Toure 2005, have suggested that if citizenship is to make meaning it must be grounded in a conception of rights, which in a development context, strengthens the status of citizens from one of the beneficiaries of development to its rightful and legitimate claimants.

As citizens, the rights of expression, association, as well as fair hearing are often restricted by the apparatus of the state forcing the citizens to live in a constant state of fear. Conventional mass media establishments which should uphold the rights and aspirations of citizens in terms of providing information and ensuring the rights of expression, have been found wanting in many occasions. In sharp contrast to this, the Internet paves way for users to express themselves and question policies as well as mobilise mass number of people to take action, fulfilling all their obligations to the state on the Net. The question, therefore, is whether being an active user of the Net helps to better one as a citizen of the state.’

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

As the Internet continues to gain considerable influence in the lives of Nigerians, especially the youths, giving them more varied platforms for expression, the need arises for a proper understanding of the nature and characteristics of Internet use in Nigeria.

The aim of this study therefore is to advance the use of Internet as a medium for enhancing expression of citizenship amongst Nigerian Youths, (using two Nigerian universities). The research pursued the following objectives:

1. To determine the rate at which ABU and BUK students use the Internet.
2. To ascertain whether ABU and BUK students express their freedom as citizens on the Internet.
3. To determine whether the Internet can assist students to acquire knowledge to become well-informed citizens.
4. To ascertain the role of Internet access in the academic pursuit of students and its implication for effective expression of citizenship.
5. To explore possible ways in which ABU and BUK students express a strong sense of citizenship.

1.3 Research Questions

The research therefore answered the following questions:

1. To what extent do ABU and BUK students use the Internet?
2. Do ABU and BUK students use the internet to express their freedom as Citizens?
3. How can the Internet help students to become well informed citizens?
4. Does the Internet contribute to students' academic advancement?
5. In what ways can students express a strong sense of citizenship?

1.4 Justification for the Study

With the increasing growth in the use of the Internet manifesting through various technologies in Nigeria, it is necessary that we carry out a study to understand the nature and characteristics of this growing phenomenon amongst the Nigerian youths. Consequently one cannot ignore the growth in the use of the Internet by the citizenry manifesting through computer gadgets, smart phones or the Internet. This study is important and timely because it filled the gap which existed in our current knowledge about the influence of the Internet on the development of effective citizenship amongst Nigerian youths. Although scholars such as Prensky (2001), Heuben (1995), Helsper and Eynon (2010) have researched into the nature of Internet use in the USA and Great Britain, focusing on its impact on citizenship, this study went further by exploring the nature of Internet use by Nigerian Youths with emphasis on how it can strengthen/enhance active citizenship.

Similarly, Liman (2014), Bawa (2014) and Idongesit (2014) have also researched into the nature of Internet use in Nigeria and its contributions to education and democracy respectively using Ahmadu Bello University as a case study. This study departed significantly from earlier studies in this area because interrogated the Nigerian Internet users in order to understand its contribution to citizenship and provide an insight into the pattern of the Internet use by Nigerians using two Nigerian universities namely Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria and Bayero University Kano (BUK). It is important to note that the study did not concern itself with carrying out a comparative study of both universities, due to the fact that they already have similar characteristics in terms of internet infrastructure. Therefore, these two universities were chosen because of their particular mandate to become leading institutions in Africa and the

world at large. Their location and drive towards provision of a strong Internet infrastructure also informed their choices. Thus, significant work is required to clearly ascertain the impact of the Internet on youths as regards the development of citizenship in Nigeria. This study identified these and contributed to the growing literature on the Internet.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to Internet use amongst youths in two Nigerian universities namely Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Bayero University Kano Nigeria. The study was done within the larger framework of Internet and Citizenship. These universities comprise youths who are proficient in the use of the Internet and can be termed as Netizens. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria has a fairly good Internet infrastructure with wireless and local area networks built into offices, classrooms and hostels, for students to make adequate use of. Similarly, Bayero University Kano has invested also in providing an Internet infrastructure which covers areas similar to that of ABU as stated above. However, the study relied on students' access to the Net through their mobile gadgets. These two case studies provided the resources for this study to understand the nature of Internet use and its possible role in the enhancement of citizenship.

1.6 Definition of Terms

This section provides clarification on the various terms used in this study (so as to avoid ambiguity) and provides a clear understanding of the way they are used within the work.

Netizens: Netizens are citizens of the Net. They are people who decide to devote time and effort on making the Net a better place. Netizens are not just users of the network, but contributors to the network. They do not only use the network to get something from it, but also try to give back something to the network. They are people who make it a point of duty to ensure that the world of the Internet is a better place for all other Netizens by making a social contribution -such as trying to provide answer to the questions that someone asks on a page or presenting information on the Web that other people are interested in knowing about.

Youth: A Youth is defined in this study as a young individual or group of young individuals between the ages of 15-30. Youths further refers to University students within the stipulated age who are conversant with and proficient in the use of the internet to meet their needs and express their citizenship.

Citizen/Citizenship: A citizen is someone who is a legitimate member or belongs to a particular community. Citizenship therefore, is the status of being a citizen, which carries with it certain rights and responsibilities. These rights entail access to political, civil, and social rights. Political rights are the rights to participate in the exercise of the political power including the right to vote, to make democratic choices, to hold institutions to account. Civil rights concern the right to freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property, and the right to justice and equality before the law. Social rights stretch the notion to include a range of rights to share, to the full, in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized human being, according to the standards prevailing in society. Hence, citizenship is about making informed choices and decisions, about taking action, individually and as part of collective processes, to

play full part as active citizens and to be civically engaged through the exercise of moral responsibility, community involvement and exercise of rights and responsibilities. Therefore, the use of citizens in this study especially in the chapter four refers to youth who are students.

Internet: Internet within the purview of this work is defined as a connected group of computer networks allowing for electronic communication. It comprises all forms of communication and information sources that are made possible through the interconnectedness of computers.

Enhancement: Enhancement as it is used in this study implies the improvement in the expression of rights and fulfilment of responsibilities of citizens. As such, the use of the Internet to share information, acquire information and knowledge, participate in political discourses is conceived in this study as helping to improve the capacity of citizens to make informed decisions and choices. Therefore, by finding more space on the Internet to express opinions, associate freely with others irrespective of beliefs, religion, as well as political affiliations, citizenship is being enhanced.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0. Introduction

This chapter attempts a review of literatures related to the Internet, Social Interaction, Communication, Citizenship/Mass Media, New Media/Development and finally provides a theoretical framework for the study. This is imperative in laying the foundation for the understanding of this study as well as properly providing the theoretical foundation to this study.

2.1. Communication

From time immemorial, man has made use of various elements from his natural habitat to convey his feelings, fears and aspirations. As such, man has communicated for as long as he has existed, using a wide range of physical and symbolic devices to create and convey meanings. The methods which man used to communicate at different points in history evolved from the societies within which he lived. This evolution occurs in a process of mutual influence whereby social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and natural forces affect the means of communication and in return the means of communication influence and shape ideas, values, tradition and institutions.

According to Shannon and Weaver (1949), Communication is the exchange of ideas. It is not the mechanical transfer of facts and figures as the mathematical model of communication would appear to indicate. It is also not talking at people. It is an interactive process that works in a circular, dynamic and on-going way (Hiebert *etal.* 1985). It is talking with people, a process with no permanent sender and no permanent receiver. "In communication, the roles of sending and receiving change hands,

depending on who is talking and who is listening, this implies freedom, equality and shared interest” (Moemeka 1989:5).

Prominent within the thinking of communication is the idea of sharing and exchange of information or ideas between individuals or groups. This is consequent upon the notable fact that communication is not only about raising awareness, informing, persuading, or changing behaviour. It is also about listening, exploring, understanding, empowering, and building consensus for change. Our concept of communication, therefore, is the humanised, democratic interactive model that:

...places emphasis on how people use communication or messages. It stresses genuine dialogue, free and proportioned opportunity to exert mutual influences and rejects the idea that persuasion is the chief role of communication. Here, feedback is imperative; its importance lies in the opportunity it creates for understanding the other person's point of view and, therefore, for ensuring co-orientation influences (Moemeka 1989:5).

The vital point to note here is that for a society to make progress, communication must be central to issues and processes of development. However, for this to be achieved, participation should be key to a communication process which is dialogical as Mefalopulos (2008:6), suggests:

To be truly significant and meaningful, participation needs to be based on the application of genuine two-way communication principles and practices. That is why communication is increasingly considered essential in facilitating stakeholders’ engagement in problem analysis and resolution. Similarly, there is an increasing recognition that the old, vertical, top-down model is no longer applicable as a “one-size-fits-all” formula.

Part of the reasons for the failure of earlier development models as captured above was that development has a universal formula, which neglects the collective yearnings of the people and gives them little or no room in the decision making processes leading to development. Therefore, the vertical one-size-fits-all formula has been replaced by the horizontal participatory strategy which takes into account the voices, needs and yearnings of the people.

Consequently, development communication has emerged as a field that emphasises the use of communication as a catalyst to growth and development. By development therefore, we mean a widely participatory process of social change and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment' (Rogers 1975b:345-358). The systematic use of communication processes to involve the people and drive initiatives geared towards change has remained the pivotal force of development communication.

Earlier conceptions of development such as the modernisation theory did not factor into its processes the strategic use of communication processes. As such, within the modernisation paradigm, the conception of development was a linear one, based on trust in science, reason, technology, and the free market. The main role of communication was to persuade people to embrace the core values and practices of modernisation. Among the merits of this paradigm, in addition to a certain number of successes in specific instances and projects, there was the establishment of a more systematic and rigorous approach to development initiatives. Overall however, this theoretical approach to development, with its related bag of practical tools, did not deliver the expected results.

Conversely, an alternative strategy to development emerged with deep emphasis on the inclusiveness of people in the communication processes that would lead to development and this gave birth to development communication. Because it is communication with a social conscience, development communication is heavily

oriented towards man, that is, towards the human aspects of development. Even though it is primarily associated with rural development, it is also concerned with urban, particularly suburban problems. According to Moemeka (1989:6), it plays two broad roles:

The first is a transformational role through which it seeks social change in the direction of higher quality of life and social justice. The second is a socialisation role through which it strives to maintain some of the established values of society that are consonant with development. In playing these roles, development communication creates an enhancing atmosphere for the exchange of ideas that produce a happy balance in social and economic advancement between physical output and human relationships.

What can be deduced from the roles highlighted by Moemeka above is that development communication as an alternative strategy is more human centred, it gives credence to the value of human existence within the context of his environment with emphasis on human interactions and exchange of ideas as the key to understating and propelling societal growth. Unlike earlier processes of development that relied heavily on the transfer of technology and the proliferation of development messages through the mass media, development communication focuses on the revitalisation of indigenous, people-owned and inspired communication strategies towards change.

Therefore, central to the process of development communication is the concept of Participatory Communication. Nair and White (1993:51) describe Participatory Communication as “the opening of dialogue, source and receiver interacting continuously, thinking constructively about the situation, identifying developmental needs and problems, deciding what is needed to improve the situation, and acting upon it.” Thus, Participatory Communication is used to describe a two-way process of dialogue between individuals or groups, thriving on the principles of information sharing towards reaching common understanding. Similarly, Arvind Singhal (2004)

defines Participatory Communication as “a dynamic, interactional and transformative process of dialogue between people, groups and institutions that enable people, both individually and collectively, to realise their full potential and be engaged in their own welfare.” As such, dialogue is central to the process of Participatory Communication. It strives on a process of information flow in which individuals or groups are allowed to share information and ideas freely in order to reach a common understanding in achieving their goals.

Therefore, a free and open dialogue remains the core principle of Participatory Communication. Paulo Freire (1983) defines dialogue as: the encounter between men in order to name the world. Those who have been denied primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this act of exclusion. For Freire, the free and open dialogue whereby people can name the world is voice, the principle of action and horizontal communication. To have a voice is to be able to take part in the decision-making processes and likewise determine the nature and pattern in which the situation affecting you can be changed.

However, Dagrón (2002) observes that “Participatory Communication is in itself fragile, it is often contradictory which conspires against the ready-to-replicate model exercises, but in the end it is as alive as the communities that use it as a means to promote dialogue and networking on issues that are important for the community life: development.” This is to say that Participatory Communication, as a strategy, needs proper handling. It must take into account all the stakeholders within a community if it is to achieve true and sustainable development. The inability to fully achieve this in a given circumstance will eventually lead to the failure of the development project, a

problem which characterises the top-down, vertical communication model. The emphasis on participation in development also implies increased attention to communication, because there can be no participation without communication, at least without a certain type of communication. In other words, the added emphasis on participation helps to mainstream communication in many initiatives and at the same time promotes a more dialogic and two-way conception of communication. The model of reference is significantly different from the traditional one, since it is now characterised by dialogue and by a horizontal flow, enabling the balanced sharing of perceptions and knowledge. In this perspective, the top-down features rooted in the modernisation paradigm gets diluted, and communication acquires a more interactive connotation aimed at facilitating participation and empowerment.

The general assumption emanating from the literatures on Participatory Communication suggests that the application of participation in communication would naturally lead to a participatory society. Dervin and Huesca (1999:177), however, draws our attention to the fact that “when it comes to applying ideas relating to communication and participation in development contexts, situations and behaviours must be treated momentarily as static states.” This implies that practitioners of Participatory Communication must first consider the realities of the people as a unique entity different from any other which they have experienced before. Communities must be treated in view of their own peculiarities and participatory strategies must be designed to be in tandem with the lifestyles of the people, otherwise it would be a repetition of the dominant paradigm which has been so criticised.

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009:15) also observe that:

Whenever local stakeholders are not engaged from the beginning of the intervention, the possibilities for problems and failures rise dramatically. Examples are innumerable in which communication failed to achieve expected changes due to people's initial lack of involvement or to their limited or contradictory understanding of issues by various stakeholders. That specific behaviour changes cannot be achieved without recognition of wider social acceptance.

As such, it is clear from the above position that there are two sides to the outcome of the application of Participatory Communication. It can either go wrong or it can go correctly to engender the inclusion of stakeholders in the processes of design and implementation of development projects. It is when stakeholders get fully involved in the processes of development through participation in the communication processes that sustainable development can take place.

The mass media is also not left out in the drive towards achieving sustainable development through participation. When using mass media, messages can be expected to originate from people themselves rather than from "outside experts." Because genuine participation in development implies having the opportunity and the power to take part in decisions concerning one's own well-being, Participatory Communication models need to take the issues of power and empowerment into account. Furthermore, once adopted, participation can hardly remain contained within the realm of development projects. It often transcends its scope to enhance projects' results and sustainability and become a capacity-building element of a broader social dimension.

It is clear that the Participatory Communication process can adapt any tool or technology to support the process of community participation. This is because communication technology also helps extend perceptions and knowledge and enlarges

consciousness. The New Media has the capability to make communication, as well as information flow, interactive. By enabling interactivity, communication becomes a two-way process instead of one-way. Such interactivity in communication inadvertently changes the nature of who controls communication. As such, each individual user of an interactive system has a large degree of control in choosing what information to request and what to avoid, which is a key feature in today's development process. Although several decades ago there was a tendency to refuse new technologies based on the assumption that they would have a pervasive influence on local cultures, reality shows that any technology can be appropriate to a social change and development process if used to articulate local needs and local contents.

2.2. New Media, Internet and Communication

The most fundamental aspect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is probably the fact that digitalisation, the process by which all texts (symbolic meaning in all encoded and recorded forms) can be reduced to a binary code and can share the same process of production, distribution and storage (McQuail 2005:137). As stated earlier, Yarhere (2008:299) describes ICT as "...the product of the convergence of digital technologies encompassing computer, telecommunication, audio-video, and publishing...." This convergence of technologies has led to what is referred to today as the New Media. In the words of McQuail (2005:136-137):

The New Media are in fact a disparate set of communication technologies that share certain features apart from being new, made possible by digitalisation and being widely available for personal use as communication devices... the most widely noted potential of the new media is the convergence between all existing media forms in terms of distribution and reception.

In an attempt to understand the New Media, it is imperative to note from McQuail's point above that the New Media brings together various forms of personal and

interposed communication modes all in one device. The idea of newness is not conceived around the notion of something that has not existed before but on the idea that it brings together various forms of communication platforms into one integrated form. The Internet, which is one of the greatest manifestations of the New Media, has emerged within the communication arena as the world's largest interconnected environment. It is significantly "the world's most recent communication tool which affords a user the opportunity to transcend borders and have access to the encyclopedias, newspaper, bulletin boards, videos, hypermails all at one stop in a global village" (Hashim 2001:72).

Hence, without doubt, the Internet has narrowed down the distance between people, cultures and societies. The express flow and access to information facilitated by the Internet allows for the exchange of cultural artifacts such as fashion, music, and lifestyles through media contents made available on the Net. Laying further emphasis on the above, Poster (1999:15) notes:

The Internet incorporates radio, film and television and distributes them through push technology: it transgresses the limits of the print and broadcast models by enabling, many to many conversations, enabling the simultaneous reception, alteration and redistribution of cultural objects; dislocating communicative action from the posts of nation, from the territorialized spatial relation of modernity; providing instantaneous global contact and inserting the modern subject onto a machine apparatus that is networked.

Therefore what is new about the Internet may be the combination of interactivity with those features which were innovative. In fairness to the conventional modes of mass communication, which we were very much accustomed to before the advent of the New Media, one can say that the possibilities of conversation and engagement were limited. The familiarity in the use of the New Media however, opened up much more possibilities for engagement and conversation on the mass media than we have

previously experienced before. With the inclusion of social platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, among others, as feedback mechanism in mass media broadcast, people have had greater access to engage with one another to share ideas and opinions.

Putting it succinctly, Lievrouw (2004:10) notes that “a variety of media technologies, forms and content, often lumped together under the single rubric of the Internet, have become a common place part of work, education, leisure, culture, and politics.” Lievrouw’s point therefore suggests that the Internet has opened up space for access to information and servicing of needs in various aspects of life. This is because the society is dynamic and so is the dynamism of information. Consequently, the Internet has led to the advancing of information with a speed that was hardly imagined before now in its avowed vision of unifying several parts, not of society, but of the world into a global village. “The role of information technology in this global village, or globalization in its entirety, has remained focal and vital in the whole process of inter-relatedness of humanity” (Idegu 2002:15).

As such, there are little or no aspects of life today without the influence of the Internet.

Mike Kwanaishie (as cited in Idegu 2002:15) observes that:

The emergence and rapid expansion of the information super highway has brought to the door of people all over the world information which has become a vital factor in daily decision making. Remote areas around the world are today covered by the communication range through technological advances in cyberspace, in the computer and telecommunications field.

Information technologies have become necessary in areas of academic research, journalism, politics, business transactions, social interactions, amongst many others.

Individuals find the Internet as a viable platform for expanding their real life existence through the various platforms available on the Net. The convergence and cross-

platform intertextuality is making a nonsense of any lingering distinction between the 'real' and the 'virtual,' projecting the virtual onto the real, so that we encounter the Internet, say, not just on a computer screen but on a street corner (Galloway 2004).

Beckett (2004:1) further notes:

In the information technology powered twenty first century a general demand for more effective communication is driving people to question the present, examine the past and to prognosticate the future. The 'unique global media-information system' - the Internet- is the central fact of a vast new complexity of communication (mediated and unmediated) that is driving social-economic-political-religious-technological change at a rate never experienced before.

One key factor responsible for this change, engineered by the Internet, is its unhindered ability for information sharing across boundaries transgressing all spheres of life. Resulting from its ubiquitous nature, the Internet, as the engine behind the information society, plays an important role in shaping world societies. It has aggravated the divide between those who have access to information and those who do not. At the same time the Internet has the potential to bridge the information gap. The growing number of Internet users today attests to its potential to bridge the gap between those who have access and those who do not. In drawing a vivid picture of distribution of Internet users worldwide, Kraidy (2008) notes:

Today more than 100 million people worldwide use the Internet. Internet penetration varies greatly across countries, with the highest levels registered in North America and Scandinavia, and the lowest found in sub-Saharan Africa. A 1998 Nua Internet survey indicates that 57 % of Internet users live in North America, 21.7 % are residents of Europe, 17 % live in Asia, while South America, Africa, and the Middle East have the lowest percentages at 3 % for South America, 0.71 % for Africa, and 0.5 % for the Middle East. This distribution follows the availability of older media such as newspapers, radio, and television in different parts of the world....

Although Kraidy's submission reveal that Africa and the middle east constitute the lowest percentage (3%) of internet users as at 1998, the Internet World Statistics

website (www.internetworldstats.com) reveal that Africa, as at 2012, amounted for 7% of the world's Internet users. This clearly shows that there is an increase in the access to and use of the Internet in Africa. As such, the Internet is a potential contributor to the process of globalisation and is shaped by it. You find out most significantly that the opening which the information technology creates, has impact on almost all aspects of human life, culture, religion and values. These are all affected as people all over the world are exposed, more than ever before, to different and alternative views. Kwanaishe, however, argues that 'the fear of cultural imperialism therefore, underscores a point that globalization would also be seen as process of harmonization of different cultures and beliefs' (as cited in Idegu 2002:16).

Therefore according to Idegu:

The globalization of culture in this regard is not the same as its homogenization but globalization 'involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenization (ornaments, advertising techniques, language and clothing styles) which are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty and free enterprise in which there is too much openness to global flaws (16).

In tandem with Idegu, the Internet has a major role to play in the quest of globalisation. The linkages it provides for people of different lifestyles and nationalities across distant boundaries distinguish it as a platform with the potentials to promote the mix of cultures as well as spread of a single world culture. The question is whether this mix of culture and spread of a single culture will be profitable to developing countries such as Nigeria and other third world countries around the world.

However, it has been argued that we have witnessed profound changes in communication patterns and also in the scope of global interaction over the past few

decades (Giddens, 2001). Much of these changes may be attributed to the widespread introduction and use of modern information and communication technologies, and especially the Internet. The specific characteristics of these changes and the possible effect they have on global interaction are difficult to understand in a congruent manner. There is no general understanding whether these changes really represent actual stages of development. The rapid and extensive increase in the amount of economic and social activity taking place across national borders in a global manner is in many respects conceptualised as processes of globalisation (Giddens, 2001).

Some scholars have argued that the Internet holds the promise for sustainable development because it contributes to coordinating global resources with local needs.

According to Salman (2010:9):

The Internet offers various useful tools for communication, among which we might mention electronic mail, the World Wide Web, newsgroups, remote access, file transfer and text-based and voiced-based chat. The net has become the most important e-mail system in the world because it connects so many people worldwide, creating a productivity gain. Organizations use it to facilitate communication between employees and offices, and to communicate with customers and suppliers.

In as much as this appears to be a development which needs to be applauded, one might be tempted to express the fear that this new trend puts traditional mail systems out of business as most mail exchanges happen through the Internet. Most individuals and organisations find it easier to send electronic mail rather than use courier services except where they cannot do otherwise.

Richardson (1998b:173-177) further argues that the Internet may be used to support rural development in many areas:

In the area of agriculture, the internet can serve as a gateway to global markets and information. Well organised user groups can access information relevant to local needs and realities. New information can be fed into the community through existing channels such as the community radio, local co-operatives; interpersonal networks internet can serve as an information resource as well as a research tool. Also in the area of community development the internet could be employed to develop locally appropriate applications and services; provide knowledge about successful development strategies; enable efficient regional, national and global organisation efforts;...and enable rural young people to learn about computers and have access to the technologies and information available to their urban peers.

Empowerment also occurs as the use of the computer allows a global space for social interaction. Here again, this access to global institutions and practices can be beneficial in some domains like telecommunicating for an overseas firm more so than in the domain of social interaction. This empowerment may also come about as a reinforcement of local practices. The computer is used not only to contact people in faraway places but also to interact with neighbours. Sometimes these are individuals, who already know each other, who use the computer to maintain contacts or advance a community or church cause. In other cases these are people who meet online (Alonso and Oiarzabal 2010:56). Also, it empowers marginal people in many different ways as the initiative may come either from within or from without. Those who must stay at home because of family obligations (taking care of children, elderly parents or handicapped persons) have been isolated from the labour force, but with computer access they are able to look for jobs that do not require physical presence in the workplace but simply a tele-presence (telecommuting jobs); they can compete with others (non home bound individuals), and they can even be members of a labour union (Huws 1984:6). What the Internet does here is to help someone who is homebound to return to the labour force via online mechanisms.

There are, however, those who claim that ICTs have made it easier to communicate and provide access to information independent of time and material space. Here, ICTs are understood as part of the main driving forces of globalisation processes (Giddens, 2001). The Internet has become a powerful and widespread communication platform and an important source for acquiring information (Giddens, 2001). According to Narula (2003), technology is perceived as one of the causes of globalisation. Although Narula acknowledges that it is difficult to decide on the actual causes as well as the extent of the notion and effect of globalisation, new ICTs contribute to a more interconnected world.

According to this view, distances have “shrunk,” and this has not just taken place among the developed countries, but has also been a development trait in the developing world (Narula, 2003). From Narula’s perspective, technologies that facilitate communication make it easier for cross border exchange to occur, and the possibilities to establish alliances are improved. Such a view may be somehow deterministic in the sense that it implies a notion that technological change results in social change in the meaning of increased participation and networking. In the past few decades, Internet facilities and connections have continued to spread into more and more remote areas, therefore contributing to the notion of increased inclusion in the information society as well as increased global interaction. Supporters of such a view often support the notion that such structural changes facilitate the existence of a “global village” (McLuhan cited in Giddens, 2001:461).

This notion indicates a very much interconnected world in which people in different geographic areas of the world depend on each other in economic, political and social

terms. Consequently, the New Media technology brings about changes in society in the sense that new ways of communication and exchange are possible (McLuhan, 1964). The notion also indicates an aspect of impact, in the respect of people having possibilities to mutually influence the behaviour and opinions of others across geographical borders. Although when McLuhan was speaking several years ago, the Internet had not developed to have the face which it has today, but we see his postulations coming to bear on our existing communication systems today. With the Internet, people are able to establish relationships and make impact as well as influence one another across distant boundaries.

Advocates of a “global village,” view development as creating more cultural equality as everybody has access to the same information. Corroborating this view, Webster (2001:1) argues:

Technological tools play a central role in the organisation of society and in the shaping of the opportunities and constraints, meanings and ways, of life. People and groups adopt technology to their needs and interests, producing transformations in the organisation of social life and profoundly changing the structures of current society in such a way that “the rhythms of everyday life are being transformed in ways which by any historical comparison are remarkable.

From the above one can then aver that the New Media has become an inveterate part of social life today as it influences the patterns and ways in which people behave and act. Taking a quick check, it is apparent that the last thing we do before going to bed is going through our phone and it happens to be the first thing we do when we awake. Although this trend has received a rousing welcome and has the potential to influence its users, it is yet to be clear if the New Media defines the lives of the younger generation in Nigeria or if it amounts to a means through which individuals gain added value to life. In comparison to the Western societies, Africa is still lagging behind in

terms of access, as the majority of users are only opportune to find access in the urban areas. However, there is no doubt that with the proliferation of the Internet use, lack of access will be a phenomenon of the past, especially with the efforts of existing mobile network providers who have created data packages that enable individual users to access the Net on the move, a characteristic of the 21st century information society.

2.3 Citizenship

Access to Information is a very crucial aspect of citizenship and citizenship education; as such it is imperative to take a holistic look at the concept of citizenship as central to the focus of this study. The idea of citizenship is one that has undergone constant debate. This is results from the fact that citizenship has been viewed from different perspective by scholars. One can describe a “citizen” as a member of a political community, which is defined by a set of rights and obligations.

Heywood (1994:155) suggests that; “citizenship represents a relationship between the individual and the state, in which the two are bound together by reciprocal rights and obligations”. This therefore, connotes that citizenship is a legal status and an identity. Thus, there is an objective dimension of citizenship: specific rights and obligations which a state invests in its members, and a subjective dimension: a sense of loyalty and belonging. However, objective citizenship does not in itself ensure the existence of subjective citizenship, because “members of groups that feel alienated from their state, perhaps because of social disadvantage or racial discrimination, cannot properly be thought of as ‘full citizens’, even though they may enjoy a range of formal entitlements” (Heywood 1994:156).

Simply put Heywood (1994) tries to establish that individuals can be citizens of a particular community by law but because they do not enjoy for instance the complementary benefits of equity from the state, his sense of loyalty and belonging to the state might not be harnessed. In Nigeria for instance we find such objective and subjective citizenship being in conflict especially in some regions. People who are given birth to or have lived in a particular state for most of their lives are denied their rights to occupy political positions for instance, and they end up with no fulfilment in terms of their subjective citizenship. Perhaps Alubo (2005:56) captures this vividly when he notes:

The issue of citizenship is further complicated by the operative requirements of indigeneity, an attribute that is almost exclusively acquired by descent in Nigeria. Thus, to be born and have an entire working life in a state, other than that to which one traces his or her ancestry, does not qualify one as an indigene of the state. Instead, the practice of indigeneity is based on lineage, which requires that one has certain rights and privileges such as seeking elective offices in one's ancestral home irrespective of whether or not such individual maintains any ties.... Denied full citizenship in locations where individuals have made a home, such people have little option than to turn to their ethnic kin for social, political and economic support.

Although one might agree with Alubo's submission above, it is also pertinent to note that there are one or two states in Nigeria where you find people who do not have ancestral linkages holding political positions. States like Lagos and Kaduna for instance stand out in this regard. Why this has become insignificant is because compared to the number of states we have in Nigeria only two out of thirty six allows for this expression of objective citizenship.

Identity in its ethnic and religious forms is central to the citizenship question in Nigeria because it is a basis for inclusion and exclusion. The issue becomes more crucial because, as in most parts of Africa, citizenship is tied to group rights and thus,

inextricably linked with identity. In effect, identity is a form in which the citizenship question is posed and practically experienced. This perhaps explains the rise in identity politics, especially in relation to material issues. Citizenship is here defined as a relationship between the individual and the state in relation to mutual rights, duties and obligations. Citizenship is also a form of participation in the running of the state and society, and in this sense an agency and subject. Alubo (2009:4) observes that the 1999 constitution guarantees one is a citizen of Nigeria provided such a person:

- Was born in Nigeria before the date of independence either of whose parents or any of grandparents belong or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria. Provided a person shall not become a citizen of Nigeria by virtue of this section if neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in Nigeria
- Every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria
- Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria (Chapter 3, section 1)
- There are also provisions for naturalization and for foreigners to apply for Nigerian citizenship.

The constitutional provision also spells out rights and privileges in a fairly comprehensive manner as to ensure rights of all citizens. The problem is not however, the constitution but the translation of its provisions to reality. Part of this complication is the division of Nigerian citizens in daily experience into indigenes and settlers.

In problematising the citizenship situation in Nigeria, Nwanegbo *etal* (2014), make allusion to some constitutional loopholes which appears to have exacerbated citizenship crisis in Nigeria. They argue that Section 147 of the 1999 Constitution states that

indigene of each state shall be considered in ministerial appointment without explicit definition of the term indigene. According to Yisa (2005:8), the consequence of Section 147 of the 1999 Constitution is that it has created four types of Nigerians: The lucky ones who belong to the indigenous communities of the state of residence; the indigenes of other states who are expected to go back to their own states for any benefits; Nigerians who are unable to prove membership of any indigenous group in any state of the country and women who are married to men in states other than their own, who are neither accepted in their states of origin nor in their husbands.

Explaining this further, Egwu (2013:27) posits that what obtains in Nigeria is a bifurcated system of citizenship by which a pan-Nigerian notion of citizenship operates at the national level while indigeneity operates at the local level. For him, this ignores the rich history of migration and constant mingling of Nigerian peoples and creates a distinction between “indigenes” and “non-indigenes” or between “natives” and “settlers” (Egwu, 2013: 27). Thus, the controversies and complexities of citizenship in Nigeria could be explained from the outcome of politics that necessitated its use. In this direction, citizenship is used to gain access to power, employment, claim benefits and sometimes ensures denial to others. The implication is perennial conflict arising from disagreement among individuals, groups and ethnic nationalities. As such the citizenship situation in Nigeria reveals clearly the difficulty and complexities associated with the discourse of citizenship across the world.

However, one scholar whose voice cannot be ignored in the discourse of citizenship is Thomas Marshall (1950) who defined citizenship as ‘full membership of a community’. According to him, citizenship is constituted by three elements: civil, political and social

rights. Civil rights being the rights necessary for individual freedom, liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. The second which is political rights comprises right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body. The third being Social rights include the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security.

Giving a clear explanation of Marshall's position on citizenship Bryan Turner notes that:

At the heart of Marshall's account of citizenship lies the contradiction between the formal political equality of the franchise and the persistence of extensive social and economic inequality, ultimately rooted in the character of the capitalist market place and the existence of private property. Marshall proposed the extension of citizenship as the principal political means for resolving, or at least containing, those contradictions (Turner 1990:201).

Marshall's approach however has been criticised for being evolutionary, unitary and ethnocentric. His theory of citizenship failed to emphasize "the notion of social struggles as the central motor of the drive for citizenship" (Turner 1990:203), and therefore it does not distinguish "between active and passive forms of citizenship, which arise from variations in the relationship between the subject and the state" (Turner 2000:21). The former expands citizenship rights through a process of political conflict; the latter is the effect of the political strategies of the dominant political elite.

Turner (1993), among the first to revisit Marshall's theory, defines citizenship as a set of legal, economic, and cultural practices which define an individual as a competent member of society. Such practices shape the flow of resources to individuals and social groups. Turner's definition allows us to analyse how individuals and groups have

differentiated opportunities of becoming competent members of society. From this point of view, citizenship identity, the sense of belonging and solidarity, is necessarily connected with the problem of unequal distribution of resources in society.

Providing a slightly different perspective to citizenship Zamudio (2004), explains that there are three proportions of citizenship which manifest as: Status, Exercise and Conscience. Citizenship status is the set of rights and obligations between individuals and the state. Only those individuals and groups which fulfil all the requirements that define citizenship in a country will have the formal recognition of the state. Citizenship exercise refers to the conditions necessary for the realization of citizenship rights and the incorporation of new rights (the transformation of needs into legitimate rights), redefining and expanding the previous notion of citizenship. Last, but not least, citizenship conscience makes reference to the conviction of being a citizen, with the recognition of the state expressed in concrete practices that assure citizenship exercise.

Citizenship conscience is, in turn, formed by three elements:

- i) the knowledge of citizenship rights and duties;
- ii) the identification of the state as responsible for granting those rights and duties by means of laws and policies that guarantee their fulfilment and
- iii) the recognition of legitimate means to make demands (Zamudio 2004 cited in De la Paz 2011:2).

Hence, the state plays a fundamental role in the creation of citizenship conscience, because it arises from a reflexive process: if the state, its authorities and institutions, do not treat individuals as citizens, but as subjects, then those individuals will not be able to develop a citizenship conscience and, consequently, will not be capable of

identifying the legitimate procedures for making demands. This then implies that the creation of citizenship conscience is very essential in solving or rather addressing the problems of citizenship and one way to achieve this is through civic education.

In a liberal democracy, being a citizen, that is, a competent member of society seems to be closely related to education. The reason for this is because by means of education the individuals acquire knowledge and skills that favour the development of citizenship conscience, and exercise, which is, in turn, indispensable for the construction of citizenship (De la Paz 2011:7). Central to education as a key factor in the development of citizenship is equal access to information. Dela Paz again notes:

Civic education is necessary for reducing informational inequality, which means to reduce political inequality. Civic education can be considered as an instrument for empowerment; a method for distributing among powerless groups and individuals the knowledge and skills indispensable for exercising effective citizenship.

Not only does access to information bring about greater opportunities for citizenship it also provides individuals with the agency to exercise citizenship. The access to information which the Internet has brought to bear is a distinct example of this. With the Internet, one can argue contrary to De la Paz that access to information in itself can lead to the exercise of effective citizenship. The state also does not necessarily have to play a role in civic education as citizens themselves have gotten to the point of deliberately educating themselves about rights and responsibilities and how to go about effectively exercising these rights. Abah (2005:vii) makes allusion to this by stating that "...recent more pluralistic approaches re-conceptualise citizenship to take a less state centred, and more actor oriented approach, arguing that citizenship is attained through the agency of citizens themselves, based on their diverse sets of identities". Abah's argument is in line with those by Egwu (2013) and Yisa (2005) which explain

the reality of citizenship today in Nigeria. While their points are valid one can still not take away the importance of statutory citizenship as one conceived in rights. This is important to lay a foundation for the analysis in this study. One clear principle in all the arguments so far is that of rights, and as such this study will approach citizenship from that angle, rights to speech, association, religion and how they are exercised via the Internet.

There is however, a new expression of citizenship on the Net called Netizen. The word 'Netizen' is a combination of two words 'network' and 'citizenship' and was first used or invented by Michael Hauben, a graduate student of Colombia University, in 1995. Emanating from his research on the nature of Internet usage, Michael Hauben (1997: ix-x) gives a vivid description of Netizens as thus:

There are people online who actively contribute toward the development of the Net. These people understand the value of collective work and the communal aspects of public communications. These are the people who discuss and debate topics in a constructive manner, who e-mail answers to people and provide help to newcomers, who maintain FAQ files and other public information repositories, who maintain mailing lists, and so on. These are people who discuss the nature and role of this new communications medium. These are the people who as citizens of the Net, I realized were Netizens. However, these are not all people. Netizens are not just anyone who come online, and they are especially not people who come online for individual gain or profit. They are not people who come to the Net thinking it is a service. Rather they are people who understand it take effort and action on each and everyone's part to make the Net a regenerative and vibrant community and resource. Netizens are people who decide to devote time and effort into making the Net, this new part of our world, a better place.

To draw inference from Hauben would be to consider Netizens as people who make it a point of duty to ensure that the world of the Internet is a better place for all other Netizens by making a technological contribution such as making the speed of the network transmission faster; finding a way to exchange information safely; making a social contribution, such as trying to provide answer to the questions that someone asks

on a page, or presenting information on the Web that other people are interested in knowing about. The picture which this imprints on the mind is that of a community which is not bound by geographical barriers, in which every individual is happy to assist the other to achieve his or her goal irrespective of race, tribe or religion; a world which thrives on collective consciousness and interconnectedness; a world of the net in which everybody's voluntary contribution has built it into a useful connection for many others around the world for which they exist as Netizens - citizens of the net.

Netizens are not just users of the network, but contributors to the network; they do not only use the network to get something from it, but also try to give back something to the network. It is worth noting, however, that the world is becoming much smaller owing to the immense outreach of the Net and the activities of Netizens. The attributive factor to this is the growing irrelevance of borders (Seib 2007:xv), as the Internet facilitates trans-national trends in politics and other facets of globalisation via the various Internet-based modes of communication which affect not only the web-oriented public, but policy makers as well. Anything on the Internet can have a global reach, international news coverage and public attitudes can be affected by this vast new chorus of voices, pioneered by Netizens.

Therefore, by rendering assistance in online mobilisation for collective action, by communicating on group discussions, chat rooms, or returning emails, you are a Netizen. There are no strict conditions of citizenship on the Net. All that is needed is the necessary savvy to guarantee your place as a Netizen in cyber world where everyone is happy to contribute and to participate freely and unhindered in various activities that give them meaning. Consequently, it is imperative to note that new technologies are most popular with the youth and this highlights the significance and

importance which new technologies have within their lives (Gibbons, 2007). For some, new technologies have been such a defining feature in the lives of younger generations that they predict a fundamental change in the way young people communicate, socialise, create and learn.

Among the growing terminologies that have extended to describe the changing nature of the young generation of users of the new technology is the 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001a). The generation constituting the population of this era is described as those born within the last three decades (1980-2000). This description however results from their familiarity with and reliance on ICT. They are regarded as living lives immersed in technology, 'surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age' (Prensky, 2001a:1). Further giving a vivid description of digital natives, Prensky states:

Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics before their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to 'serious' work (1).

Although Prensky provides us with a basis for understanding who digital natives are, one can observe that it restricts digital natives to age classification. Therefore, Prensky again describes those who are not born within the digital age but have adopted the use of these technologies as 'digital immigrants.'

Digital immigrants may learn to use new technologies but will still be in some way located within the past, unable to fully understand the natives. Characteristics of digital immigrants include: not going to the Internet first for information; printing things out as opposed to working on screen; and reading manuals rather than working things out

online. This category of people is adjudged not to be proficient in the use of the technologies and as such do not have the speed and savvy that is characteristic of the digital natives. However, several opinions have arisen to suggest that being a digital native goes beyond just being born in the digital era as this would mean that individuals who are born outside this period are not and cannot be natives of the digital world. The possibilities exist that those termed digital immigrants can eventually turn out to be digital natives once they become proficient and effective in using the Internet to enhance their lives. In Nigeria today, for instance, we have people of the older generation who have come to terms with digital technologies and have also become proficient in its use so much so that there is no difference between them and the younger generation who are considered to be digital natives.

Therefore, it is imperative that an operational understanding of these two is needed for clarity. Providing a suitable description of the term digital natives that would encompass both the ideas of digital nativity and digital immigrants is highly essential to this study as it will help in putting the study in proper perspective. As such, Helsper and Eynon (2010:515) giving an adequate description of what digital natives entails state:

It appears that younger people who have a greater range of ICTs in their household, tend to use the Internet as a first port of call, have higher levels of Internet self-efficacy, multi-task more and use the Internet for fact checking and formal learning activities. Nevertheless, generation was not the only significant variable in explaining these activities: gender, education, experience and breadth of use also play a part. Indeed, in all cases immersion in a digital environment (i.e. the breadth of activities that people carry out online) tends to be the most important variable in predicting if someone is a digital native in the way they interact with the technology.

Hence, what can be gleaned from this position is that generational difference alone does not account for being a digital native. Older generation of people are also able to accommodate and learn the language of the digital age even as well as the younger

generation who flourish in its usage. As such, digital natives either those who are proficient (the young), or those who have adapted to the digital age by learning how to use technologies (the old), are those who have come to the realisation that the digital world is a veritable platform for enhancing human relationship and interaction. By immersion in the digital environment, digital natives communicate, carry out transactions, watch television, entertain and learn all from the digital source.

2.4 Online Community, Social Interaction and its Implications for Citizenship

The transformation of society into an information environment means that interactivity has become a familiar and overused word in the everyday language of New Media... (Manovich 2001:55). The Internet is a combination of textual interactions and virtual worlds that enable global communication among humans (Wellman & Hampton, 1999). Matusitz (2007:22) further argues that:

Among the many ways of communication that cyberspace offers, Multi-User Domains (MUDs), emails, chat lines, and virtual reality simulations are notorious examples. Consequently one of the significant concerns raised about the effects of the Internet is that it has fundamentally influenced social interactions among humans, to such a point that, for some of them, the “technoculture” (that is, the set of computer-mediated relationships among individuals) is the only culture that they know and identify with. Humans, by nature, grow through social interaction.

One can therefore agree with Matsuitz that humans, by nature, grow through social interaction. But that the social interaction through computer mediated relationships can become the only culture some people know and identify with, is a conclusion that needs interrogation. This is because an individual is first and foremost born into a world built around social relationships and gets firsthand contact with culture through interaction with his immediate environment. Contact is made with other interposed devices after an individual has grabbed the basic concepts of his existence. The computer mediated relationships can only serve as a re-enforcer of culture and values which an individual

is already exposed to. This does not, by any means, erase the possibility of individuals getting so much involved and engrossed in the possibilities of the interactions possible via computer mediated communication.

By definition, social interaction takes place “in a social setting” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:134). The implications of accessing the Internet for the amount and quality of human interaction, however, can be profound. In fact, not only can the opportunities for human interaction on the Internet develop a sense of immersion and social engagement far different from whatever sensory or motor realism can provide (Schiano, 1999), but our collective behaviour has also changed as a result of instant or anonymous interaction as it is in cyberspace.

Interactivity remains a key concept in this new information environment. Individuals within this new environment have found it convenient to interact with one another using the various channels of emails, chat lines, wall posts, blogs, amongst others available on the Internet (Ride and Dewdney 2006:206). One of the most laudable contributions of the New Media is that it has highly revolutionised human society and has brought about changes in the original manner in which certain concepts were conceived. The idea of community has long held an important position in social theory, especially as a tool for assessing the impact of social change and as counter-poise to the idea of a mass. In earlier thinking, a community referred to a set of people sharing a place or some other bounded space, an identity and certain norms, values and cultural practices and usually small enough to know or interact with each other (McQuail 2005:148). However, there is a new set of expectation concerning community which

has developed as a result of the emergence and consequent proliferation of the New Media usage especially computer mediated communication.

The core idea is that of a community existing on the Internet referred to as a “virtual community,” a word coined by Howard Rheingold (1994) when he wrote a book of the same title. A virtual community is formed by Internet users at their own choice in response to some stimulus influencing their desire. Lindolf and schatzer (as cited in McQuail 2005:149) define virtual community as a community founded intentionally by people who share a set of similar interests, often revolving around certain texts or tropes imported from non-Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) venues. Thus members of a virtual community often have something in common; they share similarities, beliefs and a strong desire to interact and communicate with one another to meet specific needs.

The interaction enabled on the virtual community, as inveterate as it has become, holds certain implications for the society at large. This results from the fact that a virtual community is much more than just a collection of computer mediated communication messages; it is a sociological phenomenon (Rheingold 1994). Matusitz (2007:23) argues that the creation and existence of a virtual community has positive implications for human society. He notes:

First, although there has been much debate about the implications of the Internet for the meaning of “community,” it can be argued that many features of communities in the real world are also present in the digital realm. For example, a virtual community can be considered a “real” gathering of people where they communicate, like in a physical environment, create webs of personal relationships, and strengthen weak ties over time, even if everything occurs in cyberspace. In fact, a virtual community can be a great opportunity for social interaction that enables both reciprocal and non-reciprocal communication. Such interactive communication is a necessary factor for a series of online messages to

make obvious the existence of a virtual community. Internet users join such communities to socialize, in the same way that they would go to a cocktail party in order to meet people, flirt, tell stories, and share interests with one another.

A virtual community even allows their users to “lurk” without “participating” (Lindlof & Schatzer, 1998). Individuals can gain access to the community in order to just observe or rather acquire information about the latest trends within the community without making contributions to the discussions going on in the community. According to Rheingold (1994), a virtual community emerges from the Internet when there are a sufficient number of people who carry on public discussions, with adequate human feelings, to connect in an online “space.” As such, while off-line community is mostly tied together by space and territory, the real time experience of the virtual community is tied most significantly to the immediacy in terms of the response with which the members interact with one another. This immediacy is further enhanced by the common identities and ideas that individual users share within the community. To say the least, virtual communities can be as enjoyable as off-line communities. Both can have the same features, including social interaction, common goals, a sense of identity and belonging, norms and rules (whether written or unwritten), with possibilities for exclusion or rejection of community members.

The typical conditions for the formation of a virtual community seem to include minority status, physical dispersal of members and a degree of intensity of interest (McQuail 2005:149). As a result, many people have taken advantage of the possibilities of the creation of communities online. One of such is what Alonso and Oiarzabal (2006:11) refer to as Digital Diasporas. According to them, ‘Digital Diasporas is the distinct online networks that Diasporic people use to recreate identities, share opportunities, spread their culture, influence homeland and host-land policy, or create

debate about common interests issues by means of electronic devices' (11). In giving a vivid description of the type of environment which the Internet engenders for individuals who find themselves far away from their native lands (in the Diaspora) and the need to keep in touch with people of like identities, Alonso and Oiarzabal (2006:9) notes:

...the internet as a post geographically bounded global communication system has significantly provided the ability for dispersed groups such as Diasporas to connect, maintain, create, and recreate social ties and networks with both their homeland and their co-dispersed communities. The internet offers the ability for Diasporas to exchange instant factual information regardless of geographical distance and time zones. Again time and space shift meaning: there are no constraints on synchronicity or locality. That is the Internet offers the possibility to sustain and recreate Diasporas as globally imagined communities.

Judging from Alonso and Oiarzabal's submission, connection and information sharing are the key components which the Internet helps facilitate for individuals in the Diaspora. By connection, people are able to stay in touch with their families as well as friends and also get informed about happenings in their homelands through information being shared online without recourse to physical location. It can be further argued that Digital Diasporas also expand the ideas of citizenship by activating a space online for individuals of the same decent to assert their identities on a common platform. It enables individuals in the Diaspora to relate as members of the same entity having a sense of national unity and allegiance to their parent country even though separated by distance.

Digital Diasporas bring to the Internet a sense of identity and community prior to the modern technology. So the technology either reinforces or transforms their previous meanings and attitudes. Thus, it is important to note that the Internet does not belong to anyone; we are all immigrants who simultaneously share a common space called

cyberspace. This is to say cyberspace does not belong to any particular nation, state, or Diasporic group; everyone claims his own legitimate space in this cyber world to give expression to the beliefs, ideas, identities and interests that makes them a complete social entity.

The implications that the Internet holds for the meaning of community can also be negative. There are many virtual communities where users will never be able to find out who is in front of the computer screen. A certain number of people who interact with others in cyberspace are “performers,” deliberately altering their identities. On the Internet, no one knows if the user is a senior citizen, a serial killer, or a computer-whiz kid. Neil postman (1993) argues that the adoption of virtual community is detrimental because it lacks the important element of accountability and mutual obligation present in real world communities. Corroborating this view, Weinreich (1997) is of the opinion that virtual communities will never resemble physical communities because a physical community is a collective of kinship networks with a common geographic territory, a common history, and a shared system of values, usually embedded in a common religion. In like manner Matusitz (2007:24) argues thus:

Another negative implication is that some features of online interaction would never exist in the real world. As described in the next section, on the Internet any user can deceive anybody else without being detected. One can easily swap gender, race, and age in order to reach goals that would not be reachable in normal life. Interactions on the Internet can reach a state of bogusness that is not comparable with the fakeness that humans encounter in real-life situations. Consequently, one might reasonably argue that the meaning of the word “community” on the Internet is nonsensical. By the same token, although the Internet has some features that are not conceivable in the real world, the opposite also happens. Real-life communities possess features that can never be present in virtual communities (i.e., touching, smell, taste, hearing, etc).

Furthermore, Matusitz argues that just because the two communities do not share exactly the same features or just because a user swaps gender or does not share

someone's religion and values, does not mean that the user does not care for that particular someone. It is quite the contrary. The Internet gives individuals the opportunity to know other individuals for who they are and not for what faith they believe in, what they look like, or how they dress. As a result, the Internet allows for an enormous opportunity for diversity, as it enables the growth of greater acceptance of others. This in turn allows for a diversity of individuals to meet and blend together with less risk of clashing against each other; a phenomenon that would very likely happen in the real world today, where the news constantly talks about clashes of cultures, races, sexes, religions, etc.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to encounter a discussion on virtual community without close reference to Social Network, a characteristic that every virtual community poses. A Social Network may exist as a group of groups, entity or people and may also refer to the relationships that exist between these entities, objects and people. Social Networks are contingent upon relationships that provide support systems, an attribute upon which virtual communities thrive. They are supportive in that they "are created through coordinated activities and relationships that permeate organisational boundaries" (Stohl, 1995:23). This results from the fact that social networks in cyberspace are not fixed; they are very malleable (Buchanan, 2002). Social Networks on the Internet are built upon a new type of organisational structure: a structure that is horizontal, flat, and contingent upon flexible communication relationships. The principle here is that interconnections through the Internet are made in an "all-channel" manner (Bavelas, 1950; Leavitt, 1951), which means that potential linkages can be established very quickly anywhere and at any time, regardless of space, distance, and time. The Internet makes irrelevant the distance and the time between subjects that is

necessary to be defined as space. The Internet, then, composed of information rather than matter, allows networks to spring up like mushrooms inveterately.

However, it is pertinent to note that those who are proponents of the ideas of online community are aware that the term is a metaphor rather than the real thing. On the other hand, the real thing in itself is often rather elusive and sometimes mythical (McQuail 2005:149). Although these contradictions exist, the positive aspect is that several features of the real community such as interaction, common purpose, a sense of identity and belonging are attainable.

2.5 Political Participation and Citizenship Participation/Citizenship Action

Citizenship has always been a highly or essentially contested notion, implying that meaning, scope and nature is perpetually being debated and struggled over. Historically, it has proven to be a highly dynamic concept, for example, evolving from the fight for equal political rights for all, the struggles of labour versus capital, to demand for equality by women, gays, lesbians, ethnical minorities, etc. In recent years, citizenship and the 'transformation thereof have resulted in a fierce academic debate opposing authors who stick to the classic definition of citizenship and those who claim that citizenship has transformed due to processes of globalisation, trans-nationalisation and the interactive potentials of information and communication technologies' (Bart and Leo 2005). The former sticks to the nation-state as the prime and indeed only realm where citizenship can take form. The latter defends that new forms of 'unbound' citizenship are emerging, linked to cosmopolitanism, multiple identities and embedded in a transnational civil society. According to Bart and Leo (2005), this new situation points towards '(new) levels of political participation 'below' and 'above' the nation-

state, as well as emerging communities of interest that go beyond the confinements or boundaries of the nation-state and beyond mere rights. ICTs are said to play an enabling role in this regard.’

It is pertinent to first understand the concept of citizenship within state boundaries before we proceed in this work. Marshall (cited in Jackson 2003:2) gives an appropriate definition of citizenship which best suits the thrust of this study. He defines citizenship in terms of the struggle for civic, political, as well as social rights:

The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for personal freedom ... By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political power or as an elector of such a body. ...By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society.

Furthermore, other scholars have attempted to refine and question Marshall’s ideas of citizenship by introducing other dimensions to it, such as the welfare state as the realm where citizenship materialises in modern societies or by introducing feminist and ethnic minority perspectives (O’Conner, 1973: 6; Esping-Andersen, 1990: 21; Lister, 1997; Ginsburg, 1994).

Citizenship is clearly developed within the boundaries of a modern state. According to Miller (1999:69):

All our experience of citizenship has so far been of bounded citizenship: initially citizenship within the walls of the city state, later citizenship within the cultural limits of the nation-state. These boundaries have been actively policed. Admission to citizenship has always come with strings attached.

Slightly contrary to Millers position above, the modern conception of citizenship as merely a status held under the authority of a state has been contested and broadened to

include various political and social struggles of recognition and redistribution as instances of claim-making, and hence, by extension, of citizenship. As a result, various struggles based upon identity and difference (whether sexual, racial, ethnic, diasporic, ecological, technological, or cosmopolitan) have found new ways of articulating their claims as claims to citizenship understood not simply as a legal status but as political and social recognition and economic redistribution (Isin and Turner 2002).

As such, within this context, the conventional media was seen as the custodian of citizenship rights and widely beneficial for democratic politics and expression of views and aspirations. This is because it affords citizens the opportunity to have access to information about events and expose issues to public critique. However, with time, the negative tendency of this has played itself out as the dominance of these channels by a few voices has resulted in the predominance of a vertical flow and the heightened commercialism of the media market, resulting in the complete neglect of democratic communication roles. The typical construction and pattern of mass communication presents a hindrance to access and discourages active participation and dialogue.

Thus, one of the striking advantages of the New Media to citizenship is the idea of participation. In fact, according to experiments carried out, some scholars have shown that exposure to more information via the Internet produces a greater interest in politics and favours participation (McDonald 2008; Lupia and Philpot 2005). This result from the fact that gaining access to the Internet reduces the cost of acquiring political information, given that it allows almost unlimited, fast, cheap access. The best-informed members of the public tend to participate more (Milner 2002), although the direction of the causal relationship between these variables is debatable. Cheaper access

to political information can be expected to bring with it an increase in the level of the information itself, which in turn has a positive influence on participation.

Consequently, the emergence of modern ICTs has resulted in uninterrupted worldwide real time communicative streams, essentially eliminating time/space restrictions in terms of communication. The compression of time/space barriers has furthermore led to a dual move with regard to borders and boundaries. We are witnessing a blurring of boundaries, for example, in terms of the difficulty to control content or the emergence of transnational communities of interest, but at the same time also a re-enforcement of boundaries. This dual process relates as much to geographical borders as it does to symbolic boundaries, as well as private versus public sphere (Habermas, et al., 1996; Harvey, 1989; Lash & Urry, 1994; Burgelman, 2000).

With the advent of the New Communication Technologies, the democratic space has been expanded with the proliferation of different voices expressing their political views and exercising their freedom of expression as citizens on issues that directly affects them as well as people around them. It has thus been argued that this new empowerment engendered by the emergence of the New Media can bring about political consciousness and growth within society. This is because the New Media immensely contributes to increased diversity and homogeneity of people and viewpoints. For some, the Internet is the only “diversity-oriented” electronic medium existing today because it is a valuable vehicle for creating awareness of our own viewpoints, but also others’ viewpoints. On the one hand, the Internet offers greater diversity to such a point that people who are from different cultures are more in direct

contact among each other than they were before the advent of the Internet.

Corroborating the above, McQuail (2005:151) notes that:

The new electronic media have been widely hailed as a potential way of escape from the oppressive 'top down' politics of mass democracies in which tightly organised political parties make policy unilaterally and mobilise support behind them with minimal negotiation and grass-roots input. They provide the means for highly differentiated provision of political information and negotiation between leaders and followers. They promise new forums for the development of interest groups and formation of opinion. They allow dialogue to take place between politicians and active citizens, without the inevitable intervention of a party machine.

McQuail's assertion above describes the potential effect of the New Media in today's politics where campaigns and electioneering have been taken to the cyberspace as it allows for a wider reach to the populace, especially those who are brave enough to form most of the political workforce and share their cogent political views through the net. Taking an instance from the Arab region, Al-Roomi (2007:142) notes:

Arab Internet users can be characterised as increasingly self confident. They believe in their own potential and in enlarging their social circles. While becoming more self assertive, Arab Internet users have also become more assertive about what they really want out of life. The Internet/blogs in tandem with other new communications technology (e.g, text messaging and satellite television) are bringing about a dynamic change, leading to the erosion of traditional authority structures in family society, culture/religion, and nation-state. This has led to increasing call for political, social, and economic reform in the Arab world.

Another dimension to McQuail's position is the use of the new electronic media by individuals for personal campaigns and struggles to support and achieve specific goals. For instance, in situations of mass protest the New Media can serve as a veritable tool for mass mobilisation and strategising for action. Meeting spot, protest venues and time can be communicated through the use of emails, blogs, personal walls, instant messages etc. Bennett (2003) arguing further along the dimensions of political activism notes:

...the recent period has been marked by impressive levels of global activism, including: mass demonstrations, sustained publicity campaigns against corporations and world development agencies, and the rise of innovative public

accountability systems for corporate and governmental conduct. All of these activities seem to be associated in various ways with the Internet. In some cases, the simple exchanges of information involved could also be accomplished by mail, phone, or fax. In these cases, the internet simply enhances the speed and lowers the costs of basic communication – at least for those who have crossed the digital divide. In other cases, however, the Internet and other technologies such as cellular phones and digital video, enable people to organize politics in ways that overcome limits of time, space, identity, and ideology, resulting in the expansion and coordination of activities that would not likely occur by other means.

Clearly, conventional barriers of information flow are of decreasing significance as the level of communication increases and individuals can find information sources that match their cultural and political interest online. People are more likely to trust news/information from people like them thereby making it possible to pull together a collection of human resources towards political struggles. Individuals who use the Internet to advance the struggle on behalf of their national actor do so because of a sense of deep involvement and for different motives, alongside frustration due to the difficulties facing their nation. The activities in this arena are varied and individuals utilise different platforms; ‘sending emails via mass online distribution lists, signing, petitions, participating in online surveys or media talkback, writing blogs, and constructing web sites’ (Naveh 2007:171).

The talk about politics has expanded from neighbourhood coffee house to global proportions, enlisting participants and encouraging electronic speech and the thinking behind it. This is networking in the sense that like-minded activists can find each other and form partnerships of various kinds. Information which is both solid and wild can be disseminated quickly and widely. Some time will have to pass before this phenomenon’s long term political impact can be determined, but if bloggers’ talk leads to expanded bloggers activism, this may be yet another way that mass media provide impetus for democratisation. Seib (2007:4) similarly notes:

The Internet can generate political pressure because it is itself intrinsically democratic and can foster populist participation. That is not yet fully understood, but it can be seen in the fervour of political discussion that takes place on a scale and with an audacity new to politics in much of the world. People advocating changes do not have to take the risk involved with public demonstrations in a police state, and they don't have to rely on slow and small scale disseminations...

This therefore goes to further buttress the fact that modern democratic principles demand that the people are involved in political governance, especially on issues that affect their lives directly or indirectly. Undoubtedly, one of such avenues through which citizens have found to get involved in governance is the Internet. As such, Ifukor (2010:81) in a study of an online political discussion group called 'Nolitics' on the Nigerian website Naijapals, argues that "the dialectical relationship between discourse and social practice, and the process of political empowerment can be textually illustrated through the choice of vocabulary and sentiments expressed in blogs or discussion fora." He further concludes in the study that "citizen's access to electronic social media empowers them to gain active involvement in democratic governance" (Ifukor 2010:82).

In terms of mobilisation, the social media plays a huge role in political mobilisation. The role of the social media in political mobilisation and participation across the globe cannot be overemphasised. Of recent, Social Media have been playing a leading role in mobilising support for or against political figures. Titus-Fannie *etal* (2013:43) in a study assessing the role of the social media in mobilising youth for the 2011 general elections in Nigeria notes that:

...the emergence of the online social media like Facebook and other discussion fora is enabling Nigerians to be involved in political debates much more than ever before. More voices are being heard, social problems are being discussed and more people are participating in political debates especially the youth.

This form of social and political participation is likely to increase in the future since online awareness is already created and bloggers are getting involved in computer-mediated discourse. Political involvement and participation in governance defines the concept of citizenship in the context of political discourse on Facebook, Naijapals, and other Social Network sites.

Scholars such as Downey and Fenton 2003; Scheufele and Nisbets 2002; Stromer-Galley 2000, have argued that the role which the Internet plays in promoting feelings of efficacy, knowledge and participation is very limited. They are also of the opinion that the existing political party organisations have generally failed to make use of the potential of the Internet, but rather turned it into yet another branch of the propaganda machine. For instance, campaign managers do not really want interaction which is risky, problematic and burdensome. They use the Internet mainly as a vehicle for infomercials (Stromer-Galley 2000). Shirky (2010:29) however argues that even though the above critique is correct, “it is not enough to question the power of social media. The fact that there are individuals who just join online groups to make comments without being committed to the cause, does not mean that there are no actors who can be very committed to use social media effectively to influence socio-political change.”

Seib (2007) asserts that blogging may prove to be a valuable tool for citizens in orchestrating pressure and reform. He notes that “in 2005, bloggers in Lebanon and elsewhere spurred debate about the perpetrators and aftershock of the assassination of Rafik Hariri - debate that could be joined by anyone with Internet access, regardless of some government desire to stifle these discussions.” As such, New Media technologies

have provided an arena for information flow that is more collaborative, immediate, and open than ever before. The result has been an information revolution in which mobile tools, social media platforms, and collaborative online spaces have changed basic habits of information production, dissemination and reception. These shared networks have fundamentally shifted how individuals understand participation, expression, sharing and community. Convergence of all media into one platform has also created integrated landscapes for citizens around the world.

To conclude this section, it is imperative to take a look at journalism and its implications for citizenship. With the development of multiple new avenues for citizens to monitor their information environment and actively participate in the production and distribution of news in ways that were historically the domain of mainstream media, the debate outlined above is now confronted with a new media environment. As digital information, social media networks and mobile technologies fuel the growth of new models of journalism practice, education programmes are being forced to re-examine how they prepare future reporters in digital environments. Specifically, educators still need to do the normative and ethical intellectual work to conceptualise the relationship between professional reporters and their interactions with citizens, who are now armed with the tools for inserting themselves squarely into the news cycle.

Mihailidis and Shumow (2011:42) note:

...the need for diverse voices, shared perspectives, greater media education, and reduced apathy toward government, democracy, and the media. Again, they saw the civic voice as the key to citizenship moving forward, with a majority of the

participants mentioning citizenship in their responses to the question, highlighting the prerogatives of the individual over those of any governing or public body.

Therefore, the avenue for a more engaged public is taking shape through participation, largely in forms typically reserved for journalism. The public should be involved, contribute to civic dialogue, provide feedback, and report alongside journalists. As such people must figure out how to use the new tools and how to connect in an ultra-busy landscape, the entire news process must become more fluid for important information to flow.

2.6 The Youth, New Media and the Participatory Culture

The transformation in the technology of information and communication generation, processing, storage and dissemination witnessed in the 21st century has unprecedentedly opened up new media platforms unmatched in history in terms of interconnectedness, interactivity, multiplicity and accessibility (McQuail, 2005:38). It so happens that those who evidently are the major players in this era of interconnectedness, interactivity and accessibility of communication processes are youth. This is, however, not unconnected with the fact that the Internet, one of the greatest manifestations of the New Media, has orchestrated an integration and convergence of the existing media to extend the frontiers and possibilities of the media of communication. How then are young people to gain the thoughtful, analytical skills necessary to engage as strong civic participants; whether in their local community or a more national stage? Interactivity is a property of technology, while participation is a property of culture (Culver & Jacobson 2012:1). 'Participatory culture is emerging as the culture absorbs and responds to the explosion of New Media technologies that make

it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and re-circulate media content in powerful new ways' (Jenkins 2009:8).

The New Media, propelled and driven by the Internet, provide platforms for social interactions between and among users in such a manner that no older platforms/media can boast of. The new media display such potentials that the only limitation to the dynamism is 'ignorance or illiteracy in terms of the ability to use the hardware and/or software for maximum effects in the realm of communication, education, politics, economics, social or technology' (Adaja and Ayodele 2013:66). As such, the young generation are most akin to have these skills as they are described as living lives immersed in technology, 'surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age' (Prensky, 2001:1).

There is no diminishing the importance of the youth in this technological era as they constitute a huge resource which any reasonable leadership must be aware of and pay adequate attention to. Their consistent usage and manipulation of the new technologies to re-invent and suite their lifestyles, access and share information inveterately, mobilise to gather support, all adds up to qualify them as a valuable asset. In making a strong case for the importance of the youth in this era of technological proliferation, Amadi (2012) argues that:

Young people, through their liberalism, dynamism and idealism reinvigorate and sometimes reinvent institutions of the state. Their activism helps the states to overcome the pathologies of entrenched institutions and ginger political leaders to establish new institutions that respond to fresh challenges. The liberalism and dynamism of youths is the reason why the face of the change in the world today is youth. Young people are on the blocks deciding the destiny of the human race. It is arguable that at no time in the past have we seen a greater degree of youth

activism in different aspects of life than this moment. Young people are to be empowered. We owe this empowerment much to technology. The technological revolution brokered by the digital computer, the Internet, the broadband and the mobile telephony system have changed the way we live, think and talk. With the innovation of facebook and Twitter we have fully unleashed the power of youths.

One can clearly aver that the dynamism of the youth, coupled with the unprecedented influence of the technological revolution, has created a whole new society built on the principles of virtual freedom of communication and expression of rights on all fronts. There exist certain levels of connectedness in terms of trust to associate with individuals when the need arises to fight for a cause. Perhaps it is that liberalism which Amadi speaks of that accounts for this willingness to express their views and act to the benefit of the greater collective. One major characteristic of this generation is their ability to manipulate the textual language which they have become too conversant with in the actualisation of their communication intentions towards one another.

The platforms available on the Internet; Facebook, Twitter and other social platforms, all have something in common and that is communication through written text. The youth have become so skilled in the use of their thumb in communicating that they have been described as the ‘thumb tribe’ (Taiwo 2010; Joyce 2000). The younger generation of Nigerians, like elsewhere in the world, can be captured in what Joyce (2000) refers to as “the thumb tribe,” a generation of people skilled in the manipulation of the phone and computer keys with their fingers, especially the thumb. She also describes their culture as the “Thumb culture.” Similarly, Sutherland (2002) refers to this thumb culture of texting as a ‘dialect’ which is most appreciated and propagated by the youth of this generation. In a study conducted on how SMS usage in Nigeria is helping users fulfil their social responsibilities in a novel way, Taiwo (2012:15) concludes that text messaging has the potential of becoming an instrument for active

agitation for social reforms. He further observes that the young people have the potential to take texting to the level of critiquing society and by so doing playing a major role in the political and social institutions in Nigeria.

There is no doubt in saying that mobile devices are the major devices that give the youth firsthand experience with the New Media. As such, the possibilities for multi-tasking which the mobile phones offer have become enormous with so many options available on one device. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the mobile phone is its ability to provide access to the Internet which has also facilitated the access to various social network applications on mobile phones. Many young people are now online more than ever before because the Internet has become compelling with the availability of online social networking platforms such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and 2go, which have become widely adopted as a means of social interaction with friends and loved ones because it is instant, location-independent, and personal (Reid and Reid, 2005).

These social platforms are highly equipped with utilities which have given a new face to communication and have transformed communication into a more interactive process which involves the sharing of information across distant boundaries within real time experience. These platforms enable individuals to pool together a large number of friends as connections and interact with them through individual profiles which are constructed by users on the platform. Therefore, text becomes one major form of communication as individuals can leave messages on pictures, walls and on people's comments as well. Users can thus leave their opinions about anything they so wish on their individual profiles and walls. On many of the large Social network sites,

participants are not necessarily "network" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network (Boyd and Ellison 2007). In a study of online discussion on politics conducted on Facebook, Gana (2012:113) posits that Social network sites can play a vital role in political development, because individuals are able to share their opinions on issues raised on discussion topics through suggestions, questions, advice or critiques, all forming a thread of responses that can be taken as deliberation on issues that affect them.

However, some scholars have argued that the Internet's indescribable power to influence, connect and mobilise the youth has negative consequences. Olowu and Seri (2012:62) observe that 'some youth have lost their control over social media usage and begun having problems with their functionality in social, vocational and personal circles as the Internet has taken over total control of their lives.' Likewise, Idankwo (2011) posits that school work and social interaction have been affected at the advent of these Social Media. Undergraduate students spend more time on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks through smartphones that are now in abundance among these youth. Many youths cannot go for two-three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks even at the detriment of other activities such as educational and career pursuits.

Similarly, there is a growing concern that the use of mobile phones and the new style of writing it affords has gross implications to the study of English language especially on the youth in secondary schools. Faleke & Ibrahim (2011:51) however asserts that the

writing style employed by the youth on these platforms is informal. They further state that the nature of the language style employed by the youth is mostly characterised by:

“...spelling inconsistency, improper use or lack of punctuation marks, the use of figures to represent words, the use of prefix to represent words, the use of a letter(s) to represent word(s), reduction of words etc. These varied forms of writings are mostly used by literate Nigerians via SMS which they send to acquaintances, wards and colleagues and these are read by their recipients and their children who have access to their handsets and consciously or unconsciously open to the SMS in/out box devices.

As such, Alabi (2008), as well as Faleke & Ibrahim (2011) carried out studies amongst youth and secondary school students which reveal that the use of the informal writing style often employed while writing for SMS and social networks greatly affects the writing of secondary school students, as they tend to use single letter to represent words and this has a tendency to get them confused.

Furthermore, in an article on the *Daily Trust Newspaper*, Itodo (2011) posits that there seems to be an alarming rate of social networking obsession among youths today; a trend that could affect their academic, social and spiritual lives negatively if not properly controlled. Many concerned parents have expressed grave concern that they could hardly get the attention of their children and wards, as they seem to have been carried away by the fascinating world of social networks. Some youths are such social freaks that they have now carved out for themselves a world of fantasy and illusion far detached from reality. Bello (2012) of the *Sunday Observer*.argues that the dangerous trend of social network “obsession” if left unchecked could further affect an already collapsing education system in Nigeria.

Nonetheless, studies have also revealed that the New Media, especially social network sites hold great potentials for education. Verster (2010), while commenting on the potentials and use of Facebook, says:

You can create a social space from where you can send notices, organize classroom events and aggregate learning feeds from any of the aforementioned tools using Facebook's built-in array of tools ... You can make it your classroom's informal start page to kick-start any formal assignment and discussion.

Therefore, it is important to note that the New Media, and by extension Social Media, by their very nature are drivers of social change, national development and organisational development as it possesses the capability to increase work efficiency and speed as well as reduce cost (Ikpe and Olise, 2010). Udende (2010) in a study to assess Internet access and use among students of the University of Ilorin revealed that a large majority of the students use the Internet for academic purposes. This could be connected with the fact that users have found an enormous reservoir of information in different disciplines amid dearth of books in our libraries.

Against the backdrop that a majority of the students use the Internet for academic purposes, it could be admitted that the Internet enables students to solve their academic problems. This position conveys the fact that there exists a significant relationship between students' use of the internet and their academic performance. Udende also further suggest and I agree that as a way of encouraging students, a pool of computer systems should be provided by various university authorities with a defined schedule on when students can access the internet to browse, or even for unlimited access, as obtained at the universities in the developed world. This is in view of the fact that students who are constrained by paucity of research materials in the libraries will enjoy the luxury of having a viable option through access to the Internet. Also, such an

opportunity will facilitate online discussion between students and lecturers. Similarly, Liman (2014) observes that the social media can be used for effective communication between lecturers and students. She observes that lecturers can communicate with students on Facebook groups relaying to them information about assignments as well as discussions on important topics covered within lecture hours.

Furthermore, Owston (1997) posits that the Internet “is a truly open technology,” enabling users in possession of any hardware or software to derive the necessary information from the network, independent from the location of data and knowledge bases. Thus, within the framework of national educational systems, inequality in distribution of information bases concentrated in big centres usually, is overcome. Suffice it to say that one of the most noted advantages of the Internet in the area of information inquiry is the increased accessibility of reference materials and data for all categories of users. The advantage of this is that young students can now have access to variety of materials relevant to their particular field of interest once they go online.

2.7 Democracy, Media Production and Civic Engagement/Empirical studies

Since the Internet emerged as a global phenomenon, various scholars have been bewildered as to its effects on political institutions and their operation. In particular, scholars and practitioners alike have asked the question whether the Internet acts as a positive force in the development of democratic systems and ideals. Most times the question has been asked with great expectations for an affirmative answer. Some of this optimism might be due to the correlations found in the diffusion of earlier communication networks (e.g. voice telephony) and democracy (Sun & Barnett, 1994).

Another source of the optimism might be, due to the democratic vision and architectures of the Internet itself (Barlow, 1996).

The Internet is noted to have largely facilitated and accelerated communication processes within countries by forcing governments to keep their countries' communication borders open (Best and Wade 2009:255). The consequent free flow of information not only allows for the efficient passage of commercial information but also for more "democratic" information. The obvious example being that citizens gain the potential to expose government abuse of power, which can have a negative effect on governments in the world community if they are cast as illegitimate, violent, dishonest, or untrustworthy. The Internet's collective characteristics (low cost, multidirectional capability, etc.) help make this possible. In addition to newsworthy dissent, the Internet can also enlighten citizens of less democratic nations of the comparatively high-income lifestyles associated with democracies and, as a result, they may begin to wish for democratic change. Democratic governance requires both an informed citizenry and a citizenry free to express opinions. This freedom is enshrined in the constitution of many nations as well as founding documents of international organizations. In Western democracies a guarantee for this freedom was sought through private ownership of the press, rather than government ownership.

The evolution of modern media corporations has shown that this attention to ownership structures did not adequately describe the conditions necessary for engaging citizens in dialogue. Modern media corporations were privately owned, but it was not clear that these corporations always provided a channel through which citizens could sufficiently express themselves. Often citizens were put in the position of consuming news and

information rather than expressing their needs and viewpoints as active participants. But real discussion must take place. Real disagreements must be aired and real compromises must be sought. (Gutmann & Thompson, 1998) This is sometimes referred to as a discursive theory of democracy.

For this reason, deep discussion amongst citizens on issues relating to their specific needs and interests is of paramount importance if an active citizenry is desired. This balance of theory and practice is a core component of Paulo Freire's concept of praxis or informed action. Freire believed education functions most successfully when teacher and student both use their voice for dialogue and discussion and that it is through this, sometimes difficult, dialogue that true alignment and action can take place (Freire, 2007). The concept of Participatory Action Research expands on Freire's work by recognising that social change requires all involved parties to examine and discuss an issue or topic in order to change and improve it (Wadsworth, 1998). Often these discussions have taken place in public spaces, such as village squares. Today, this sort of participation takes place increasingly online, through mobile phones or other easily accessible technologies. For the youth, this discussion often takes place in the classroom or an informal educational environment.

Freedom of information is a key component of democracy, and the Internet has been able to engender that freedom for citizens to take advantage of within their democratic rights. This freedom engendered empowers citizens to share intimate connections, share information, form opinions as well as engage in conversations on issues that affect them. This, however, takes place in a kind of virtual space that has come to be known by specialists as the Public Sphere. Commenting on issues relating to public

sphere, a philosopher and social critic Jurgen Habermas (cited in Rheingold 2008:101) observes that:

By public sphere we mean first of all a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open in principle to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public. They are then acting neither as business or professional people conducting their private affairs, nor as legal consociates subject to the legal regulation of a state bureaucracy and obligated to Obed Philipience. Citizens act as a public when they deal with, matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely and express and publicize their opinions freely.

As such, the public sphere depends on free communication and discussion of ideas. As soon as your political entity grows larger than the number of citizens you can fit into a modest town hall, this vital market place for political ideas can be powerfully influenced by the unfettered potential of the Internet.

The platform the Internet creates can be likened to a place where people congregate together exerting their rights of assembly and association as public bodies to share and discuss issues freely and unhindered, ‘a place which exist within the boundless space of the cyber world’ (Gana 2012:13). Central to a functioning public sphere within a democratic space is the mechanism for sharing of ideas and information. According to Dahlgren (2005 as cited in Gana 2012:13), “an active public sphere is understood as a constellation of communicative spaces in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, debates, ideally in an unfettered manner.’

Such spaces can be experienced in an environment made possible by the Internet due to its ability to pull together a mass number of the public as members of one community. According to Habermas, ‘when the public is large, this kind of communication requires

certain means of dissemination and influence' (as cited in Rheingold 2002:240). Today, the Internet is undoubtedly the most significant public sphere as it promotes the expression and formation of opinions. Comments of young citizens on social networks sites such as Facebook for instance, reveal that citizens have a lot to say about the current agenda/situation affecting their lives.

As increasing numbers of young people seek to master the use of media tools to express themselves, explore their identities, and connect with peers to be active creators as well as consumers of culture, there exist an opportunity for young media makers to exercise active citizenship by way of informing publics, advocating for positions, contesting claims, and organizing action around issues that they truly care about. Public opinion is therefore a strong manifestation of a functioning public sphere. In terms of its very pristine idea, 'public opinion can be formed only if a public that engages in rational discussion exists' (Habermas 1984). By engaging in a rational discussion, one is directly exercising his or her public voice. Rheingold (2008:102) therefore notes:

In one sense, public voice can be characterized not just as active, but as generative—a public is brought into being in a sense by the act of addressing some text in some medium to it... By writing a blog post about an issue, a blogger brings together people whose only common interest is the issue addressed, bringing about “a relation among strangers” that would probably not otherwise exist. Creating a wiki about a local issue has the potential to precipitate a public that can inform itself, stage debates, even organize collective action.

This position affirms the notion that it is only in a public sphere that the exercising of voice is engendered. The Internet therefore, enables the citizens to forge alliances where they can congregate as a public to voice out their opinions on matters that are central to their existence as citizens of a nation. As such, the communication technologies that drive the Web enable citizens to explore new forms of interaction with each other, and with leaders and governments. Interactive platforms such as

discussion forums, weblogs and groups turn people into commentators on news of the day. Youth-oriented online communities offer young people new ways to interact around civic issues with peers nationally or even internationally. Citizens therefore can only be active if they are well informed about issues around them, for it is by gaining knowledge through information occasioned by participation in discussions that citizens can then form strong opinions that will lead to action.

In as much as the New Media has shown so much potential for the development of democracy, it is very important to be very cautious of its celebrated possibilities. People need to be very careful about spreading the idea that the networking of the Internet is magical in some way and influential to bringing about a people centred democracy without mentioning the rigorous hard work that needs to be done in real life before harvesting the benefits of the democratizing power otherwise risk becoming unwitting agents of commodification. James Carey (1989) posits that:

...despite the manifest failure of technology to resolve pressing social issues over the last century, contemporary intellectuals continue to see revolutionary potentials in the latest technological gadgets that are pictured as a force outside history and politics... despite the shortcomings of town meetings, newspaper telegraph, telegraph, wireless and television to create the conditions of a new Athens, contemporary advocates of technological liberation regularly describe a new postmodern age of instantaneous daily plebiscitary democracy through a computerized system of electronic voting and opinion polling.

From the above, Carey raises caution about the much professed potential of the electronic media towards democracy in the light of the various shortcomings encountered by the use of earlier media forms employed in an attempt to advance democratic principles. However, what he has failed to consider is that the Internet, unlike other forms, can help citizens break the monopoly that has been enjoyed by the powers behind the broadcast paradigm; the owners of television networks, newspaper syndicates and publishing conglomerates. This is occasioned by the 'many to many'

information sharing capabilities of the Internet which empowers every user to be a producer as well as consumer of information.

Amongst the concerns which one can find associated with democratised publishing of information on the Internet, is the loss of certainty about authority and credibility. We can no longer trust the author to guarantee the veracity of work. As such, today's media navigators must develop critical skills in order to find their way through the oceans of information, misinformation, and disinformation now available. The ability to analyse, investigate, and argue about what we read, see, and hear is an essential survival skill. Some bloggers can and do spread the most outrageously inaccurate information; it is up to the readers and, most significantly, other bloggers to actively question the questionable.

Furthermore, Rheingold (2002:243) adds his voice to the concerns of the ever increasing reliance and belief in the democratic potentials of the Internet. He argues that:

The great weakness of the idea of electronic democracy is that it can be more easily commodified than explained. The commercialisation and commodification of public discourse is only one of the grave problems posed by the increasing sophistication of communications media. The net that is a marvellous lateral network can also be used as a kind of invincible yet inescapable cage.

Users can become lost in the ideas of a hyper-real environment and begin to forget that the Internet only conveys an illusion of being in a town meeting. Therefore, problems arise when we forget about the illusion that is created by the Internet. When technology itself grows powerful enough to make the illusions increasingly realistic, as the Net promises to do in years to come, the necessity for continuing to question reality grows even more acute.

Nevertheless, as citizens embrace the use of information technologies, scholars have continued to turn their attention to the impact of the Internet on various aspects of society. In 2008, Hun Myoung Park and James L. Perry carried out a study of the American election to determine whether the Internet really facilitates civic engagement. To effectively ascertain the goal of the study, civic engagement was categorized into Action Oriented Civic Engagement and Deliberative Civic Engagement. The study analyzed nationwide survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) collected in election years of 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2004. These years (1996, 1998, 2000, and 2004) were chosen by Perry and Park (2008) because the question of Internet use for political information appears only in these four years. The data set was extracted from the cumulative data file of ANES from 1948 through 2004. As a method of analysis, the study employed the propensity score matching method and the recursive bivariate probit model to deal with the missing data problem, endogeneity, and simultaneity. Findings from the study reveal that:

Internet use for political information has a positive influence on civic engagement in the public sphere. Its impact is not, however, the same for all forms of engagements. Deliberative and non-electoral action-oriented engagements are substantially influenced by Internet use for political information. However, Internet use, despite its statistical significance, does not make a big difference in electoral action-oriented engagement. As a dominant information and communication technology, the Internet appears to facilitate citizen deliberation and non-electoral activities rather than mobilize citizens to take part in electoral action-oriented activities, such as financial contributions and attendance at a campaign rally. Endogeneity matters in deliberative engagement but not much in action-oriented engagement. Deliberative engagement and Internet use appear reciprocal and jointly determined rather than one causing the other (Park and Perry 2008:259).

While the study seems to have made considerable contribution in terms of determining revealing that the Internet has a positive effect on civic engagement, it falls short in terms of the source of data used to draw its conclusion. The conclusion was arrived at using secondary data sources which were already sources by a different research with.

While there appears to be a similarity between the study conducted by Park and Perry (2008) and this one, the major point of departure lies in its focus on Internet use by Nigerian youth as a means of enhancing citizenship.

Also, Innocent Chiluiwa in 2012 carried out a study of political discourse in the new media, particularly as it reflects the roles and rights of citizens in Nigerian society. The study examined political participation by Nigerians in a popular online political discussion forum Nolitics hosted on the popular website *Naijapals*. The study conceptualized political participation as a form of discursive social practice. Using the Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis as a tool for data collecting and analysis as a framework for analysis, the study examines responses and comments of users to issues raised in the discussion forum. The study concluded that:

...the emergence of online social media like weblogs and discussion forums is enabling Nigerian citizens to be involved in political debates much more than ever before. As such, it suggests that more voices are being heard, urgent social problems are being discussed, and more people are participating in political debates: nothing of this was possible during the era of the military dictatorship. These new form of political participation are likely to increase, given the awareness that has already been created and the number of bloggers that are getting involved (Chiluiwa 2012:85).

Chiluiwa's submission above shows that the Internet is influential in engendering civic engagement amongst citizens. Similarly, Daniel Bawa carried out a research on "The Influence of Social Networking on Student Associations' Electioneering Campaign." The scope of the study covered the role of the Social Networking in realizing democratic culture in the political development of Theatre and Performing Arts Students Association (TAPASA) with particular emphasis on two Facebook groups (Shamagana Justice Vanguard and Emeka Loveday for President group). Using

questionnaire and group comments on facebook as the major instruments of data collection, the study revealed that:

1. A.B.U students are highly aware of and use of Social Networking Sites
2. A.B.U students are interested in the endless possibilities the Social Media offers
3. There is a growing awareness and interest in the involvement of ABU students in democratic communication
4. The Social Network holds the potential of engendering democratic culture among A.B.U students
5. So far, of the Social Networking Site on democratic development among students is relatively low.

The findings of Bawa (2014) above align with those of Park and Perry (2012) as well as that of Chilwa (2014), showing the potentials of the Internet in developing a more conscious and active society.

Approaching Internet use from the perspective of education, Liman (2014) carried out a study on “New Media in Higher Education: A study of Social Media Use Among Students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study aimed at providing an understanding of the usefulness and efficacy of Social Media in the educational enterprise in Nigeria. The study revealed that there are both positive and negative effects of the use of social media by students of higher institutions and concluded by noting that:

The development of New Media technologies has apparently resulted in a more heterogeneous environment of culture and knowledge and the notion of Social Media as bearer of a single set of ideologies and beliefs or as uniformly harmful can no longer be sustained or justified. As such, educators should necessarily aim to develop young people’s understanding and positive attitude in the area of utilization and participation in the media culture that surrounds them” (Liman 2014:150).

However, while the above mentioned studies have covered different areas of internet use by users, there is still a void left to fill in terms of its place in enhancing citizenship.

While Park and Perry (2008), Chilwa (2014), and Bawa (2014), Liman (2014) were focused on the Internet's capacity to enhance civic engagement, political participation, improve democratic culture and foster education; there appears to be no significant contribution made in terms of the Internet's capacity to enhance active citizenship amongst citizens. More than ever before citizens are finding more spaces for expression, thus, what is the implication of this for the development of active citizenship especially in Nigeria today? That is the gap in knowledge which this study will attempt to fill.

2:8 Theoretical Framework

The phenomenon of the New Media exists in a broad spectrum, making its presence felt in several purviews of communication. As such there are quite a number of theories that could be suitable for the foregrounding of this study. Consequently, since the focus of this study is geared towards ascertaining the possible impact of the Internet on citizenship, the theoretical framework of this study will be premised on Technological Determinism and the Social Shaping of Technology.

The basic idea of technological determinism is conceived around the principle that technology shapes society in some way which includes social practices such as learning (Jones 2001). Similarly according to Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006), technological determinism is "the belief that technologies have an overwhelming power to drive human actions." However, some social critics maintain that communication media can change everything else in society. In this view, technology drives social change, so it is sometimes called technological determinism. Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006:21) again notes;

We can think of technological determinism as an approach that identifies technology, or technological developments, as the central causal element in processes of social change. In other words, technological determinists emphasize the “overwhelming and inevitable” effects of technologies on users, organizations, and societies.

Sociologist Claude Fischer (1992) characterises the most prominent forms of technological determinism as “billiard ball” approaches, in which technology is seen as an external force introduced into a social situation, producing a series of ricochet effects. From this perspective, technology causes things to happen, albeit often through a series of intermediary steps. For example, the invention of the automobile might be said to cause a reduction in food prices because the automobile “reduced the demand for horses, which reduced the demand for feed grain, which increased the land available for planting edible grains,” making food less expensive (Fischer 1992: 8). The problem, however, is that there is no human agency in this type of analysis. The technological determinist’s view is all structural constraint and no human action. It argues that technological properties demand certain results and that actual people do not use technologies so much as people are used by them. In this view, society is transformed according to a technical, rather than a human agenda.

The most famous media technological determinist, Marshal McLuhan, argues that print and electronic media are truly revolutionary, an idea captured in his famous aphorism the “medium is the message.” For McLuhan, content is a meaningless triviality;

Whether the light is being used for brain surgery or night baseball is a matter of indifference. It could be argued that these activities are in some way the ‘content’ of the electric light, since they could not exist without the electric light. This fact merely underlines the point that ‘the medium is the message’ because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and forms of human association and action. The content or uses of such media are as diverse as they are ineffectual in shaping the form of human association. Indeed, it is only too typical that the ‘content’ of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium (McLuhan, 1995:152).

He proposes that new communication technologies determine culture and that it is the form of the media rather than their content that matters. For example, in McLuhan's view, the invention of the printing press led to the rise of the scientific method and later to our technological society, by forcing thinkers to put their words in linear order and their arguments in a logical progression just like the words on a printed page. This led to thinking about the neutral world in the same linear fashion, instilling the notion that it, too, had a beginning and an end, causes and effects. Bimber (1996:83), however, argues that 'some kinds of technology could not happen without others and that some kinds of social organisation could not happen without certain technological developments.' This idea of the importance of sequence recurs throughout accounts that have been held up as examples of technological determinism (Lawson 2004:4).

Sociological approaches to technology do not ignore the inherent capacities of different media. As we have seen, the technical properties of each medium place constraints on the ways people can use them by providing parameters within which human agents must operate and by more readily lending themselves to particular applications. But humans have agencies: they can act and they have a range of options with respect to how they use media technology. As a result, the development and application of new media technologies is neither fixed nor fully predictable (Douglas 1987). Instead, a sociological approach emphasizes that media technologies are embedded in ongoing social processes that affect their evolution. For example, the Internet is subject to social forces that help to shape how it functions and how it is used. These forces include legal regulations, social norms, and market pressures, as well as the medium's inherent

technical properties (Lessig 1999). Together, these forces have shaped the Internet, just as they have shaped every other communications medium.

Thus, looking at the development of media technologies entails thinking simultaneously about the technological and the social (Bijker and Law 1992). To understand the relationship between media and society, the most important question is not, "What does a new technology do to people?" but "How do people use the new technology?" This however brings us to the social shaping of technology. The social shaping of technology posits that technology can best be understood as the product of social preferences, bureaucratic mandates and economic pressures. In the words of Robin A. Williams and David Edge (1996), "Central to Social Shaping of Technology is the idea that there are 'choices' (though not necessarily conscious choices) inherent in both the design of individual artifacts and systems, and in the direction or trajectory of innovation programs."

The term social shaping, borrowed from science and technology studies, is usually associated with the critique of strong technological determinism and a shift toward strong social determinism in the 1970s and 1980s in that field (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999). Raymond Williams notes that, research and development have been assumed as self-generating. The new technologies are invented, as it were, in an independent sphere and then it creates new societies or new human conditions' (1974: 13). To totally agree with the above position would mean that the Internet, for instance, was developed without recurs to the social processes of human society.

Although recent writing about New Media in cultural studies and media arts and design often takes a technologically deterministic tone (e.g. Manovich, 2001; Poster, 1990; Stone, 1995), New Media researchers virtually united in rejecting accounts in which technological innovation is the cause and society is the effect (Woolgar, 2002). Instead, they have adopted the counterview that ‘the technological, instead of being a sphere separate from social life, is part of what makes society possible. In other words, it is constitutive of society (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999: 23). Livingstone (2005:67) thus argues that ‘every aspect of society; from work to family life, from politics to entertainment, from religion to sexuality, is affected by innovations in communication technologies.’ A firm contributing factor to this is the fact that communication is central to human existence and the innovations in communication are clearly manifestations not separate from social life but part of what makes society possible and is itself constitutive of society (Gurevitch 2005:234). Therefore, to interrogate the impact of the Internet on citizenship would require that we consider the Internet as an integral part of human society.

This social-determinist view ‘migrated’ to communication research, cultural studies, information studies and other fields in the 1980s and by the early 1990s, it had displaced the technologically deterministic ‘new society’ discourse common in communication research previously. It has subsequently become the dominant perspective in New Media studies (Boczkowski 1999).

By social shaping, we mean to suggest more of a mutual shaping process in which technological development and social practices are co-determining (Boczkowski, 2004). People always have choices about how technologies are created, understood and

used. Thus, when certain technologies become very extensive, embedded and taken for granted (e.g. voice telephony, broadcast television, newspaper publishing, and increasingly, the Internet), they can also constrain or limit the range of available choices. This too is a social process, as Agre (2004: 27) points out when he observes that, 'every system affords a certain range of interpretations, and that range is determined by the discourses that have been inscribed into it'. Consequently, technology, action and social context are inseparable phenomena, each influencing the other. The Internet, as we have it today, is in itself a social ecology which facilitates social, economic, as well as political processes that helps to transform society and likewise give added meaning to people's existence.

Thus, it is the premise of this study that the New Media is a product of the society and constitutive of society in itself. With the ever increasing presence of the Internet in the lives of citizens, it is important to enquire into the possibilities of it enhancing citizenship. The theory of Technological Determinism and Social Shaping will be instrumental in helping the research ascertain that technology has a crucial role to play in changes that occur within society. It will also help reach the conclusion on the possible role of the Internet in the enhancement of citizenship in Nigeria. Therefore, it is the strong opinion of this researcher that the theory of technological determinism and the social shaping of technology provide the right framework for the foregrounding of this study as they both bother on social change and also look at the effects of technology on users.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the procedures employed by the researcher to achieve the aim and objectives of this study. It is imperative to note that this study aims at exploring the role of the Internet in the enhancement of effective citizenship amongst students of two Nigerian Universities. As such, for every academic research, it is pertinent to lay out the plan of how the researcher intends to generate data for the smooth realisation of the aim and objectives of the study.

According to Henning (2004:36), research methodology can be described as “a coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the ability to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the researcher purpose.” Furthermore, Burns and Grove (2003:488) observe that “research methodology includes the design, setting, sample, methodological limitations, and the data collection and analysis techniques in a study.” Thus, when we talk of research methodology we do not only talk of the research methods, but also consider the logic behind the methods we use in the context of our research study and explain why we are using a particular method or technique and why we are not using others, so that research results are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher himself or by others.

There are two broad approaches to research which were employed in this study; these are the qualitative and quantitative research methods. Strauss & Corbin (1990:19) define qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings that are not

arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Ary et al (1990:445) assert that the qualitative method seeks to understand human and social behaviour from the “insider’s” perspective, that is, as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting, for instance, school, community or group. Qualitative approach to research, therefore, is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. Research in such a situation is a function of a researcher’s insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which is not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis. By employing this approach, which is people centred, the researcher developed an understanding of the people’s feelings about the Internet and how it affects their lives as citizens. It also helped the researcher to generate an in-depth account that presents a lively picture of the research participants’ reality.

Quantitative research method, on the other hand, has to do with “the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect.” According to Cohen *et al* (2000), quantitative research is defined as ‘social research that employs empirical methods and empirical statements.’ By empirical statements, he means a descriptive statement about the case as it “exists” in the “real world” rather than what it “ought” to be. Typically, empirical statements are expressed in numerical terms. Another factor in quantitative research is that empirical evaluations are applied. Empirical evaluations are defined as a form that seeks to determine the degree to which a specific program or policy empirically fulfils or does not fulfil a particular standard or norm.

Furthermore, Creswell (1994) has given a very concise definition of quantitative approach research as a type of research that is 'explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods.' Paying close attention to the above definition, one can draw three key points from it. 'Explaining phenomena' which is the first, is a vital component of all research, be it quantitative or qualitative. When we set out to do some research, we are always looking to explain something. The specificity of quantitative research lies in the next part of the definition. In quantitative, numerical data is sought. This is closely connected to the final part of the definition: analysis using mathematically based methods. In order to be able to use mathematically based methods, data has to be in numerical form.

The last part of the definition refers to the use of mathematically based methods, in particular statistics, to analyse the data. This is what people usually refer to as quantitative research, and is often seen as the most important part of quantitative studies. This is a bit of a misconception. While it is important to use the right data analysis tools, it is even more important to use the right research design and data collection instruments. Therefore, using a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches in this study helped improve evaluation by ensuring that one type of data is balanced by the strengths of another so as to ensure validity and credibility of findings. Also the quantitative approach allowed the researcher obtain and scrutinise data from the direct parties (students) who use the Internet. However, because one cannot achieve perfection by using just the qualitative approach, as noted by Cohen *et al* (2000), a combination of qualitative approach becomes necessary to help provide a description of characteristics of people not on numbers and amounts.

3.1 Research Design

Research design has to do with an overall guidance for the collection and analysis of data for this study. This is important because it plays a critical link between the theory and argument that informed the research and the empirical data collected. A choice of research design ‘reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process and this of course will have considerable influence on lower-level methodological procedures such as sampling and statistical packages’ (Bryman and Bell 2007:40).

Mouton (1996:107) avers that a research design is a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. Huyasamen (1994:20) similarly describes research design as “the plan or blueprint, which specifies how research participants are going to be obtained and what is going to be done to them with a view to reaching conclusions about the research problem.” As such, a research design should be able to give an overview of how the research will be conducted and how data will be collected. More so, a research design should show how the data will be analysed and presented to the reader to be able to benefit from the research in the real field of education. The research design enables the reader to follow and evaluate the researcher’s line of reasoning.

Premised on the above, this study adopted the survey research design which was carried out in both quantitative and qualitative manner. This is consequent upon the aim of the study and the realisation of the set objectives. To ascertain the effect of the Internet on the behavioural pattern of youths as well as determine its effect on citizenship required a research method that is flexible but potent enough to

accommodate collection of data from large numbers of people and yet make the results verifiable. As such, using the survey method helped the researcher account for data collected from the two different universities within which the study was carried out. Therefore, the survey research method can be seen as a research method in which quantitative information is systematically collected from a relatively large sample taken from a population” (De Leeuw *et al* 2008:2). It is any activity that collects information in an organised and methodical manner about characteristics of interest from some or all units of a population using well-defined concepts, methods and procedures, and compiles such information into a useful summary form.

3.1.0 Research Population

The population of this study is drawn from youths/students from the two selected universities already spelt out in the scope of this study. The total number of registered undergraduate students in ABU for the 2013/2014 academic session stood at 30,657 with 9,540 female students and 21,117 male students within the 12 faculties in the university (Management Information System Unit (MIS) A.B.U Zaria, 2013). Bayero University Kano, on the other hand, has a total of 24, 033 students from the 12 faculties in operation within the university (Directorate of Examinations, Admissions and Records BUK, Kano).

This research concentrated on four faculties each from both universities, making a total of eight (8) faculties. There are a number of reasons for limiting the population to the students of both ABU and BUK. Students of both institutions are exposed to the Internet and constitute a large enough population for the study. The students of these

two universities also fit into the description of youths as Digital Natives/users of the Net.

The limitation of the scope to these two would facilitate the easy interpretation of data. The sample was limited to undergraduate students because the study focuses on youth and therefore this helps limit the age range of respondents to young adults. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between age and use of the Internet (Liman 2014); as such it would make much more meaning to consider a particular segment of the population which constitutes the highest rate of Internet users.

According to Saumure and Given (2008), population, as a concept in research methods, refers to every individual who fits the criteria that the researcher has laid out for research participants. Therefore, population is perhaps most easily understood when it is contrasted with the concept of a sample. A sample is different from a population because it includes only a portion of the population. Saumure and Given (2008) further clarifies:

In the case where the researcher uses a sample of participants, the researcher may have decided that it is not financially or chronologically feasible to study the whole population of, for example, unwed mothers in Canada. Hence, he or she may choose instead to study a subset of that population (644).

3.1.1 Sample Size

The sample size is the number of data sources that are actually selected from the total population. Basic principles of statistical sampling demonstrate that the accuracy of an estimate from a probability sample is strongly influenced by the size of the sample itself. As such, a total number of 1, 000 respondents were sampled. The sample size

was drawn from eight (8) different faculties (four each) from both universities as determined by a systematic sampling method. The faculties are further broken down into departments using a random sampling method and a sample fraction was used to determine the number of respondents from each department. fourteen departments in total were sampled (seven from each university). From ABU, the sample was drawn from the following faculties as determined by a systematic sampling method: Administration, Law, Social Sciences and Medicine; while that of BUK was drawn from the Faculty of Arts, Education, Sciences and Agriculture. The importance of sample size in determining the accuracy of the results is because larger samples generate more precise estimates and smaller samples produce less accurate estimates regardless of the size of the larger population (Morgan 2008:798).

3.1.2 Sampling Technique

A sample is the set of actual data sources that are drawn from a larger population of potential data sources. Within the broad process of sampling, choosing the actual sample is the second step in a two-step process, which begins with defining the population that is eligible for inclusion in the sample. Approaches to selecting samples are typically divided between probability sampling and non-probability sampling, where the former uses a group's size in the population as the sole influence on how many of its members will be included in the sample, while the latter concentrates on selecting sample members according to their ability to meet specific criteria. This study made use of the probability sampling method.

According to Barreiro and Albandoz (2001), one of the main advantages of probability sampling is that it allows each unit to be randomly selected and allows for each unit's

‘inclusion probability’ to be calculated, leading to the production of reliable estimates as well as sampling error. Therefore, inferences can be made about the population. The probability sampling method becomes necessary for this study because the study population comprises units (students) who belong to groups (faculties and departments) and as such probability sampling helped the researcher to determine the number of students to sample from each department based on the size (number of students in each department).

The study made use of the multistage sampling method in determining the sample size. According to Jawale (2012), ‘Multistage sampling involves, combining various probability techniques in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The process of estimation is carried out stage by stage, using the most appropriate methods of estimation at each stage.’ Under multistage sampling, the first stage may be to select large primary sampling units. Each of these units is further divided into new units called secondary units. This becomes necessary resulting from the fact that students within both universities belong to faculties and departments and are easily located based on these stratifications.

To determine the faculties to be studied in both ABU and BUK the study made use of the Systematic Sampling Method and to determine the departments to be studied, the study employed the Random Sampling Method. A systematic sample is obtained by selecting one unit on a random basis and choosing additional elementary units at evenly spaced intervals until the desired number of units is obtained (Mugo 2002). In order for systematic sampling to work, it is essential that the units in the population be randomly ordered, at least with respect to the characteristics you are measuring. Barreiro and

Albandoz (2001) note that systematic sampling is advantageous because it extends the sample to all the population and is also very easy to apply.

According to Mugo (2002), the sample procedure for systematic sampling involves the following:

1. Number the units in population from 1 to N
2. Decide on the n (sample size) that is required
3. Select an interval size $k = N/n$
4. Randomly select an integer between 1 to k
5. Finally, take every kth unit

As such, the faculties within both universities are numbered one to twelve. The interval size, k, is equal to $N/n = 12/4 = 3$. Three, therefore, is selected as the random integer from 1-3 and the sample faculties were gotten by picking every nth number beginning from the third on the list.

Table 1. Sampled faculties from Bayero University, Kano

S/no	Faculties	Student Population	Selected Sample
1	Agriculture	785	
2	Allied Health Science	403	
3	Arts and Islamic Studies	2,945	Arts and Islamic Studies
4	Biochemical Sciences	622	
5	Clinical Sciences	1240	
6	Computer Sciences & Information Technology	756	Computer Science & Information Technology
7	Dentistry	172	
8	Education	5290	
9	Engineering	1520	Engineering
10	Law	1048	
11	Sciences	3453	
12	Social and Management Sciences	5799	Social and Management Sciences

Source: Researcher's field work 2015

Table 2: Sampled faculties from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

S/no	Faculties	Student population	Selected sample
1	Administration	3678	Administration
2	Agriculture	518	
3	Arts	2845	
4	Education	4871	Education
5	Engineering	4235	
6	Environmental design	2526	
7	Law	1481	Law
8	Medicine	2031	
9	Pharmaceutical Sciences	873	
10	Sciences	7122	Sciences
11	Social sciences	3403	
12	Veterinary Medicine	544	

Source: Researcher's field work 2015

The four faculties identified from both universities have a total of 41 departments respectively (20 from BUK and 21 from ABU). To ascertain the number of departments to be sampled, the study used the percentage of four (4) faculties out of 12, which is 33%. Thirty three percent (33%) of 20 and 21 respectively approximately amounts to seven (7).

In determining the departments to be studied from each faculty already identified, the study made use of the random sampling method. Jewale (2012) notes that a random sample is chosen in such a way that all individuals in population have an equal chance of being included in it. Because random samples are probability samples, this creates the possibility for generalizing to a larger population, but this generalisation is not absolute (Morgan 2008). However, Jewale (2012:186) argues that “random sampling is considered the least biased method of sampling and thus, according to the procedures of critical multiplism, becomes the method of choice.”

The procedure of selection of random samples includes; drawing by lot numbered slips of paper from a container, using tables of random numbers, and using roulette wheel (Jewale 2012). The study adopted the drawing by lot approach to determine the seven (7) departments to be sampled from the various faculties chosen. This is because the drawing by lot allowed equal opportunity for each of the twelve faculties selected without bias. Using the drawing by lot technique, the names of the departments were written on pieces of paper and shuffled in a container from which the researcher picked.

To further determine the sample size of each department, the study employed the use of a sample fraction. The sample fraction is decided by dividing the desired sample size by the entire population. As such the sampling fraction is $n/N = 300/3,289 = 15\%$ for BUK and $700/7,748 = 6.5\%$ for ABU.

Table 3: BUK Sampled Departments and Selected Samples

S/no	Faculty	Departments	Random sample	Population	Selected Samples 9.12%
1	Arts & Islamic Studies	Arabic			
		English & French	English & French	414	38
		History			
		Islamic Studies & Shariah			
		Linguistics			
		Nigerian Languages			
		Theatre & Film Studies	Theatre & film Studies	44	4
2	Computer Science & Information Technology	Computer Science	Computer science	756	69
3	Engineering	Agricultural Engineering	Agricultural engineering	157	14
		Civil Engineering			
		Electrical Engineering	Electrical	646	59
		Mechanical Engineering			
		Mechatronic Engineering			
4	Social & Management Science	Accounting			
		Business Administration			
		Economics	Economics	1024	93
		Geography	Geography	248	23
		Mass Communication			
		Political Science			
		Sociology			
			TOTAL	3, 289	300

Source: Researcher's field work 2015

Table 4: ABU Sampled Departments and selected Samples

S/no	Faculty	Departments	Random Sample	Population	Selected Samples 9.3%
1	Administration	Accounting			
		Business administration	Business administration	910	82
		Local Government & Development Studies			
		Public Administration	Public Administration	1077	98
2	Education	Arts & Social Science	Arts & Social Science	1381	125
		Educational Psychology & Counselling			
		Library & Info Science			
		Physical & Health Education			
		Science Education			
		Vocational & Technical Education	Vocational & Technical Education	578	52
3	Law	Civil Law	Civil Law	822	74
		Islamic Law			
4	Sciences	Biochemistry			
		Biological Sciences	Biological sciences	1155	104
		Chemistry			
		Geography			
		Geology			
		Mathematics	Mathematics	1825	165
		Microbiology			
		Physics			
		Textile Science & Technology			
			Total	7,748	700

Source: Researcher's field work 2015

As such, it is on this basis that the study drew conclusion on the situation of today's youths as regards citizenship and how the internet has helped them in expressing this status. It is hoped that this method helped to provide the necessary data to draw inferences that could add to the growing knowledge on the New Media and development studies in Nigeria.

3.2 Research Instruments

Essentially there are two basic forms of data collection suitable for this research; those with and without an interviewer. In other words: interviews and questionnaire. Interview surveys can either be in person or over the telephone, and there is a large variation across countries in the use of these methods. On the other hand, 'a questionnaire (or form) is a group or sequence of questions designed to obtain information on a subject from a respondent' (Statistics Canada 2003:3). This research therefore, relied heavily on the latter method as its key instrument of data collection. It also used of supporting data collected through the, Focused Group Discussions, as well as Observation method.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The study used questionnaire as its major instrument of data collection. Consequently, the copies of questionnaire were administered to students of both universities to elicit useful data on the nature of student's Internet use and the possible role it plays in facilitating the effective expression of citizenship. One thousand (1000) copies of questionnaire were distributed to respondents in both universities, 700 in ABU and 300 in BUK, making it a total of 1000 copies for both universities. The study used the open ended and closed questionnaire approaches. Open questions are those where response

categories are not provided to the respondent. The respondent provides an exact numerical figure or answers the question in his or her own words. For the closed ended questionnaire, questions are often exhaustive. Closed-end questions allow a limited number of answers, leaving no room for additional information to be volunteered; they require only recognition and a choice from among answer options (Reja, *etal* 2003).

The deployment of questionnaire in this research is vital because questionnaire played a central role in data collection process and has a major impact on data quality and influence the objectives which the research sought to meet. According to Statistics Canada, (2003:3) questionnaire enables the researcher to elicit detailed information from respondents who may not be easily within their reach. this method is suitable for this research because the study deals with two universities and requires responses from a cross section of students so as to be able to ascertain the impact which the Internet has on them as organic citizens.

For a research with such a considerable huge scope, the questionnaire becomes necessary because it will provide the researcher with enough data from the two different universities which the scope of the study covers. The questionnaire method is also advantageous to this research because of the following reasons:

1. It allowed respondents to maintain their anonymity and reconsider their responses.
2. Since the research is a survey, it enabled the researcher to have access to responses from a considerably large number of respondents.
3. It provided useful data for the researcher to draw inferences and make general conclusions as it relates to citizenship and Internet use in Nigeria.

Accordingly, the technique of data collection in this research will be the self-enumeration technique. This is most adequate considering the scope of the research as the researcher might not be able to be with each respondent to administer and retrieve back the question at the same time. Hence, for self-enumeration, the questionnaire would be less complex and shorter compared to that of the interviewer-assisted methods.

The questionnaire carried all relevant information (instructions, contact information, examples) to avoid ambiguity and make the questionnaire easy to understand by respondents. That is, the question should sound natural when asked out loud. With self-enumeration and personal interviews, more response categories are possible than with telephone interviews which should be kept short.

3.2.2 Observational Method

Observation is one of the oldest and most fundamental research method approaches. It involves collecting impressions of the world using all of one's senses, especially looking and listening, in a systematic and purposeful way to learn about a phenomenon of interest. Although observational research can be employed on its own, it is often used with other methods such as interviewing and document analysis. Observational research is used in both quantitative and qualitative research, and those working somewhere along the continuum between these two approaches use observation (Palys 2003:212).

As already established, the researcher observed students of the two universities under study as regards their use of the Internet. The researcher also visited cafes within both

schools to observe and collect physical data on students' preferences and use of the Internet. It is however important to note that 'observation is very dependent on the ability of the researcher to interpret data through what they know' (McKechnie 2008:298). This method is useful to this study because it allowed the researcher to have direct contact with participants though indirect data collection methods such as audio or video recording. Nevertheless, the research employed this method amongst the company of other methods mentioned to ensure that the researcher's bias did not affect the overall findings of the study.

3.2.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Four (4) small focus group discussions (two for each university under study) comprising six (6) students each were used by the researcher to get firsthand information. Participants for the discussion were drawn from the sample population already determined above. The composition of the FGD was made up of both male and female students, selected from 300 and 400 level. This was done with the understanding that a focus group must comprise respondents with similar characteristics. As such selecting students based on levels helped in eliminating the risk of violating the principle of FGD. The focal point of the discussion was to elicit responses from the participants on Internet use and Citizenship. A focused group is a type of interview that allows for participants to describe their experiences and share their perspectives with a group of peers as well as the researcher. The defining element of focus groups is the use of the participants' discussion as a form of data collection. In particular, there is no requirement to reach consensus or produce a decision; instead, it is the participants' conversation about the research topic that is of interest (Morgan 2008:352). The purpose of this is to ensure that the participants have an in-depth

understanding of the topic – Internet and the enhancement of Effective Citizenship Amongst Students of Selected Northern Nigerian Universities. It also provided the researcher with a clearer perspective of the participants’ opinions on the topic. After the questionnaire method had been administered and the data collated and analysed, the focused group discussion was then carried out and responses were analysed independently.

3.2.4 Use of Library and Internet Sources

The library proves to be very significant in the realisation of the study objectives. This was be greatly employed to enrich the review of literature and vital aspects of the research, especially in the area of Internet use and citizenship. The availability of sources online also makes the Internet a rich resource for this research. This stems from the fact that the Internet enabled the researchers to access a wider array of material (eBooks, journal articles, emails, web postings, etc) from around the globe.

3.3 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

Reliability and validity is a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research. If we see the idea of testing as a way of information elicitation, then the most important test of any qualitative study is its quality. As such, to test the reliability and validity of the instruments it was sent to the data unit of the National Bureau of Statistics for verification to ensure the questions reflected the objectives and research questions. The purpose of this was to identify and correct flaws in the instrument such as ambiguous instructions and questions.

3.4 Research Schedule

Drawing up a schedule of activities to be undertaken by the researcher is very important to the success of every research. In order to conveniently and successfully achieve the gathering of data for this study, the researcher applied below schedule:

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State			
	ACTIVITY	TARGET	ASSISTANTS
DAY 1	Questionnaire administration	Administration/ Law	4 research assistants
DAY 2	Questionnaire administration	Education sciences	4 research assistants
DAY 3	Focus Group Discussion	Administration/ Law	2 research assistants, 1 camera man
DAY 4	Focus group discussion	Education/ Sciences	2 research assistants, 1 camera man
DAY 5	Interview		1 research assistant

Bayero University Kano, Kano State			
	ACTIVITY	TARGET	ASSISTANTS
DAY 1	Questionnaire administration	Arts & Islamic Studies/ Social & Management Science	4 research assistants
DAY 2	Questionnaire administration	Engineering/ Information Science & Technology	4 research assistants
DAY 3	Focus group discussion	Arts & Islamic Science/ Social & Management Science	2 research assistants, 1 camera man
DAY 4	Focus group discussion	Engineering/ Information Science & Technology	2 research assistants, 1 camera man
DAY 5	Interview		1 research assistant

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves summarising the data and interpreting their meaning in a way that provides clear answers to questions that initiated the survey. It often consists of interpreting tables and various summary measures, such as frequency distributions, means and ranges, or more sophisticated analyses are performed. The analyst may just want to describe the observed units, in which case all tools from elementary and intermediate statistics are available (tables, diagrams and charts, elementary measures of location and spread, basic modelling, classification models, etc.). This research used both the qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis in analysing the data gathered. Content analysis was used to analyse the data gotten from interviews, focus group discussions and observation, while the data gotten from questionnaire is analysed using a five point Likert scale with a mean of 3.0. The scale has the following values:

Strongly Agree = 5

Agree = 4

Strongly disagree = 3

Disagree = 2

Don't know = 1

$$\text{Mean: } \frac{5+4+3+2+1}{5} = 3$$

The data is therefore presented using charts, tables and diagrams to reduce and organise data so as to produce findings which the researcher can very well interpret.

In conclusion, research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem and may be understood as a science of studying how research is done

scientifically. The methods and steps enumerated above are the tools with which the researcher used to fully achieve the aim and objectives of this study. Consequent upon this, it is believed that this study did achieve its set objectives and also make available plausible results that will contribute to the growing knowledge in the area of New Media and development studies in Nigeria and the world at large.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Data Presentation

This chapter presents data gathered from respondents through the instruments of data collection employed in this study. As noted in the previous chapters, the respondents of the study comprise undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU) and Bayero University, Kano (BUK). The study used the mixed method design for data analysis. The quantitative and qualitative data were equally treated. The quantitative data gathered through questionnaire was analysed first, with the qualitative data (from focus group discussions) used to support or refute the findings of the quantitative data.

The quantitative data gathered was interpreted and analysed in line with the objectives of the study and inferences as well as deductions were drawn from the results with regards to the subject of investigation. The inferences and deductions were drawn using the Likert scale with a mean criterion of 3.0 used to validate the agreement of respondents to questions. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students of both ABU and BUK (700 copies for ABU and 300 copies for BUK). A total number of 863 respondents filled and returned copies of the questionnaire from both universities; 583 out of 700 for ABU and 280 out of 300 for BUK making a total of 863.

The data from the questionnaire was statistically analysed using the SPSS programme for the data analysis. Descriptive analysis was therefore used to provide a summary of the responses and the information was presented numerically. The results are displayed

using charts and tables and a summary of data collected was done for each table. The findings are discussed according to the six sections of the questionnaire and then with reference to the objectives of the study. The six sections of the questionnaire were meant to gather information about the following:

- i. Section A: Personal (biographic) data
- ii. Section B: Rate of Internet Use
- iii. Section C: Level of information acquired on the Net as citizens
- iv. Section D: Expression of citizenship on the Net
- v. Section E: The role of Internet in the academic pursuit of students
- vi. Section F: Ways ABU and BUK students express citizenship

Respondents for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were chosen from the seven sampled departments in each university as stated in the chapter three of this work. Seven research assistants were deployed to administer the questionnaire to respondents and they also assisted in inviting respondents for the focus group discussion sessions. Resulting from this, two focus groups comprising seven (7) participants (for each discussion) was carried out in both ABU and BUK making a total number of four FGD. The data from the FGD was recorded (audio), transcribed and analysed using the research questions generated from the objectives of the study. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data were compared with existing evidence from the literature review in order to help establish a high level of confidence in this research.

4.1 Data Analysis

This section presents the analysis of data gathered from respondents through questionnaire and analysed using the SPSS programme for data analysis.

4.1.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Characteristics	ABU	BUK
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Male	405 (69.5)	182 (65.0)
Female	136 (28.3)	98 (35.0)
No response	13 (2.2)	0 (0.0)
Total	583 (100.0)	280 (100.0)

Source: Researchers field survey, 2015

The distribution above shows that out of 583 respondents to the questionnaire administered in ABU, 405 (69.5%) were male students while 136 (28.3 %) were female; however 13 (2.2%) respondents did not respond to the question. This therefore implies that while both male and female students of ABU participated in answering the question, the male students constituted the majority of respondents. The table also shows that out of the 280 respondents from BUK, 182 (65.0%) were male while 98 (35.0%) were female. This also implies that though both sexes attended to the questionnaire, the majority of respondents from BUK are male students.

Looking at data from both universities, the table therefore reveals a similar pattern in the sex distribution of respondents as majority of respondents from both ABU and BUK are male students - 69.5% and 65.0% respectively. It could also be deduced that male students use the Net more often than the female students. The disparity in use by both sexes can be attributed to the fact that the number of male students enrolled in each of the universities (both ABU and BUK) is far higher than that of the female.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

	Characteristics	ABU	BUK
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
	15-20 years	218 (37.4)	70 (25.0)
	21-25 years	232 (39.8)	154 (55.0)
	26-30 years	66 (11.3)	28 (10.0)
	31years and above	36 (6.2)	28 (10.0)
	No response	31 (5.3)	0 (0.0)
	Total	583 (100.0)	280 (100.0)

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

The distribution above shows the age categories of respondents from both universities. The table therefore shows that the age of respondents ranges from 15 years to 31 and above. For both universities, the highest age range of respondents was between 21-25 years with 232 (39.8%) for ABU and 154 (55.0%) for BUK, while the lowest respondent age were those within the age range of 31 and above with 36 (6.2%) for ABU and 28 (10.0%) respectively. Those within the age range of 15 - 20 constitute the second highest number of respondents with 232 (39.8%) and 154 (55.0%). This therefore affirms the findings made by Liman (2014) that the most active users of the Net in higher institutions are between the ages of 21 - 25. It could, however, also infer that the most active users of the Net in the universities are those within the age range of 15 – 30 years and this therefore validates the study population being undergraduate students.

Table 3. Marital Status of Respondents

	Characteristic	ABU	BUK
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
	Single	487 (83.5)	238 (85.0)
	Married	73 (12.5)	42 (15.0)
	Divorced	2 (0.3)	0 (0.0)
	Widowed	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
	None	20 (3.4)	0 (0.0)
	Total	583 (99.9)	280 (100.0)

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

The distribution in the above table shows that 487 (83.5%) of the respondents from ABU were single while 73 (12.5%) were married, 2 (0.3%) were divorced, 1 widowed and 20 (3.4%) did not for one reason or the other indicate their status. The data in the table for BUK show that 283 (85.0%) respondents were single and 42 (15.0%) were married. This therefore reveals that majority of the respondents from both universities are single. It also reveals that within the undergraduate population there exists a small group of married population.

Table 4: Departments of Respondents

Characteristic	ABU	BUK
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Agricultural Science	0 (0.0)	14 (5.0)
Arts and Social Science Education	115 (19.7)	0 (0.0)
Business Administration	80 (13.7)	0 (0.0)
Computer Science	0 (0.0)	70 (25.0)
Economics	0 (0.0)	86 (30.7)
Electrical Engineering	0 (0.0)	53 (18.9)
English Language	0 (0.0)	38 (13.6)
Geography	0 (0.0)	15 (5.4)
Law	70 (12.0)	0 (0.0)
Library and Information Science	113 (19.4)	0 (0.0)
Public administration	98 (16.8)	0 (0.0)
Sociology	55 (9.4)	0 (0.0)
Theatre and Performing Arts	0 (0.0)	4 (1.4)
Vocational and Technical Education	52 (8.9)	0 (0.0)
Total	583 (100.0)	280 (100.0)

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

It is important to note that each department had a specific number of questionnaire administered which was derived from the sampling technique employed in determining the number of respondents from each department. As such, 33% of the total population in each department is responsible for the information on table 4 above. The table hence shows that from ABU, the Department of Art and Social Science Education had a total number of 115 (19.7%) respondents, closely followed by Library and Information

Science with 113 (19.4%), Public Administration had 98 (16.8%), Law had 70 (12.0), Sociology had 55 (9.4%), Vocational & Technical Education had 52 (8.9%). While for BUK, the Department of Economics had a total number of 86 (30.7%) respondents, Computer Science had 70 (25.0%), Electrical Engineering had 53 (18.9%), English Language had 38 (13.6%), Geography had 15 (5.4) and Theatre and Performing Arts had 4 (1.4).

The table above further reveals that respondents from Library and Information Science Education constitute majority of the respondents from ABU with 115 (19.7%) while respondents from Economics constitute the majority of respondents from BUK with 25% of the sampled population. The lowest respondents from both universities were from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education with 52 (8.9%) and the Theatre and Performing Arts with 4 (1.4%) respectively.

4.1.2. The Rate of Internet Use among Nigerian Students

Table 5: Regular use of the Internet

Characteristic	ABU	BUK
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Strongly Agree	210 (36.0)	56 (20.0)
Agree	308 (52.8)	168 (60.0)
Disagree	22 (3.8)	14 (5.0)
Strongly Disagree	9 (1.5)	14 (5.0)
Don't Know	34 (5.8)	28 (10.0)
Total	583 (100.0)	280 (100.0)

Source: Researcher's field work 2015

Literatures widely suggest that the youth constitute the largest number of Internet users. The study therefore found it necessary to ascertain the rate at which students make use of the Net. The table above shows that 510 (88.0%) of the respondents from ABU agree to using the Internet regularly, 31 (5.3%) disagree, and 34 (5.8%) remained neutral. For

BUK, 224 (80.0%) of the respondents agree to using the Internet regularly, 28 (10.0%) disagree, while 28 (10.0%) have no opinion on the matter. Therefore, majority of the respondents from both universities use the internet regularly for different purposes. This thus agrees with suggestion of literatures that the youth are frequent users of the Internet.

Table 6: Medium of Accessing the Net

	Characteristics	ABU	BUK
		Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
	Smart phone	427 (73.2)	238 (85.0)
	Laptop	112 (19.2)	14 (5.0)
	Tablets	28 (4.8)	0 (0.0)
	No response	16 (2.7)	28 (10.0)
	Total	583 (100.0)	280 (100.0)

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

This question required respondents to indicate their medium of access to the Internet. Out of those who responded in ABU, 427 (73.2%) students indicated they mostly access the Internet through their smart phones, 112 (19.2%) of the respondents indicated that they mostly accessed the Internet through their laptops, 28 (4.8%) of the respondents accessed the Internet through their tablets, while 16 (2.7%) of the respondents did not provide an answer to this question. Responses from BUK however show that 238 (85.0%) mostly access the Internet using their mobile phones, 14 (5.0%) respondents mostly use laptops while 28 (10.0%) have no opinion on the matter.

The data therefore reveals that majority of the respondents from both universities access the Net using their mobile phones. The information was corroborated by participants during the FGD held with students of BUK as they attested to the fact that they mostly use their smart phones to access the Net. Data received from the FGD also attests to this. One of the participants, expressing the general feeling of the FGD

sessions, explains that phones are mostly used to access the Net because “phones are easily accessible because they are very mobile. You can carry them along with you wherever you go, so it is more easy to use in accessing the Net.” This also further helps to explain the data presented in table 5 as majority of the respondents use the Internet regularly because their most preferred medium of accessing the Internet is their smart phones.

Table 7: Hours spent on the Internet

S/N	Variable	Characteristics	ABU	BUK
			Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
1	Hours spent chatting online	1 hr-2hrs daily	367 (63.0)	210 (75.0)
		3 hr-4hrs daily	114 (19.6)	14 (5.0)
		5 hr-6hrs daily	36 (6.2)	14 (5.0)
		All day	45 (7.7)	28 (10.0)
		No response	21 (3.6)	14 (5.0)
		Total	583 (99.9)	280 (100.0)
2	Hours spent on social network(s)	1 hr-2hrs daily	377(64.7)	168 (60.0)
		3 hr-4hrs daily	93 (16.0)	70 (25.0)
		5 hr-6hrs daily	35 (6.0)	0 (0.0)
		All day daily	45 (7.7)	0 (0.0)
		No response	33 (3.6)	42 (15.0)
		Total	583 (99.9)	280 (100.0)
3	Hours spent sending, receiving or reading emails	1 hr-2hrs daily	422 (72.4)	196 (70.0)
		3 hr-4hrs daily	50 (8.6)	0 (0.0)
		5 hr-6hrs daily	9 (1.5)	0 (0.0)
		All day	22 (3.8)	14 (5.0)
		No response	80 (13.7)	70 (25.0)
		Total	583 (99.9)	280 (100.0)
4	Hours spent on finding educational materials / research	1 hr-2hrs daily	207 (35.5)	140 (50.0)
		3 hr-4hrs daily	222 (38.1)	56 (20.0)
		5 hr-6hrs daily	63 (10.8)	0 (0.0)
		All day	52 (8.9)	42 (15.0)
		No response	39 (6.7)	42 (15.0)
		Total	583 (99.9)	280 (100.0)

Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

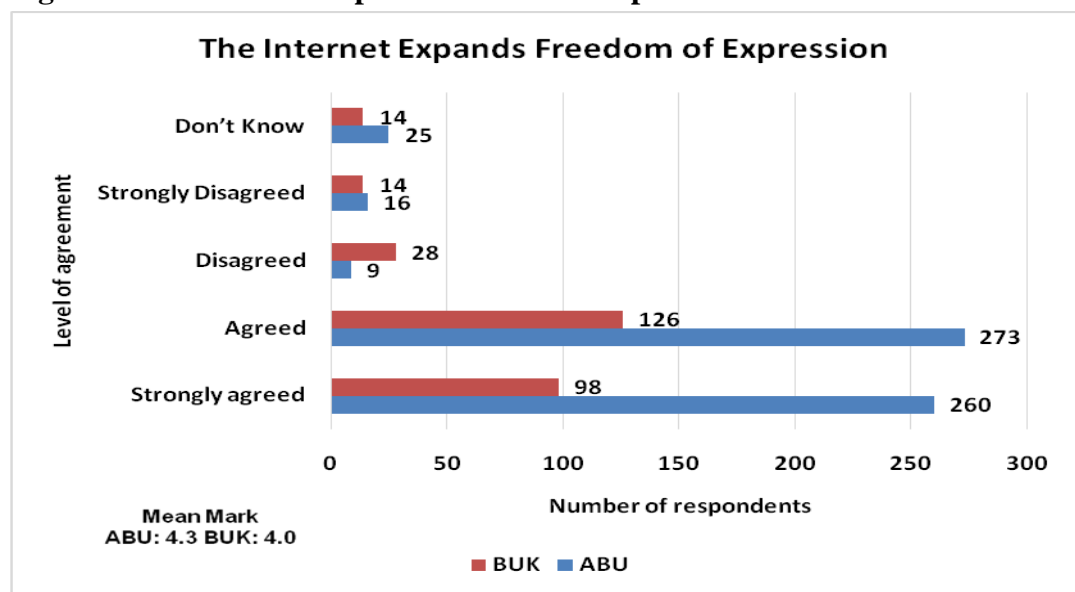
The data in table 6 above shows the rate and pattern of use of the Internet by students. For ABU, 367 (63.0%) spend 1-2 hours daily chatting, 114 (19.6) spend 3-4 hours chatting, 36 (6.7%) spend 5-6 hours and 45 (7.7%) spend all day chatting. On social network, 377 (64.7) spend 1-2 hours, 93 (16.0%) spend 3-4 hours, 35 (6.0%) spend 5-6 hours while 45 (7.7%) spend all day on social network. On emails, 422 (72.4%) spend 1-2 hours, 50 (8.6%) spend 3-4 hours, 9 (1.5%) spend 5- 6 hours, and 22 (3.8%) spend all day on emails. On sourcing for educational materials, 207 (38.1%) spend 1-2 hours, 63 (10.8) spend 3-4 hours, 52 (8.9%) spend all day. However for BUK, 210 (75.0%) spend 1-2 hours chatting online, 14 (5.0%) spend 3-4 hours daily, 14 (5.0%) spend 5-6 hours daily, 28 (10.0%) spend all day.

On social network, 168 (60%) spend 1-2 hours daily, 70 (25%) spend 3-4 hours daily and 42 (15.0%) did not provide any response. On emails, 196 (70%) spend 1-2 hours daily, 14 (5.0%) spend all day and 70 (25.0%) did not provide any response. On sourcing for educational materials, 140 (50.0%) spend 1-2 hours daily, 56 (20.0%) spend 3-4 hours daily, 42 (15.0%) spend all day and 42 (15.0%) did not provide any response. This therefore implies that majority of the respondents from both ABU and BUK spend 1-2 hours daily on chatting, social network and e-mails. While majority of the respondents spend more time 3-4 hours daily sourcing for educational materials on the Net. While this is the reflection of data from the questionnaire, it is contrary to the researcher's observation of students and the tone of the responses from the FGD. The researcher's observation reveals that students spend more time chatting than sourcing for academic materials. They spend a considerably huge amount of time chatting and interacting with friends through chat applications installed on their smart phones. This happens to be so because as discussion from the FGD sessions revealed: "it is the

cheapest means of communication” (FGD group 1 response, ABU). The characteristic interactivity which is enabled by chat applications, allows students (users) to speedily receive and respond to messages in real time. This keeps them glued to their phones always and even sometimes serves as distraction to them during lectures.

4.1.3. To ascertain whether Nigerian students are able to activate their freedom as citizens on the Net

Figure 1: The Internet expands freedom of expression



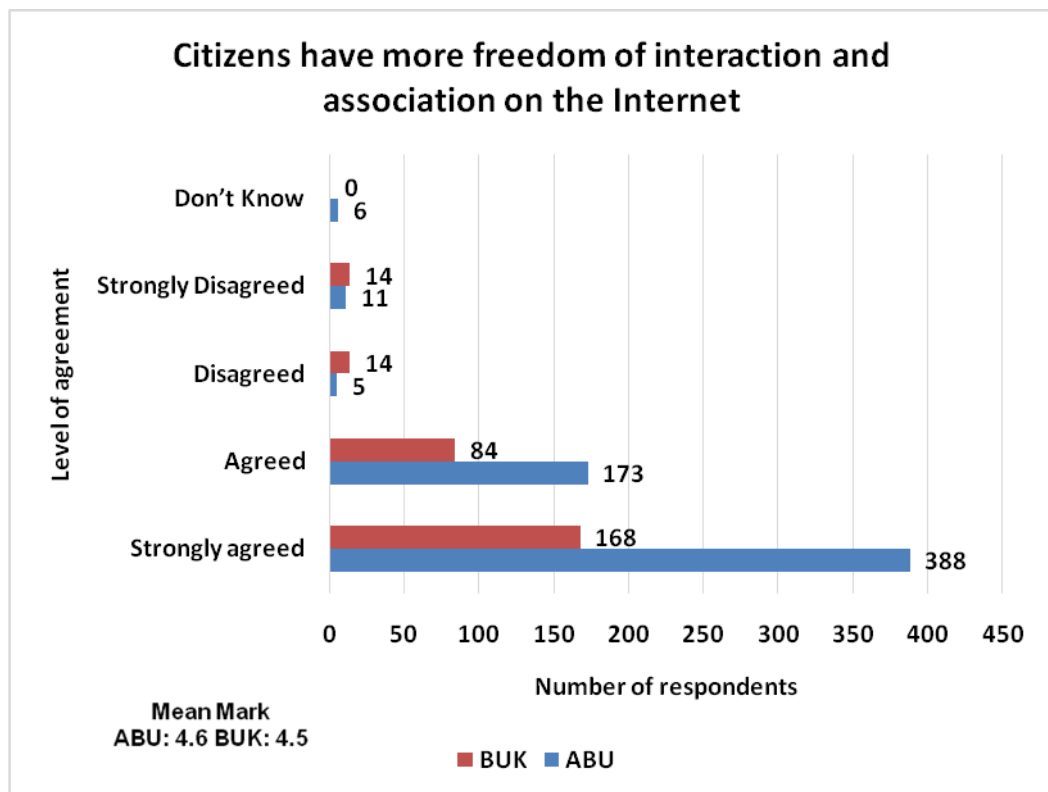
Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

From the above figure, 260 (44.6%) and 273 (46.8%) of the respondents from ABU strongly agree and agree respectively that the Internet has expanded their freedom of expression as citizens, 9 (1.5%) of them disagree and 16 (2.7%) strongly disagree while 25 (4.3%) of the respondents didn’t have an opinion on the matter. For BUK, 98 (35.0%) of the respondents strongly agree to the above question, 126 (45.0%) agree, 28 (10.0%) disagree and 14 (5.0%) strongly disagree while 14 (5.0%) didn’t have an opinion on the question. This reveals that majority of the respondents from ABU; 533 (91.4%) and BUK; 224 (80%) agree that the Internet has expanded their freedom of

expression as citizens. The response also exceeds the mean mark of 3.0 and therefore validates this deduction. The majority of respondents from the FGD also argued that the Internet has given them more avenues to express their freedom. The collective position of the FGD discussions is reflected in the response below:

The social media has done a lot of positive things when it comes to expression because back then when we just had the radio and television. If you go online and criticize the politicians they are going to find you and if they find you, they lock you behind bars or you are gone. But presently, I could just wake up in the morning and maybe I just heard news that is disturbing, I will just pick my phone and say “kai this guy don mess up” and people will begin to comment anyhow. If the president sees it, nobody cares. So I think the medium of expression has really been expanded that everybody could feel free to air their views and say their minds and say whatever they think is the solution to a problem or something that has happened in the country (FGD group 1 response BUK).

Figure 2: Citizens have more freedom of interaction and association on the internet

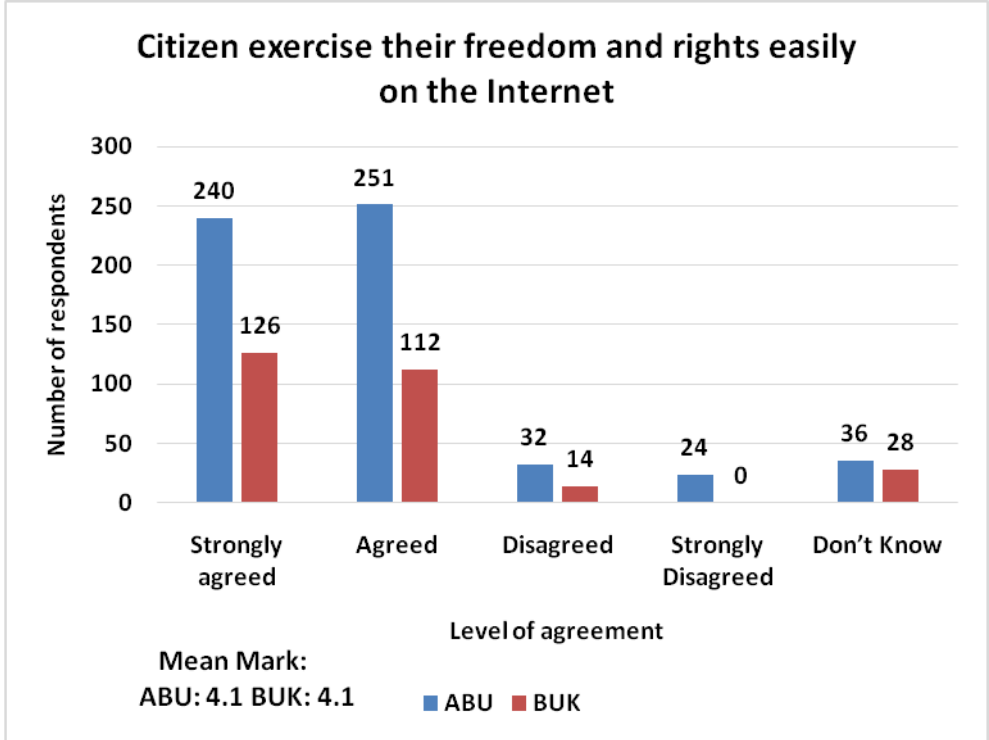


Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The above distribution shows that 388 (66.6%) of the respondents from ABU strongly agree that they are entitled as citizens to freedom of speech, association and rights to

religion, 73 (29%) agree, 5 (0.9%) disagree, 11 (1.9%) strongly agree and 6 (1.0%) didn't have an opinion on the matter. For BUK, 168 (60%) of the respondents strongly agree, 84 (30.0%) agree, 14 (5.0%) disagree and the same number also strongly disagree. As such, 96.3% of the respondents from ABU and 90.0% of respondents from BUK agree to this question and is validated by the mean score which is above 3.0. This therefore reveals that majority of the respondents from both universities agree that as citizens of Nigeria they are entitled to certain rights. It also implies that the majority of respondents are aware of their rights as citizens and therefore one can argue that they exercise these rights on the Net.

Figure 3: Citizens exercise their freedom and rights easily on the Internet

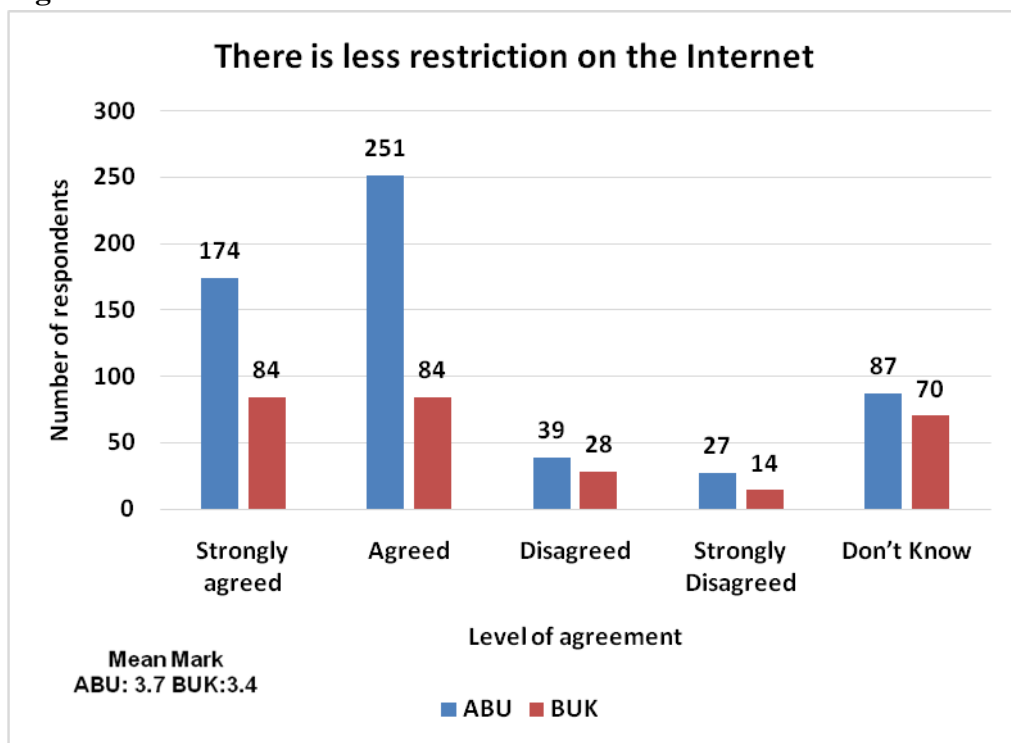


Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

On whether the Internet allows the students to freely express freedom of speech, association as well as rights to religion, the above table shows that 491 (84.3%) respondents from ABU agree to often exercise their freedom on the Net, while 238

(85%) of the respondents from BUK also agree. However, 56 (9.6%) of the respondents from ABU disagree, while 14 (5.0%) of the respondents from BUK also disagree. This therefore implies that the majority of respondents from both universities are familiar with using the Internet to express their freedom of speech, association and rights to religion and is further validated by the mean mark which is above 3.0. Also, data from the researcher’s observation and responses from the FGD also reveal that the Internet provides students access to religious materials from the Net.

Figure 4: There is less restriction on the Internet

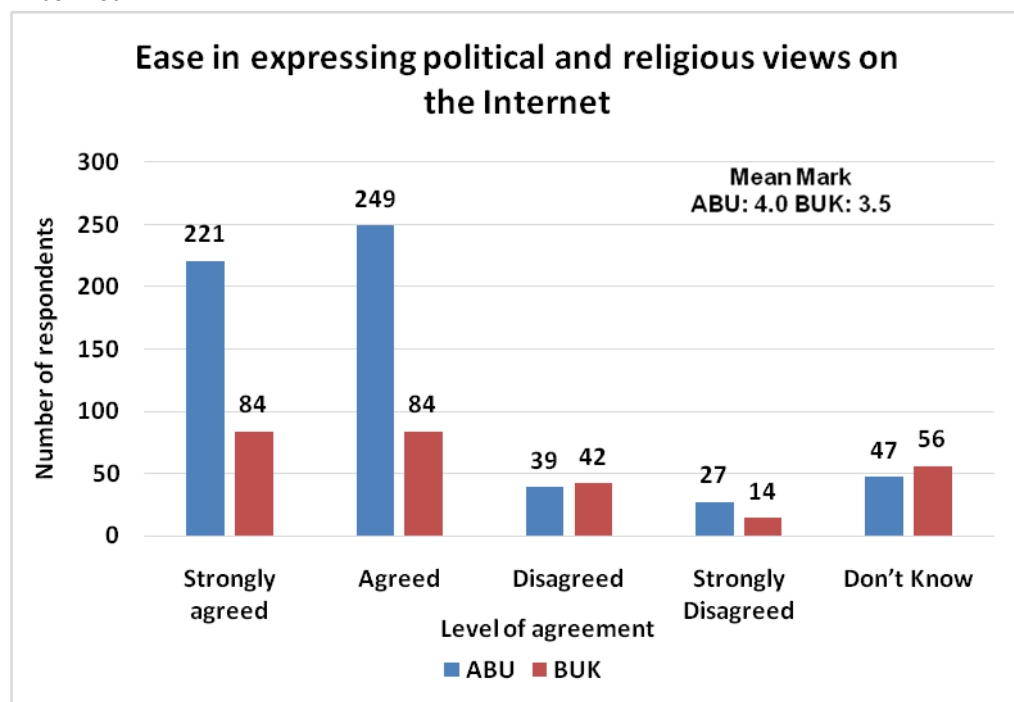


Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The question above required respondents to express how they feel airing their views on the Internet. The figure shows that 425 (72.9%) of the respondents from ABU and 162 (60.0%) from BUK agree to not being restricted from airing their views on the Net. However, 71 (12.1%) of the respondents from ABU disagree while 42 (15.0%) of the respondents from BUK also disagree. One can also notice from the distribution above

that 87 (14.9%) of respondents from ABU and 70 (25%) from BUK did not have an opinion on the matter. This therefore, reveals that the majority of respondents from both ABU and BUK agree that they do not feel restricted airing their views on the Internet. It further shows that the respondents are comfortable airing out issues on the Net without fear or restriction.

Figure 5: Students express their political and religious views easily on the Internet

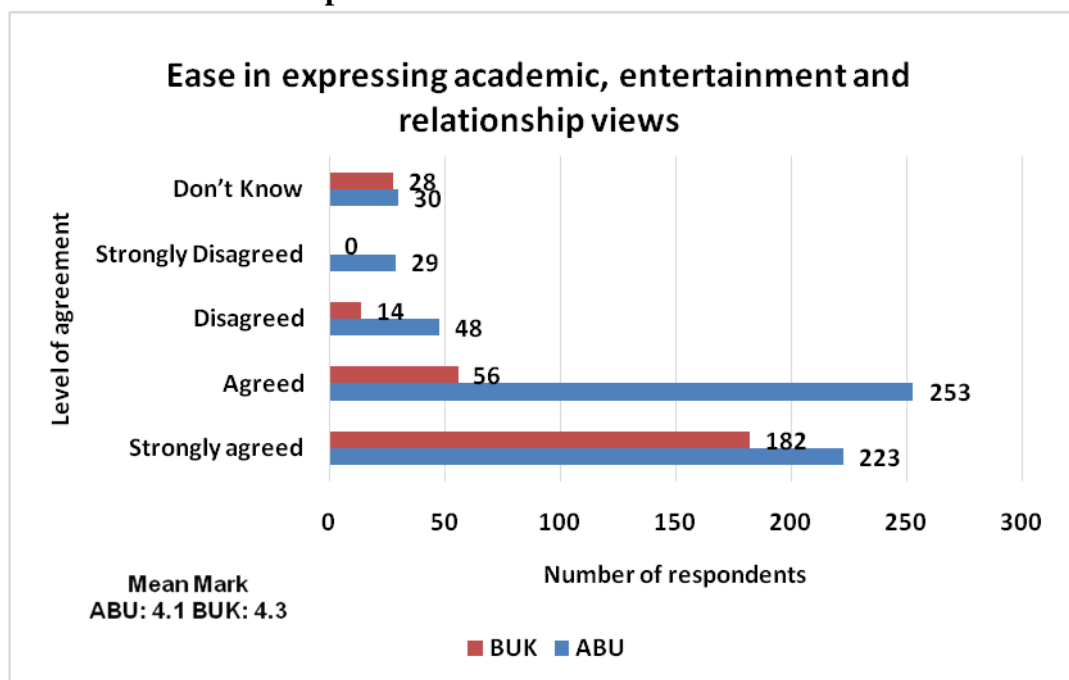


Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

The distribution above shows that 470 (80.6%) of respondents from ABU agree to finding it easy expressing their political views about Nigeria online, 66 (12.7%) of the respondents disagree and 47 (8.1%) did not have an opinion on the matter. For ABU, 168 (60%) of the respondents agree to finding it easy expressing their political views about Nigeria online, 56 (20.0%) disagree and 56 (20%) of the respondent did not have an opinion on the subject matter. Looking at the response rate from BUK, the total

number of respondents who disagree and those who didn't have an opinion is at par. However, the majority of respondents from both universities agree that they find it easy to express their political and religious views online. This implies that many students find the Internet empowering as it enables them share their thoughts on issues that affect them politically and religiously.

Figure 6: Students easily express views about academics, entertainment and relationships on the Internet

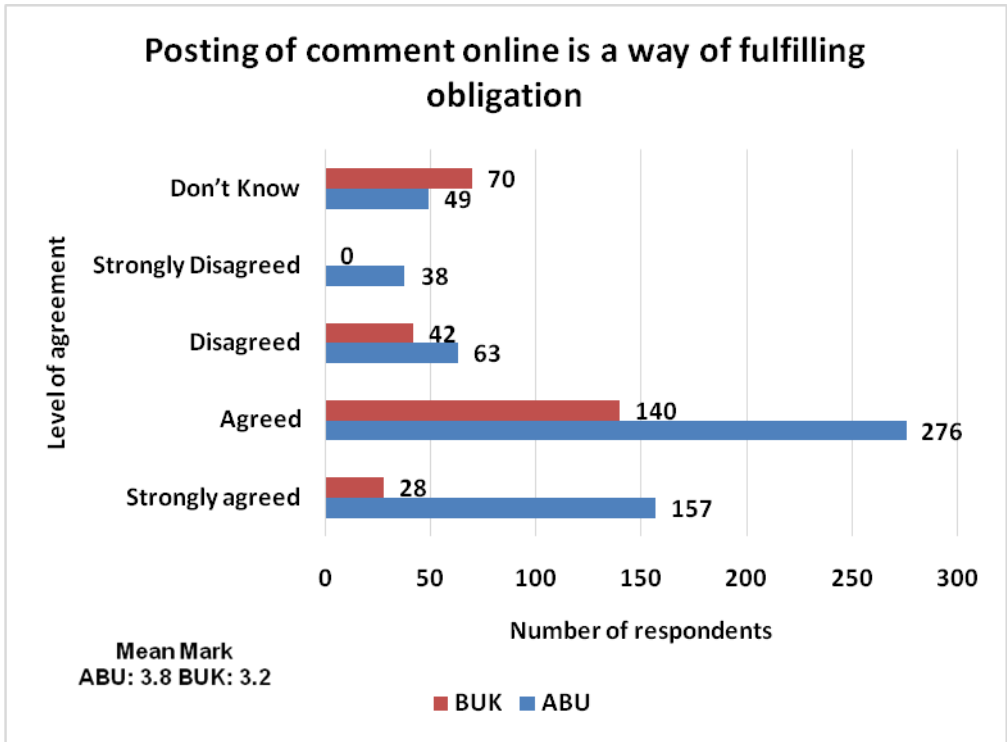


Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

From the above figure, 476 (81%) of the respondents from ABU agree that they do not find it difficult to express their views about relationships, academics and entertainment online, 77 (13.2%) strongly agree and disagree and 30 (5.1%) did not have an opinion on the subject matter. For BUK, 238 (85.0%) agree that they do not find it difficult to express their views about relationships, academics and entertainment online, 14 (5.0%) disagree while 28 (10.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Judging from the data above, it implies that the majority of students who responded are comfortable

expressing their opinions on academics, relationships and entertainment online and this is validated by the average mean which is 4.1 and 4.3 respectively. However, the researcher’s observation of student online groups reveal that students mostly share entertainment-based information on public groups while more personal interactions relating to relationships are taken to personal chats.

Figure 7: Posting of Comments online is a way of fulfilling citizenship obligations



Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

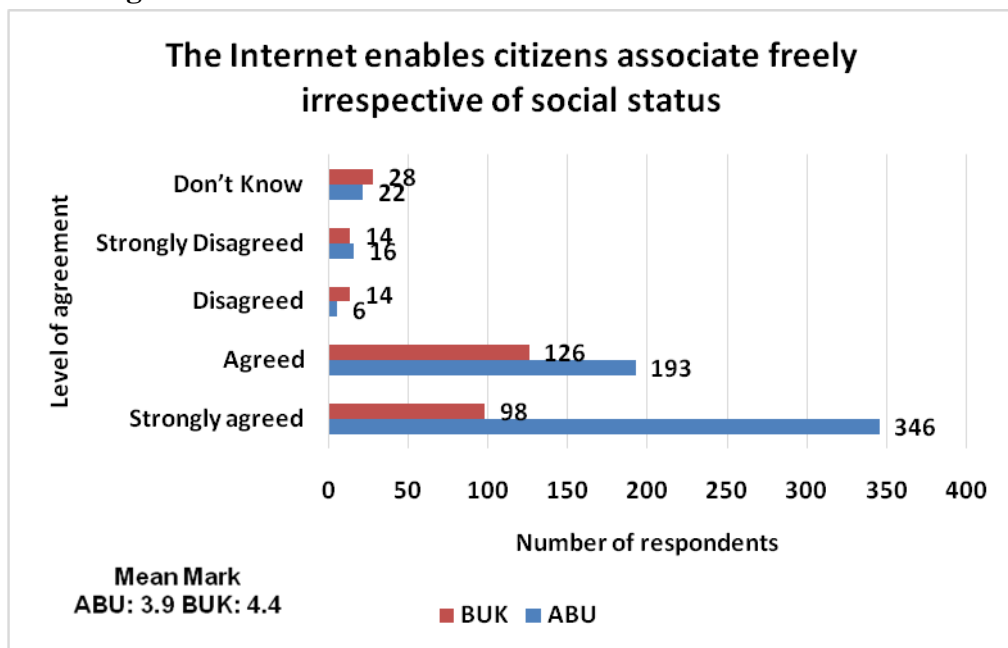
From the above figure, 433 (74.3%) of the respondents from ABU consider their comments to people’s post as fulfilling their obligation as citizens. Another 101 (17.3%) respondents disagreed while 49 (8.4%) had no opinion on the subject matter. Out of the 280 respondents from BUK, 168 (60.0%) agree, 42 (15.0%) disagree and 70 (25.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. The distribution which reveals an average mean of 3.8 and 3.2 respectively shows that the majority of respondents agree

to this question, which implies that they consider it an obligation as citizens to comment on posts they find relevant to them or to others. The majority of the participants from the FGD sessions also supported this position, describing how posts and comments online can be an exercise of obligation, a participant observes from the FGD session in ABU notes:

I think as citizens we should be mindful of the kind of posts we make. Our posts should be those that will foster unity. We should also be mindful of the kind of friends we accept on Facebook. We should check them out first because people can be deceptive and send you request because they want to carry out certain negative actions (FGD group 1 response ABU).

Similarly, a participant from the FGD session in BUK observes that users can exercise obligation on the Net “by behaving in a good manner, and not posting bad things that can provoke or cause people to act negatively” (FGD response group 1 BUK).

Figure 8: The Internet enable citizens associate freely irrespective of social tribe religion or social status

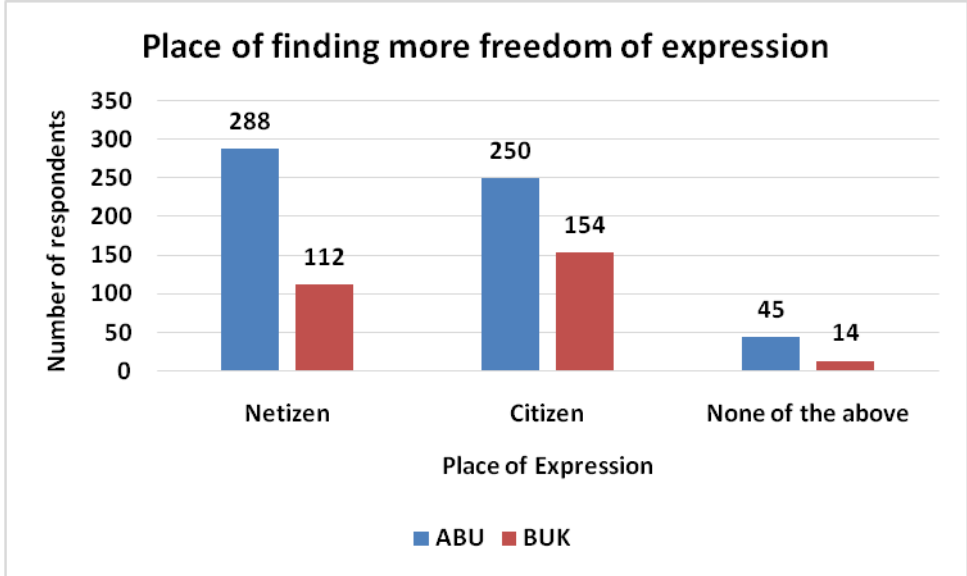


Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

From the table above, majority of the respondents agree that the Internet enables them associate freely with people. Data of respondents from ABU show that 539 (92.4%)

said they agree, 22 (3.7%) disagree while 22 (3.8%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Responses from BUK also reveal that 224 (80.0%) agree and 28 (10.0%) disagree while 28 (10.0%) also did not have an opinion on the matter. Here, the mean status 3.9 and 4.4 respectively validates the agreement of the respondents. As such, the responses from both universities therefore imply that respondents/ students meet new people and associate freely online irrespective of their differences. The majority of responses from the FGD sessions also confirm this position. A participant sums it by noting that: “you can relate with people easily especially through sites such as Facebook, Instagram and the likes. There are also guys, for instance, that will want to talk to you, but when they see you in person they will not say anything” (FGD response Group 1 ABU).

Figure 9: Place of finding more freedom of expression as a citizen



Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

Figure 9 above shows the distribution of respondents to whether they find more freedom as citizens of Netizens. For ABU, 288 (49.4%) said they find more freedom as Netizens while 250 (42.9%) said they found more freedom as citizens, 45 (7.7%) said

they did not find freedom in any of the two. Data from BUK revealed that 112 (40.0%) said that they found more freedom as Netizens while 154 (55.0%) said they found more freedom as citizens, 14 (5.0%) did not consider the two as enabling a free environment. Judging from available data, the majority of respondents from ABU find more expression as Netizens implying that they find fulfilment using the Net to meet their daily needs, while the majority of the respondents from BUK find more expression offline.

4.1.4 To determine whether the internet can assist students to acquire knowledge to become well informed citizens.

Table 8: Students acquire useful and vital information for their studies from the Internet

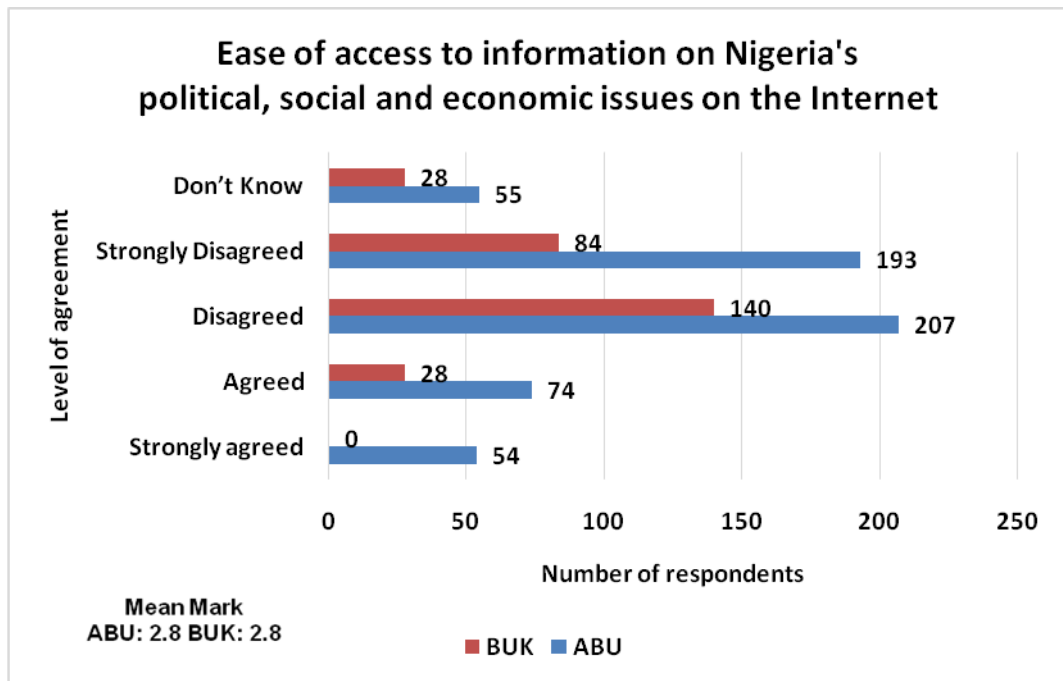
Characteristic	ABU			BUK		
	Frequency (%)	Mean		Frequency (%)	Mean	
Strongly Agree	326 (55.9)	4.2		182 (65.0)	4.5	
Agree	221 (37.9)			84 (30.0)		
Disagree	8 (1.4)			0 (0.0)		
Strongly Disagree	16 (2.7)			0 (0.0)		
Don't Know	12 (2.1)			14 (5.0)		
Total	583 (100.0)			280 (100.0)		

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

The table above shows the distribution of respondents as to whether they get useful information from the internet which can assist them in their academics. As such, 574 (91%) of the respondents from ABU agree to have been acquiring useful information for their academics from the Net, while 24 (4.1%) of the respondents disagree and 12 (2.1) did not have an opinion on the matter. For BUK, 266 (95.0%) agree to have been acquiring useful information for their academic study, none of the respondents disagree, while 14 (5.0%) of the respondents did not have an opinion on the matter. The average mean of 4.2 and 4.5 respectively substantiates the agreement of the

respondents. Thus, the majority of the respondents from both universities agree to acquire useful materials for their academics online. One can argue that the implication of this deduction is that most students are able to use the Net to source for useful materials to assist them in their studies.

Figure 10: Access to information about Nigeria’s political, Social, and economic issues on the Internet

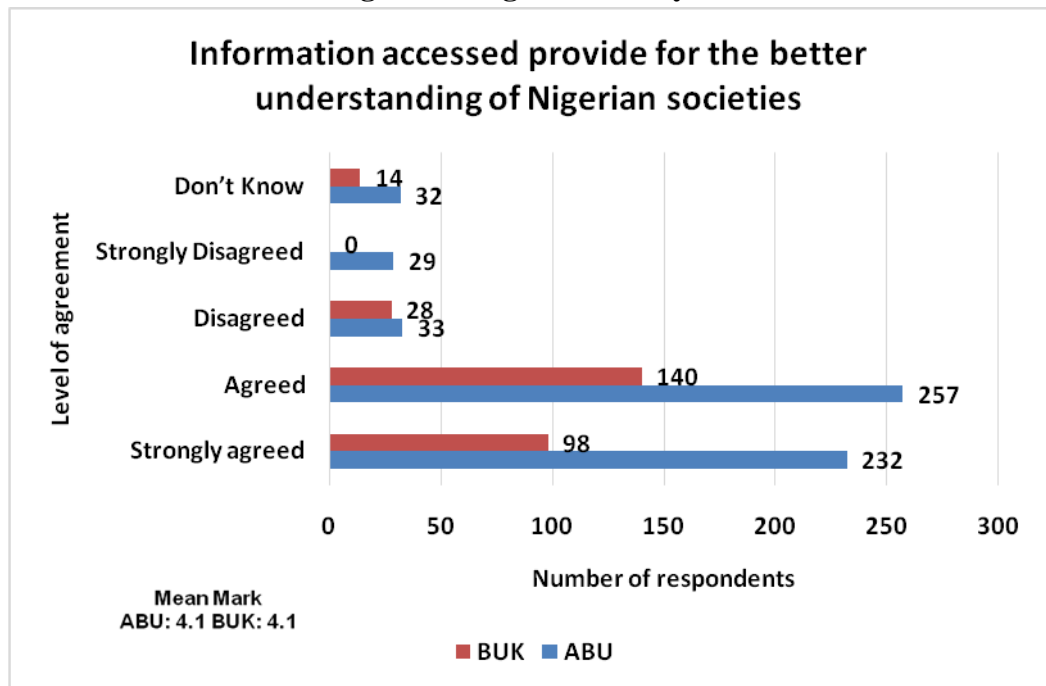


Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The above figure reveals that 128 (22%) of the respondents agree to not being able to access information about political, social and economic happenings in Nigeria through the Net, while 400 (68.6) of the respondents disagree and 55 (9.4) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK shows that 28 (10) of the respondents agree to not being able to access information about political, social and economic happenings in Nigeria through the Net, while 224 (80.0%) of the respondents disagree and 28 (10.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Thus looking at the data in table the mean mark for the number of people that agree to this question from both universities is less than

six. This invariably implies that the majority of respondents from both universities are able to access information about political, social and economic happenings in Nigeria through the Internet.

Figure 11: Information accessed on the Internet provides more understanding of the Nigerian society

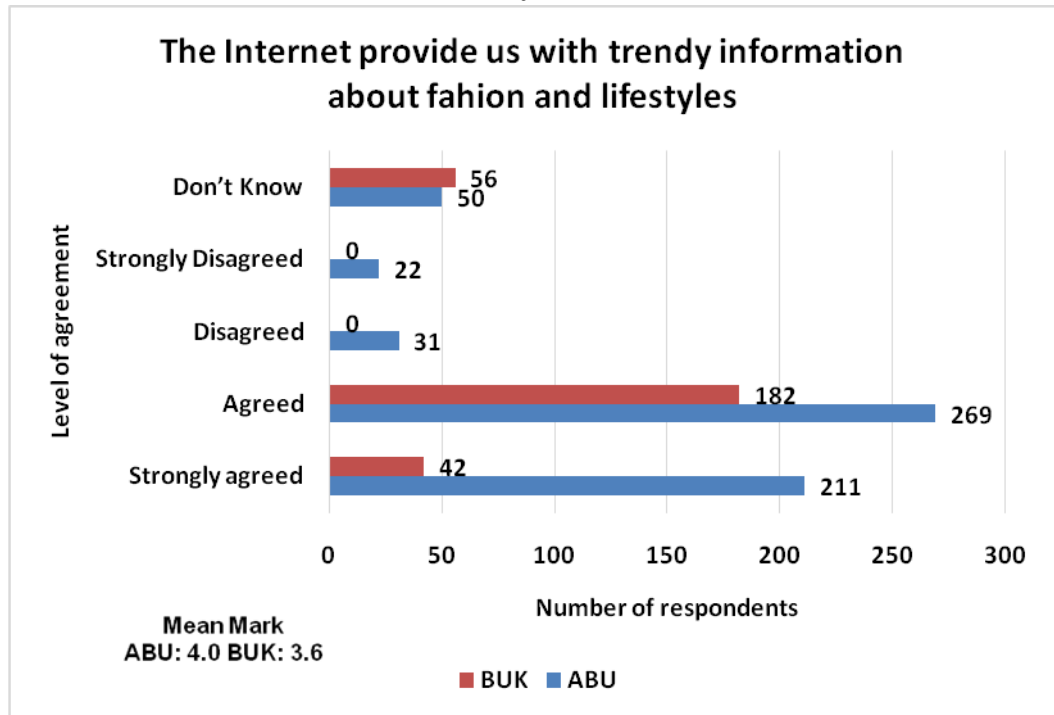


Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The distribution above shows that 489 (83.9%) respondents from ABU agree to get more understanding about happenings in Nigeria through information accessed from the Net, while 62 (10.5%) disagree and 32 (5.5%) did not have an opinion on the matter. For BUK, 238 (85.5%) of the respondents said they agree to getting more understanding about Nigeria due to the information they receive or get from the Net, 28 (10.0%) disagree while 14 (5.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. This therefore shows that the majority of respondents from both BUK and ABU receive useful information that helps them better understand Nigeria from the Net. The mean mark of

4.1 for ABU and BUK respectively validates the agreement of respondents to the question.

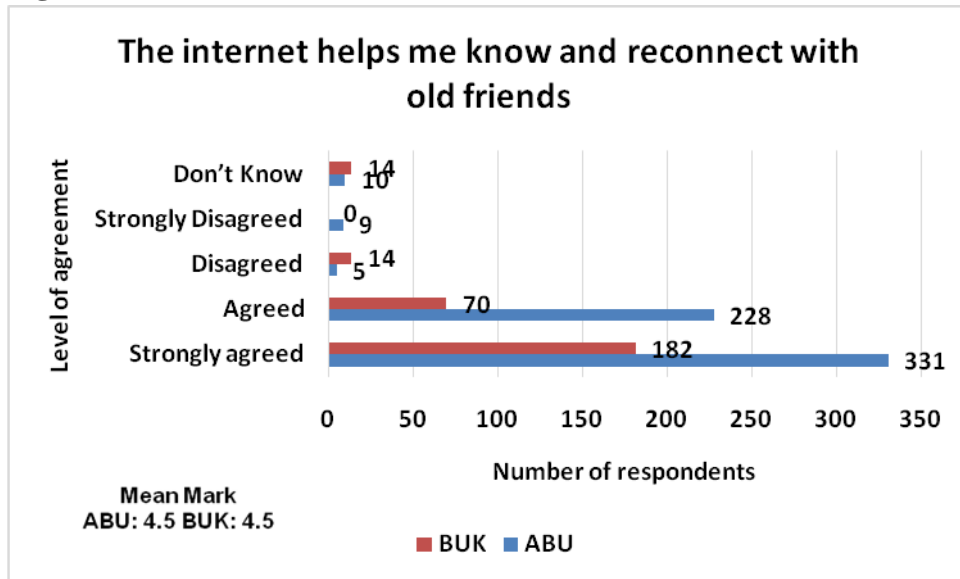
Figure 12: Internet use enable citizens access information about latest trends in fashion and lifestyle



Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The figure above shows that 480 (82.3%) respondents from ABU agree to know about latest fashion styles in the country as a result of using the internet while 53 (9.1%) disagree and 50 (8.6%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data in the above table also show that 224 (80%) of the respondents in BUK agree to the question while 56 (20.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. This reveals that the majority of students are able to know about latest fashion trends through the Internet. This might be attributed to the fact that a lot of entertainment content is available online which young people can access to meet their needs.

Figure 13: The Internets assist citizens to reconnect with old friends



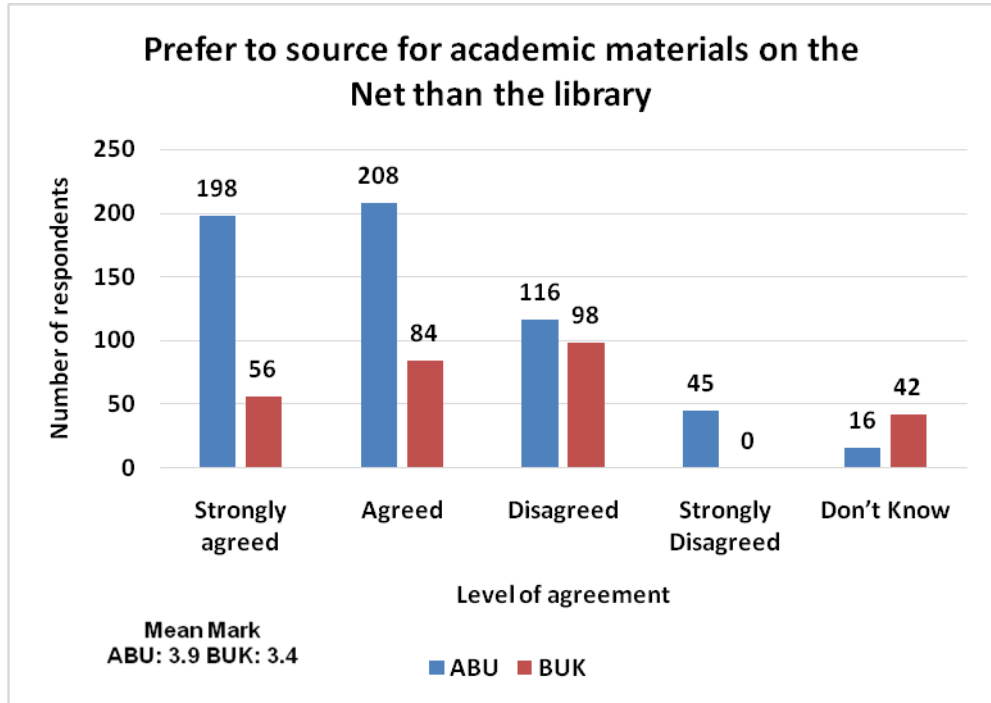
Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

The majority of respondents from both universities agree that the Internet helps them reconnect with old friends. From ABU, 559 (95.9%) of the respondents agree to this, 14 (3.2%) disagree while 10 (1.7%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK shows that 252 (90%) of the respondents agree, 14 (5.0%) disagree and 14 (5.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. An average mean of 4.5 for ABU and BUK respectively validates the agreement of respondents to the question.

This implies that the students, as citizens, find the Internet a reliable medium for connecting with people and establishing relationships with other citizens who might be far away from their location. A participant in the FGD session validates this by stating thus: “You may have not seen someone in a long while, may be in five to ten years you haven’t seen that person, but through chatting within seconds you can connect with such a person” (FGD response group 1 BUK). Thus, citizens find the Net useful in re-establishing old ties with others they have lost contact with over a long period.

4.1.5 The role of Internet access in the academic pursuit of students and its implication for effective expression of citizenship

Figure 14: Preferred source of academic materials



Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The figure above shows the distribution of student preference in sourcing for academic materials. From the data received, 406 (69.7%) of the respondents in ABU prefer to source for material from the Net, 161 (27.6) of the respondents disagree while 16 (2.7%) had no opinion on the matter. From BUK, 140 (50%) of the respondents agree to prefer sourcing for academic materials from the Net, 98 (35.0%) disagree while 42 (15.0%) of the respondents did not have an opinion on the matter. This thus reveals that the majority of the respondents prefer to source for academic materials from the Net and the agreement rate is validated by the mean mark of 3.9 and 3.4 respectively.

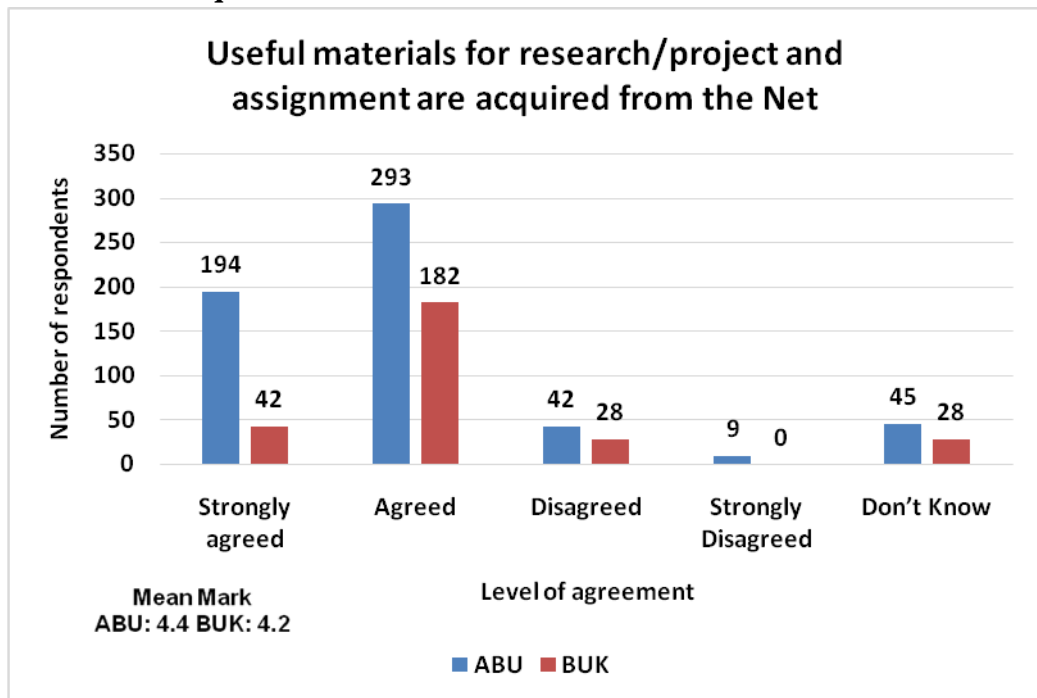
Table 9: Exposure to the net builds students capacity to handle academic matters

Characteristic	ABU		BUK	
	Frequency (%)	Mean	Frequency (%)	Mean
Strongly Agree	194 (33.3)	4.0	42 (15.0)	3.8
Agree	293 (50.3)		182 (65.0)	
Disagree	42 (7.2)		28 (10.0)	
Strongly Disagree	9 (1.5)		0 (0.0)	
Don't Know	45 (7.7)		28 (10.0)	
Total	583 (100.0)		280 (100.0)	

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

The table above shows that 487 (80.6%) of the respondents from ABU agree that the Internet builds their capacity to handle academic matters competently, 51 (8.7%) of the respondents disagree and 45 (7.7%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK also reveal that 224 (80.0%) agree to the question, 28 (10.0%) disagree and 28 (10.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Deductively, majority of the students from both universities find the Internet as a medium that builds their capacity to handle academic matters competently. This corroborates literature which suggests that the Internet enhances academic learning in higher institutions. The implication of this is that as students get knowledge they become well equipped as citizens to express themselves, fight for their rights, as well as carry out their obligations effectively as citizens because they possess the knowledge of these.

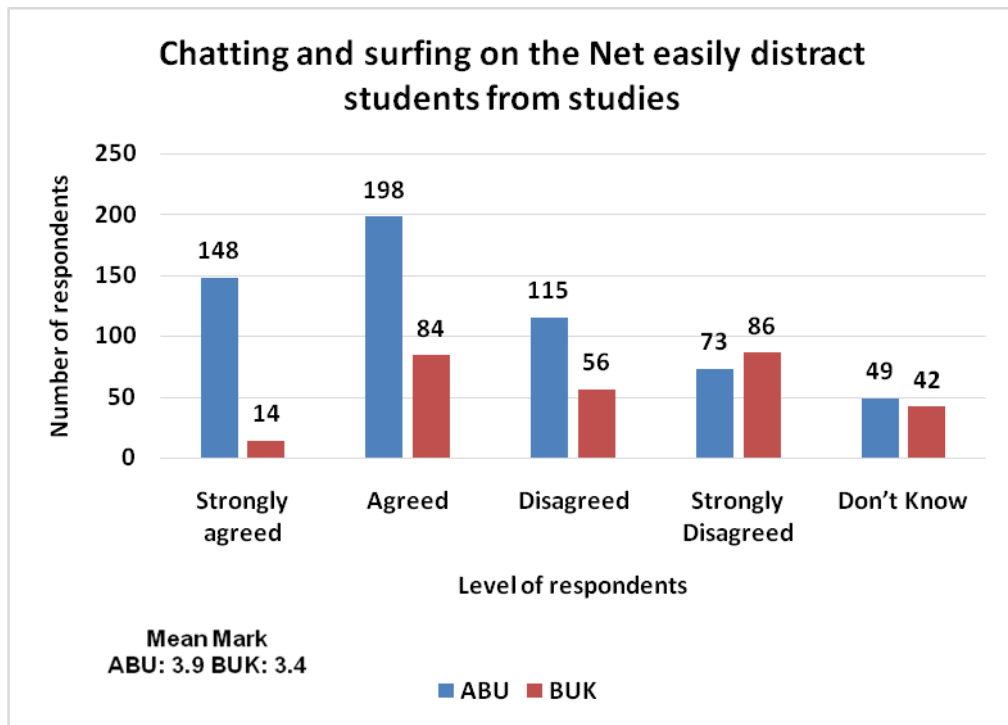
Figure 15: Useful material for research, assignments and projects are acquired from the Internet



Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The above distribution reveals that the majority of the respondents from ABU 544 (93.4%) agree to getting useful material for their academics online, 24 (4.1%) disagree and 15 (2.5%) did not have an opinion on the matter. The majority of the respondents from BUK totalling 224 (95.0%) agree to getting useful materials for their academic online, while 14 (5.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Deductively, one can argue that there is a high reliance on materials got from the Net by both ABU and BUK students. Significant to note is that no respondent from BUK disagreed to this question. Observing the group feelings of respondents from the FGDs conducted, the researchers observed that students find the Net to be very useful in accessing materials for their academics.

Figure 16: Chatting and surfing the Net easily distracts students from their studies



Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

The figure above reveals that the majority of respondents from ABU agree that they get easily distracted in class by chatting or surfing the Net; 346 (59.4%) agree, 188 (32.2%) disagree while 49 (8.4) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK, however, indicate that the majority of respondents disagree that they are easily distracted from their studies as a result of chatting with friends; 98 (35.0%) agree while 140 (50.0%) disagree and 42 (15.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. This therefore reveals a clear difference between the patterns of use in both universities as students from ABU are more distracted by the Net than those in BUK.

Table 10: communicating online allows student share information concerning lectures, tests and tutorials

Characteristics	ABU			BUK		
	Frequency (%)	Mean	Rmk	Frequency (%)	Mean	Rmk
Strongly Agree	245 (42.0)	4.2		70 (25.0)	3.9	
Agree	267 (45.8)			154 (55.0)		
Disagree	33 (5.7)			28 (10.0)		
Strongly Disagree	15 (2.6)			0 (0.0)		
Don't Know	23 (3.9)			28 (10.0)		
Total	583 (100.0)			280 (100.0)		

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

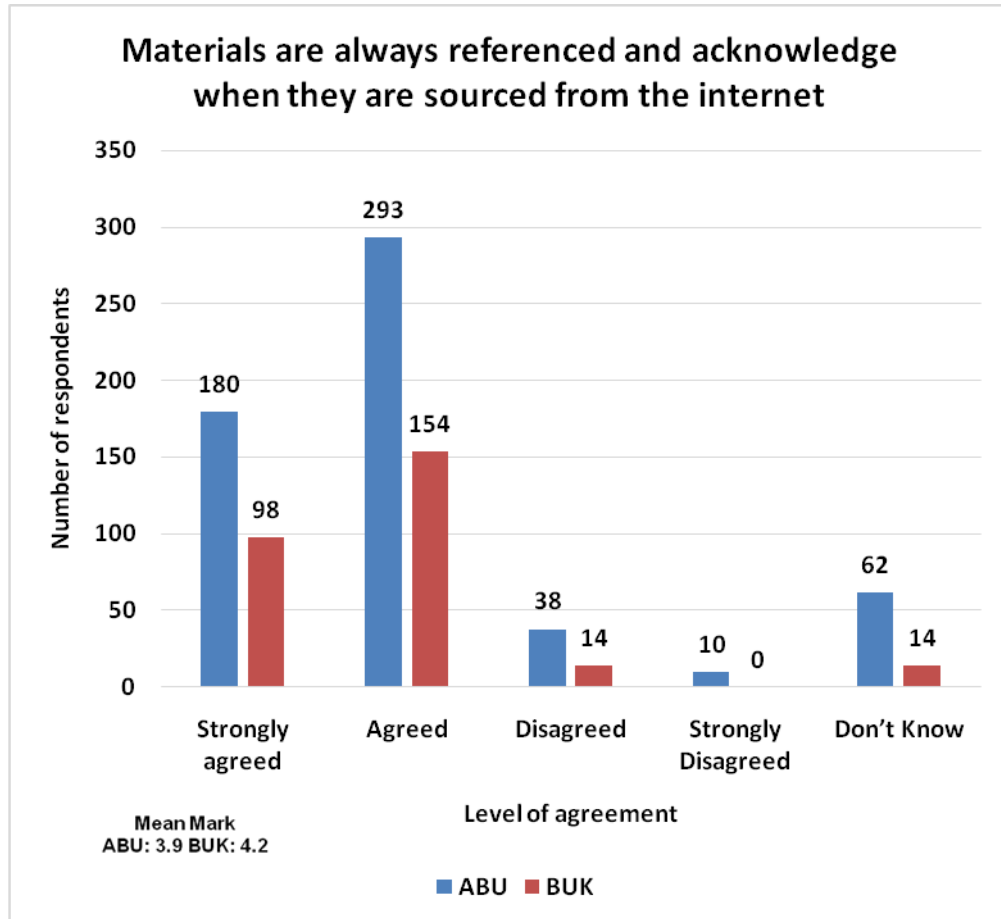
The distribution above reveals that 512 (87.8%) of the respondents from ABU get important information about tests, tutorials by communicating with friends online, 48 (8.3%) disagree while 23 (3.9%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK show that 224 (80.0%) agree, 28 (10.0%) disagree and 28 (10.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. The mean mark of 4.2 and 3.9 respectively validate the agreement of the responses. Data from the FGD corroborates this, as one of the respondents observes:

It is the easiest means of communication because sometimes we are lost. Some people might not be aware of lectures, especially if it is a fixed class so we just share the information on our WhatsApp group stating that there is a fixed class by this or that time and people become aware" (FGD response group 1 ABU).

Similarly, a participant from the FGD group 2 BUK also observes; "For instance, we have a group for the class through which we pass across information to one another, which I think is a good way to reach out to assist one another because we know when we have to do things and know about what is going on in school" (FGD response group 2 BUK). Deducing from the above, one can conclude that the majority of students from both universities use various online applications to communicate and share information on happenings about their academics (lectures, tests, assignments) thereby enhancing their lives as citizens.

Question 17: As a responsible Nigerian student I should always acknowledge/reference any material I get from the Internet

Figure 17: As a responsible citizen, materials got from the Internet should be acknowledged

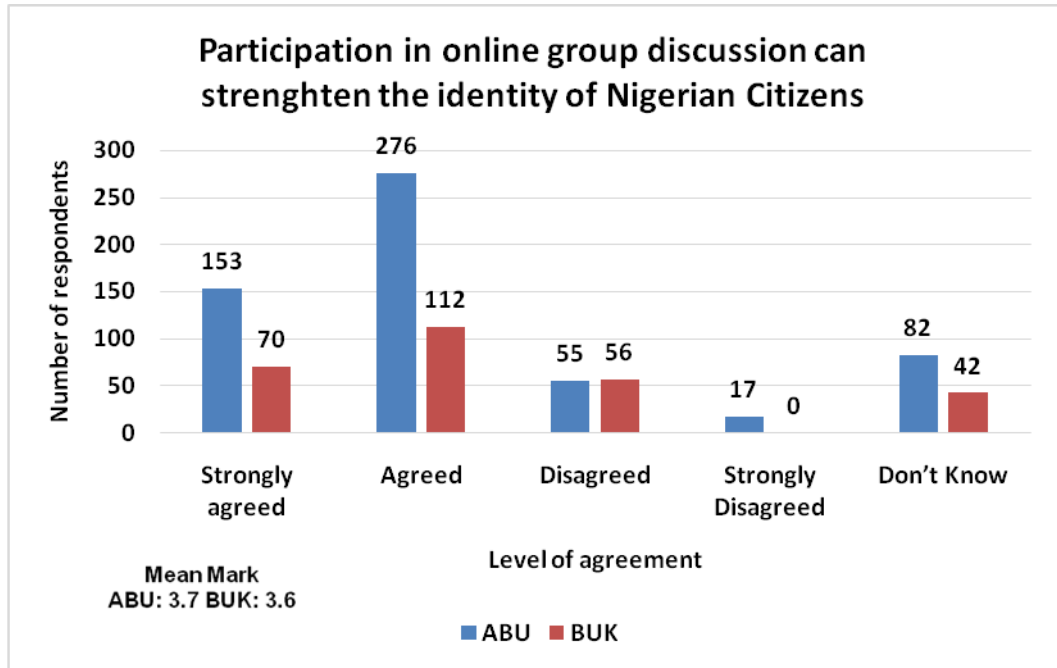


Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The majority of respondents from both universities agree to always acknowledging materials got from the Internet as a mark of being a responsible Nigerian student. Data from ABU show that 473 (81.2%) agree, while 48 (8.2%) disagree and 62 (10.6%) did not have an opinion on the matter. For BUK, 252 (90.0%) agree, 14 (5.0%) disagree and 14 (5.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. The mean mark of 3.9 and 4.2 respectively validates the agreement of the respondents to the question. Data from the FGD also reveal that students consider acknowledging material gotten from the net as a way of acting as responsible citizens.

4.1.5 Possible ways ABU and BUK Students could express a strong sense of citizenship even as Netizens

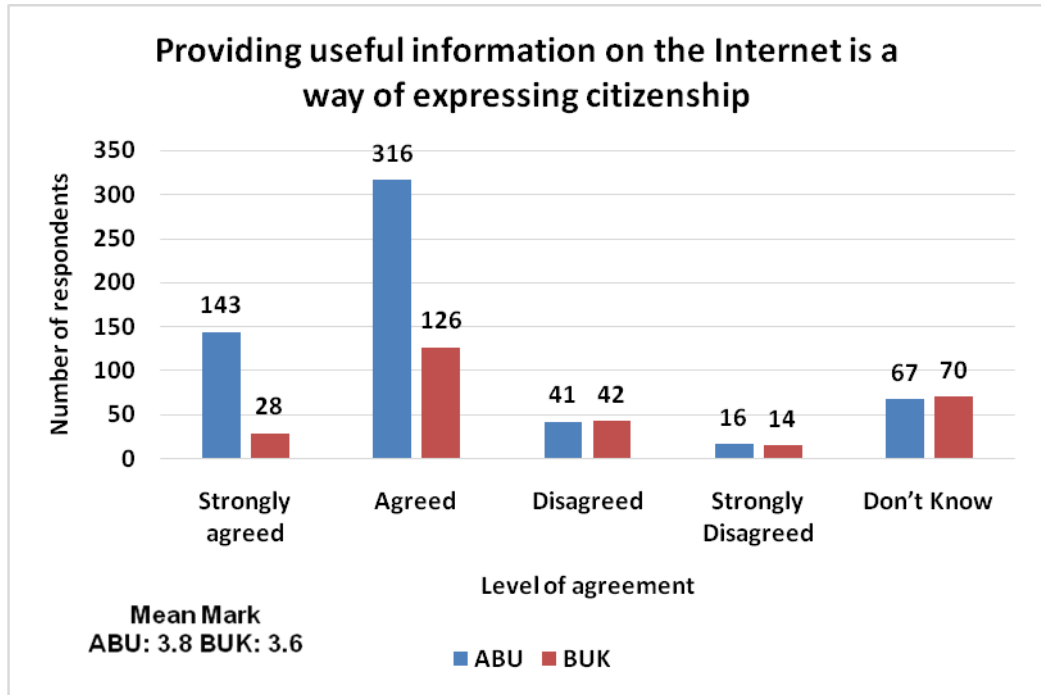
Figure 18: participating in online group discussion can strengthen the identity of Nigerian citizens



Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The question set out to check respondents’ opinion on activities online that could help strengthen citizenship. As such, 429 (73.5%) of the respondents from ABU agree that participating in online groups can help strengthen citizenship, 72 (12.3%) disagree and 82 (14.1%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK reflected in the figure above shows that 182 (65.0%) agree, 56 (20.0%) disagree and 42 (15.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. The majority of respondents from both universities agree that participating in online groups can help build citizenship and this is validated by the mean mark of 3.7 and 3.6 respectively. Thus, it could be deduced that online groups is a potent channel for engaging the youth and strengthening citizenship.

Figure 19: Providing Useful information on the Internet is a way of expressing citizenship

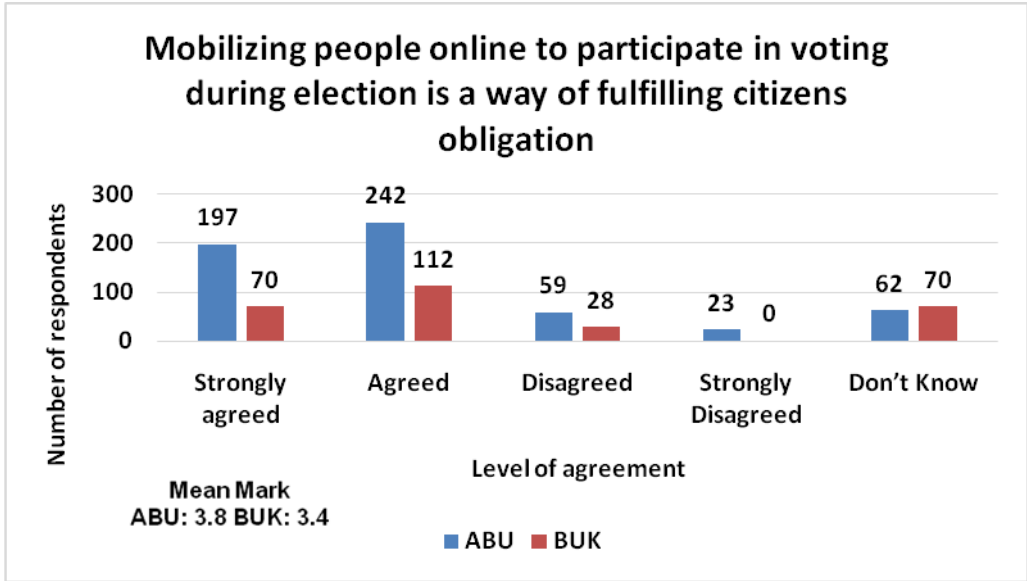


Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

As already established from earlier data presented, youths, generally, are comfortable with the use of Internet to access information, communicate and share ideas. However, whether they consider this as a means of expressing citizenship is what this question exudes. As such, the above table shows that 459 (78.7%) of the respondents from ABU agree that providing information on the Net about happenings in Nigeria is a way of expressing citizenship; 57 (9.7%) of the respondents disagree and 67 (11.5%) did not have an opinion on the matter. From BUK, 154 (55.0%) of the respondents agree, 56 (20.0%) of the respondents disagree and 70 (25.0%) of the respondents did not have an opinion on the matter. The data above therefore reveals that the majority of respondents from both universities agree that sharing information on happenings about Nigerian society is a way of expressing citizenship. It can therefore be deduced that youths can express their citizenship by sharing information about happenings around them online. Corroborating this, a participant in the FGD illustrates how information shared online

was of immense benefit to him: “I think it helps a lot in making vital information available to people. It really helped me a lot during the Nyanya bombings in April 2014. I was about to go to Nyanya, but when I opened my Facebook I saw the information and I just stayed back at home” (FGD response group 2 BUK). Similarly, a respondent from the FGD session in ABU notes: “I think it even saves people’s lives like during the killing in Saminaka after the 2015 general election in which some people were saved through information they got on WhatsApp. A student was on his way travelling home when he received the information via WhatsApp and he told the driver and they stopped” (FGD response group 2 ABU). Such life and time saving information is what citizens are potentially able to get from the use of the Internet.

Figure 20: Mobilizing people online to participate in voting during election is a way of fulfilling citizenship obligation

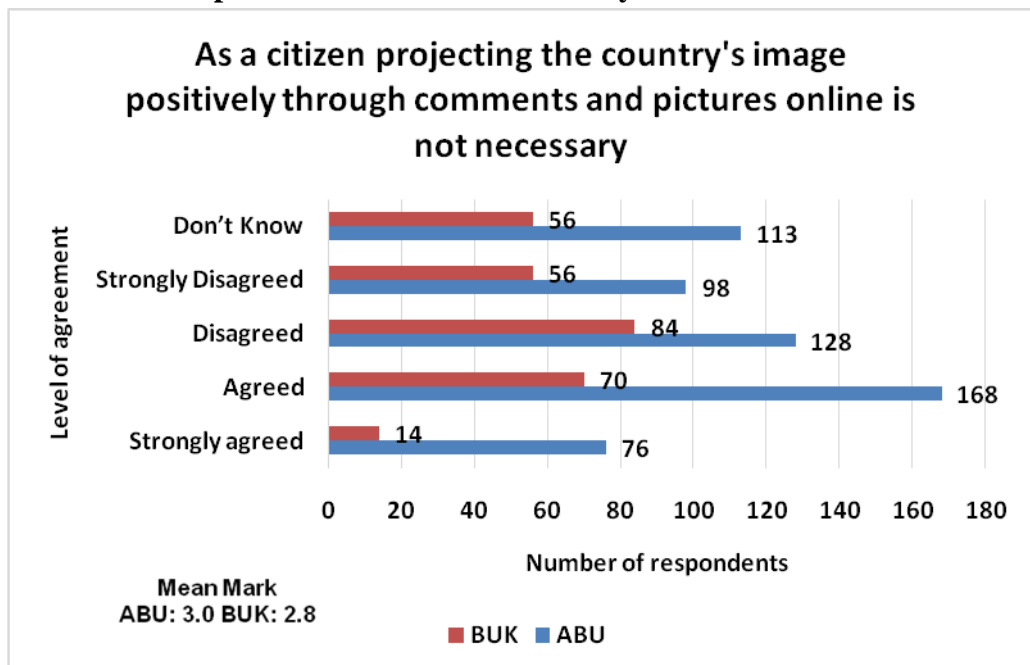


Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2015

The distribution above shows that mobilising people to participate in voting during election by majority of respondents from both universities, is a way of fulfilling their obligation as a citizen. The table shows that 439 (75.3%) of the respondents agree, 82

(14%) of the respondents disagree and 62 (10.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK shows that 182 (65.0%) agree, 28 (10.0%) of the respondents disagree and 70 (25.0) of the respondents had no idea about the matter. A mean mark of 3.8 and 3.4 respectively validates the agreement of responses to this question. It could be deduced that the Net is a potent means of mobilising individuals to take action as citizens.

Figure 21: Projecting a positive image of the Nigerian culture through comments and pictures online is not necessary



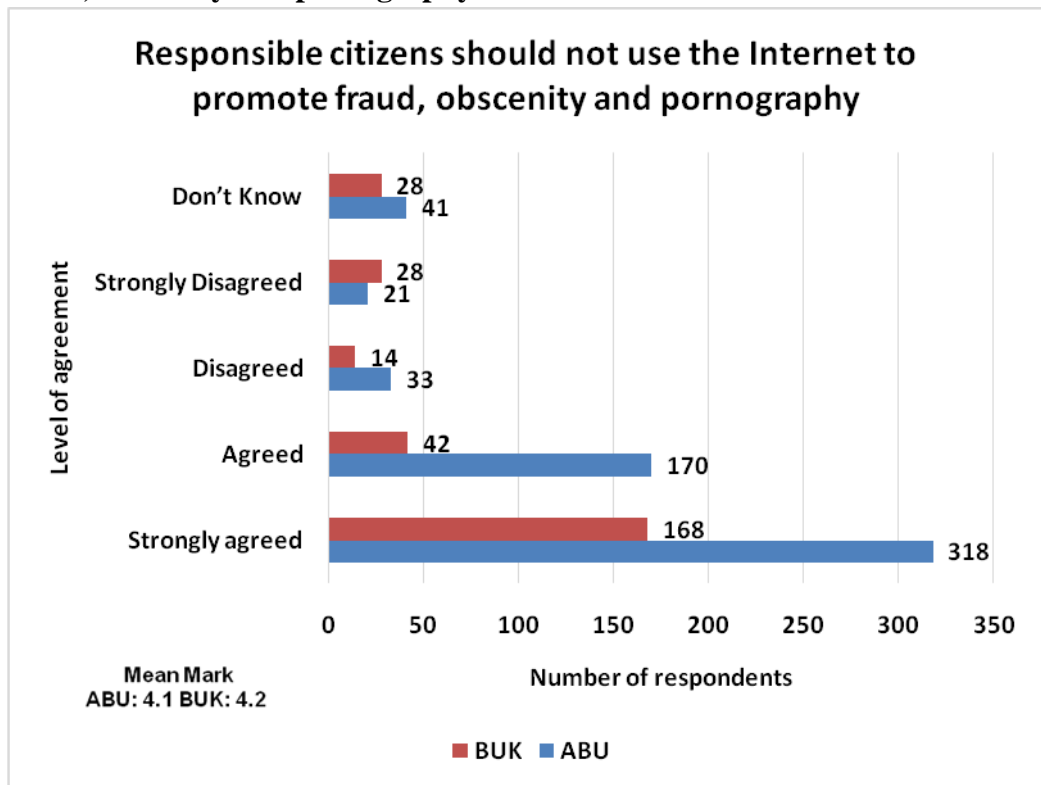
Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

In exploring the possible ways students can manifest citizenship, understanding whether students find it necessary to project the positive image of Nigeria on the Net is very essential. The figure above shows that 244 (49.8%) of the respondents from ABU agree that it is not necessary to project a positive image of Nigeria on the Net; 226 (38.8) disagree and 113 (19.4) did not have an opinion on the matter. This therefore reveals that the majority of respondents from ABU do not consider it patriotic to

project a positive image of Nigeria on the Net. However, while the data presented above shows that students do not consider it a patriotic act to project the image of Nigeria on the Net, responses from the FGD sessions in ABU seem to reveal that students will likely act responsibly as patriotic citizens.

A participant in the FGD Group 1 ABU sums up the group position by stating that: “We should always condemn what is bad and encourage positive things. If you are good at writing you should write articles that will foster positive actions”. Responses from BUK however show that 84 (40.0%) of the respondents agree, 140 (50.0%) of the respondents disagree and 56 (20.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. This reveals clearly that majority of the students in BUK consider posting comments to project a positive image of Nigeria as an act of patriotism. However, while the data above shows that students from ABU do not consider projecting a positive image of Nigeria through comments and pictures online as an act of patriotism, the responses from the FGD indicate otherwise.

Figure 22: Responsible citizens should not use the Internet to promote fraud, obscenity and pornography



Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

Youths are most times accused of using the Net to engage in acts which are considered negative. The above figure shows the distribution of respondents to understand whether they are disposed to using the Net in such negative light. Data from ABU shows that 488 (83.7%) of the respondents do not use the Net to incite violence, pornography or engage in any immoral act, 54 (9.3) disagree and 41 (7.0%) did not have an opinion on the matter. Data from BUK also shows that 210 (75.0%) of the respondents agree, 42 (15.0%) disagree and 28 (10.0%) of the respondents did not have an opinion on the matter. The majority of the respondents from both universities therefore agree that they do not use the Net for negative activities. It could be deduced that students generally would want to act responsibly in using the Net to meet their daily needs.

Table 11: Ways in which Internet use helps students to be better citizens of Nigeria

Characteristic	ABU		BUK	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It helps by creating an avenue for interacting and sharing our opinion on topical issues in the society	126	21.6	73	21.6
By providing an avenue for student students to access information about developments in the society	95	16.3	49	16.3
By enabling a channel for enlightening students about their civic responsibilities	136	23.3	67	23.3
By going online to create awareness about issues in Nigeria that of concern to the public	109	18.7	73	18.7
Total	583	100.0	280	100.0

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2015

This question was open ended and required students to express themselves freely on the ways they feel the Internet can help them be better citizens of Nigeria. The responses were aggregated according to the themes they conveyed. From ABU, 126 (21.6%) of the respondents from ABU said that the Internet can help by creating an avenue for interacting and sharing of opinion on topical issues in the society; 73 (21.6%) of the respondents from BUK also share the same view. Respondents also suggested that the Internet use can make them better citizens by providing an avenue for students to access information about developments in the society; 95 (16.3%) of the respondent from ABU and 49 (16.3%) of the respondents from BUK also share the same view. Furthermore, 136 (23.3%) of the respondents from ABU and 67 (23.3) of the respondents from BUK said that the Internet helps them to be better citizens of Nigeria

because it make them aware of their civic responsibilities. Finally, 109 (18.7%) of respondents from ABU and 73 (18.7%) of respondents from BUK said students can be better citizens by going online to create awareness about issues in Nigeria that are of concern to the public.

4.2. Discussion and Implications of Findings

As can be seen in the tables and charts above, based on the general findings of this study, students manifest effective citizenship through the regular use of the Internet to meet their needs. As revealed, the Net enables students to access, retrieve, evaluate, interpret and act on information to be able to participate in community affairs, to develop community involvement and to have an informed opinion about problems occurring locally, nationally and internationally. This is consequent upon the fact discovered that 518 (88.0%) of the respondents to the questionnaire administered in ABU and 224 (80.0%) of the respondents in BUK agree that they use the Internet regularly to chat, source for educational materials, emails and visit social media sites.

From the responses, more time was devoted to searching for academic materials online (3-4 hrs daily) while the majority of respondents spent 1-2 hours daily on emails, chatting and social media. As such, the majority of these regular users of the Internet are between the ages of 15-30. The above therefore provides answer to the research question as to what extent students use the Internet. Thus, the extent of use can be determined by the number of respondents who agree to use the Internet regularly. Out of the 583 (ABU) and 280 (BUK) copies of the questionnaire returned, 518 and 224 respectively use the Internet regularly.

On the objective bothering on the extent to which students express their freedom as citizens on the Internet, the study found out that students regularly express active citizenship on the Net. The majority of respondents from both BUK and ABU attest to this from their responses to the questionnaire administered. Data from the questionnaire administered reveals that 491 (84.3%) of the respondents from ABU and 238 (85.0%) from BUK agree to exercise their freedom of speech, freedom of association on the Internet. As such, students do not feel restricted to air their views on the Net. They find it easy to express their views about Nigeria online and they consider comments/ posts online as fulfilling their obligations towards creating a better society (see figure 1-9). Responses from the FGD sessions also corroborate this position. Two key responses from the focus group sessions sum up the collective attitude of the FGDs to this:

Internet can make it easy for you not to be shy to express your feeling, maybe because you are not physically there, but just your name and picture representing you and speaking on behalf of yourself through the Internet. It helps you feel free to express your opinion wherever you are. You are also able to know about current happenings in your community even if are not in the community. Wherever you are you can share a development opinion with the community people. So it helps you express your own feeling towards what is happening in the community (FGD Response Group 2 BUK).

Similarly a participant in the FGD session from BUK also states that:

I think the Internet has also brought the citizens closer to the government. Like I saw a page on Facebook called APC. You can share your view about issues of governance, like me, who loves to comment on anything politics. The internet has been the medium people air their views about issues of governance, even though they do not see those in power but at least it gives people the opportunity to share their views about what is happening on the political scene, so there is this connection between government and the people (FGD Response Group 2 ABU).

Consequently, it is this kind of awareness and potential for engagement in constructive discussion, which is demonstrated by students, that can most likely build them up and enhance their capacity to become effective citizens both on and offline. This is because

as demonstrated above, freedom of expression is critical to the actualisation of active citizenship and this of course comes with an understanding of the opportunities which the Internet offers. The above therefore validates the position of Di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006 cited in Gil de Zúñiga *etal* (2014:614) that: “People can pursue their political goals online by forwarding e-mails, sharing opinions about politics and current events, expressing dissatisfaction with governments by commenting on government officials’ social media pages and participating in online collective actions against certain policies.”

This finding also shows that using the Internet as a source for political news has dramatically increased the diversity and openness of information. With the capacity to express freedom being expanded, Nigerian students can now therefore be at the forefront of using the Internet for enlightenment and civic education. One cannot expect students not to be active in expressing their freedom and right to speak freely because the architecture of the Net in itself demands that they openly speak regarding whatever they feel strongly about. Thus their use of the Net to express their freedom is premised on the social conditions and needs within which they have found themselves.

The FGD provided an insight on students’ basic understanding of citizenship and the manner in which youths have over time used the Internet to enhance their lives as citizens. Several opinions were given as to who a citizen is and what citizenship entails. One of the respondents in the FDG group 1 BUK, sharing his opinion notes: “Being a citizen has to do with nationality, being born in a country.” Similarly: “A citizen is someone who is a member of a community and is also entitled to some rights and privileges and is also expected to perform certain duties” (FGD Response Group 1

ABU). These various views can be attributed to the different experiences of individuals which have accumulated to form what they have come to accept as the basic concept of citizenship.

What cuts across the responses received from all the FGDs conducted is the fact that a citizen is a member of a community with certain rights and obligations. There is therefore no doubt that the youths are not completely naïve about their status as citizens; they demonstrate an understanding of the intricacies of citizenship. Providing a clear cut description of a citizen which captures the entire understanding of the FGD session, a respondent notes:

A citizen is somebody that lives in a particular place and has rights. Rights when it comes to citizenship are what you are entitled to as a member of that society or community. It is also the freedom to carry out certain responsibilities in that particular place (FGD Response Group 1 BUK).

Thus, the issue of rights was the most prominent across all FGD. The youths considered citizenship as a status that grants them certain rights. These rights, however, are manifestations of the relationship between the individual and the state which grants them. Citizenship therefore, “comes with rights and responsibilities. As a citizen of a particular place you are expected to enjoy certain rights and apart from enjoying rights you are expected to carry out some responsibilities such as paying of tax” (FGD Response Group 2 BUK). From their understanding, it means that the individual himself has a role to play as a citizen in the actualization of his rights. The consequence of this kind of awareness is what has implication for citizenship. This is because they are able to demonstrate an understanding of what it takes to be a citizen, both in terms of what is expected from the state and what they should do to be responsible citizens. With this understanding, they are likely to grow to become citizens who will pay their

taxes, respect constituted law and order as well as lawfully access their freedom as citizens.

Consequently, participation is key in attaining these freedoms and one vital instrument which fosters this is the Internet. The Internet has become instrumental in the lives of almost every Nigerian student and as citizens they have found it useful in meeting their everyday needs. Access to the Net therefore becomes critical, as access to the Net ensures that students have access to information. From the qualitative data gathered, the majority of students from both universities (ABU 73% and BUK 85% respectively) access the Internet through their smart phones. Majority of the respondents in the FGD sessions corroborated this. A participant expressing the collective view of the group states that “you might have a system but still use your phone to browse... phones are very accessible because they are mobile. You can carry them along with you wherever you go, so it is more easy to use in accessing the Net” (FGD Response Group 1 BUK).

While the implication of this is that students do not to have problems with access to the Net, it is important to note that the regular use they speak of results from their personal effort to gain access through their mobile phones and devices. Hence, they spend a lot to buy mobile data (which on the average costs N1500 for a monthly plan) in order to stay connected to the Net and exercise their desires to communicate and access information. Even with this, they are not guaranteed satisfaction from the mobile network providers as the service fluctuates at will. One of the respondents in the FGD session (Group 1 BUK) makes a submission on the issue of access which stands out from all the responses in the entire sessions held:

Take, for example, the network. It may have problems and maybe you want to communicate with someone urgently, for example via skype because you want to talk to the person instantly. The network problem becomes a barrier because at that moment it is an urgent need and it has not been met (FGD response group 1 BUK).

The implication of this is that student may be hindered from expressing themselves as citizens at critical times they desire to do so because of the inefficiency in service of the mobile network providers who facilitate Internet services to their mobile phones. The above position also implicates the discourse of the digital divide. While the gap is gradually being bridged, evidenced through the significant improvement in the use and provision of internet services in Nigeria, it appears that a lot still needs to be done to ensure that users receive efficient Internet services.

As such, one can therefore draw a correlation between access to the Net and the active expression of freedom as citizens. This is because access to the Net invariably grants individuals access to information, and access to information also empowers individuals to generate original content themselves, thus creating new forms of expression. Thus, it is an opportunity for users to gain access to information, through a process which is interactive and participatory that can inadvertently lead users to express themselves freely as citizens. As people interact and participate, they express themselves through opinions, views and also meet their individual or collective needs on the Net.

As earlier reflected on the figures, it is pertinent to comment on whether the Internet can assist students to acquire knowledge to become well-informed citizens. The study revealed that the Internet has made giant strides in enabling participation, inclusion and access to knowledge about happenings on the Nigerian landscape, (see figure 8-13). One of the respondents in the FGD explains that:

I think it has helped to bring government closer to the people. If you look at it critically, almost all the newspapers have their own online channel through which they disburse information on a daily basis. Being a fan of the Internet, I do check these news sites once or twice every day and you will find out that there are critical topics that you will be prompted to drop your comment about. Definitely you might not be able to go to Aso Rock to complain but you can post it online. You see there is one thing about information; if you are not informed you will be deformed. When you are informed you will be posting your own opinion about issues and others will be correcting you or adding more information about what is being discussed. That is one of the ways the internet has helped us reason together on certain issues for national development (FGD Response Group 2 ABU).

What this throws up is that the Internet provides what one might refer to as a ‘public sphere’ (Habermas 1984) for accessing information which inadvertently makes issues of governance known to the people. When this happens, youths are empowered by the information they receive from the Net and are able to make informed decisions or condition their minds towards the consequence of the information they have received. Such demonstration of the place of information in empowering citizens in society by the participant above reveals that those who participate in these online engagements are more likely to become effective citizens offline due to the level of awareness and consciousness they have garnered. The response got from the questionnaire strengthens this position as the majority of respondents (83.9%) from ABU and (85.5%) from BUK attest to receiving information online that help them understand the Nigerian society.

Capturing this position succinctly a participant notes:

The Internet has empowered the low class in the society because the Internet has become a common thing; everybody has access to Internet. I can stay in my house and make suggestions that will better my country and all that. Like we said, there is freedom of speech. Citizens ought to know about their country very well. Through the Internet you get information about what is happening in your society; it helps you as a citizen to know more about your community. Before now, when internet was not popular, some people in far places found it difficult to access information about what was happening in other places, but through the Internet all you have to do is just Google and you will find whatever news or information you need (FGD Response Group 2 ABU).

This supports Gimmler's (2001) position that "using the Internet as a source for news has dramatically increased the diversity and openness of information." One can therefore see the role the Internet plays in making students aware of their environment and things happening around thus making them gain a greater control of their environment and when this happens, development is in sight, as Singhal (2004) has argued.

Fundamentally, it is the freedom which the Net gives that is instrumental to citizens acquiring knowledge to be well informed. This is because; the sharing of information which is enabled on the Net leads citizens to acquire knowledge about issues that affect them. Sharing his experience on how the Internet has helped citizens in critical situations, an FGD respondent: "I think it even saves people's lives like during the killing in Saminaka, some people were able to escape it through information they got on WhatsApp. A student was on his way travelling home when he received the information via WhatsApp and he told the driver and they stopped" (FGD Response Group 1 ABU).

Furthermore, looking at the conventional media, the conventional or rather mainstream media organisations might not be so predisposed to share certain critical perspectives on issues with listeners or viewers as a result of restrictions which can be attributed to factors such as fairness and most critically, issues of ownership and control. The case is different with the Net as it "eliminates all restrictions concerning expressing views about your country. You don't need to worry about going to the media houses but just use your phone to express yourself about the happenings in your community or country. You don't need to spend money, for instance, to project your country or where

you are coming from; you can do it freely” (FGD Response, Group 2 ABU). This position gives credence to the submission of Carpini, Cook, & Jacob, (2004) that ‘as knowledge increases, it encourages media reflection and elaboration among the audience, thus cultivating better informed citizens’.

Students/youths see the Internet as an avenue to create conversations around issues that are topical in Nigeria. This exemplifies the characteristic of the Internet as an interactive communication tool that facilitates sharing of ideas (Manovich 2001, Bennett, Mcquail 2005). Participants argued that the Internet helps in exposing them to news sources as well as enabling them to create and share information speedily. One participant in the FGD observes that:

In terms of news, you can only tell what is happening around you with news update. You can only inform others about what is happening currently. You cannot tell a story about what is happening somewhere else unless the news is being posted from where it is happening. So you can keep people up to date through the Internet if the event is happening around you. If you are in a scenario where something strange is happening all you just have to do is to take a picture to make it real, then you go on the Net and post it on whatever social network you want to use (FGD Response Group 2 BUK).

Youths have become more active in setting their agenda as citizens. It is no longer an exclusive reserve of the political class, but a task of every individual aiming to ensure that a better society is built through collective understanding that emanates from the sharing of ideas and information. Thus, as citizens become active on the Net in relating with topical issues, there is a movement that transcends mere agenda setting to visibility creation. The instantaneous postings and comments online about issues and events (either catastrophic or beneficial) that are ongoing is more about making visible those events to the general populace. A lot of this happens on the Net, so much so that it becomes even difficult for people to set agenda because users are engrossed in

discussing recent happening as they occur. This is not ruling out the possibility of setting agendas via the Internet as we have people referred to as social media enhancers who operate blogs and websites that have become reputable for news and information and thus could be used to set agendas on the Internet.

From the above, one can safely say that the Internet in itself does not automatically guarantee the enhancement of citizenship, but it has the structure which can be used to open up more opportunities for the advancement of citizenship expression and freedom. In particular, the interactive features of social media may amplify the impact of expression because they readily allow one's expression to be shared with many people simultaneously. The expressive potential of the average citizen has been transformed; individuals are now in a position to "post, at minimal cost, messages and images that can be viewed instantly by global audiences" (Lupia & Sin 2003:316).

Consequently, it appears there is a growing culture of political participation by youths as occasioned by the free flow of information enabled on the Internet. Participants observed that the use of the Internet has strengthened their ability to participate in the Nigerian society as democratic citizens. One of the participants in FGD 1 (ABU) describes the manner in which the Internet is used by youths and how it generates information that keeps them informed:

Thank God for Twitter and Facebook. I can go on Facebook and just type "Buhari is wasting our money" and people will want to know why and from what perspective I am coming from. Thank God for Twitter. I can also tag Buhari and he can see my comment except if he doesn't want to check, so it is actually helping us to express ourselves more and to understand other people's way of thinking and view. I saw a post on Facebook where one guy wrote "I love the North" and then one other person who was from the East responded, "What is there in the north if not Boko Haram?" and they began to exchange comments and

other people joined in the conversation and they forget that whether East or North we are all Nigerians. The conversation got over 500 comments.

The above description demonstrates how Internet use is integral to citizenship in an information age and why political and economic uses of the Internet differ from other activities online. The ability to participate in civic sphere has become central to the conception of citizenship as embracing political community and equality of opportunity. The example cited by the participant above shows the level to which youths consider it vital to engage in debates and discourses with a view to expressing support for what they believe in, or register their disagreement on issues they do not accept.

Therefore the Internet, in this instance, endows students as members of a society with the right to pursue their own vision and be free from unreasonable government interference such as restriction on free speech as demonstrated in the submission above. This is in agreement with suggestions from literature that ‘individuals who use social media to be informed will also tend to be involved in politics, as a direct effect. In fact, drawing on cross-lagged correlation results, the notion of a virtuous circle might be taken for granted: People who get informed via Social Network Sites tend to participate more, and participation also leads to information-seeking behaviours’ (Gil de Zúñiga *et al* 2014).

The Internet is also instrumental in creating awareness and keeping students up to date about political events especially election. Stressing the role which the Internet played in the May 2015 general elections, a participant argues:

In the last election the Internet played a vital role. Essentially, the Internet made it easy to be up to date especially if your phone is connected. During the last election most people were able to have up-to-date news about the election through their phones, because the light kept fluctuating and not everybody has generator even though a large population of people who wanted to be up-to-date about the election Internet played a vital role because once you read online you can also show others and they know what is happening in their country. So I think it plays a vital role in providing information as citizens (FGD Response Group 2 BUK).

Furthermore, one can deduce from this that students are not as inactive and unconcerned about politics as it may generally seem. They are concerned and contribute actively as citizens in the arena of politics. For that reason, like education, the Internet has the ability to provide information, skills and networks that enable political and economic participation. Broadening access and skills supports the equality of opportunity and membership in the political community (Mossberger, Tolber and McNeal 2008). This further goes to show that students need to be able to exercise political, civil, social rights and responsibilities for self and others. Communication skills are also an essential element for an active and responsible citizenship, as people need to communicate to be able to express ideas and opinions with the confidence that what they are saying will be heard and taken into account.

Summing up the group feelings of the FGDs on the 2015 general election one can safely say that through the Internet, people were able to follow the proceedings of the election, get results as well as foster transparency because most of the things that would have been done surreptitiously were revealed. This goes to affirm the position of Correia (2002) that: “The Internet offers a new opportunity for increased citizen participation in public affairs. For example, civic networks have linked together

citizens in local communities, offering easier access to public information and promoting greater citizen involvement.”

It can be deduced from the above the extent to which the Net played a significant role in keeping students (as citizens) informed about political happenings in Nigeria during the April 2015 general elections. However, while the Internet has demonstrated its potentials in keeping citizens well-informed, a participant in the FGD sessions cautions that it can also be harmful;

It’s also dangerous because on the Net there is nobody to edit anything you are posting unlike the traditional media that goes through gate keeping process. For instance, you can post anything on social media that can cause chaos, say, “100 Christians died and 20 Muslims died in a crisis.” This can cause unrest. Traditional media will never do that; they will just say about so and so number of people died during the crisis (FGD Response Group 2 ABU).

This argument brings to the fore issues of sensationalising of news arising from the fact that everybody is now a creator of news on the Net. The conventional processes of verifying information and making sure news is subjective through editing are fast losing relevance. As such, “some people do abuse the Net. Some people just go online and post things that are not appropriate. Some citizens do abuse their rights because people just go online to say things they should not say, for example some people will go online to insult Muslims or Christians” (FGD Group 2 Response ABU). This kind of behaviour, as captured in the response above is not an expression of good citizenship. The critic of such behaviours, as expressed by the participant above, is very crucial to the formation of effective and active citizenship in Nigeria. It shows that students are awake to the wrongs orchestrated via the Internet and can contribute as citizens to changing the situation by criticizing those who wrongly participate in making inciting

comments online. If youths/students must continue to have this consciousness within them then they are most likely to impart positive values on others as citizens.

In trying to ascertain the role of Internet access in the academic pursuit of students and its implication on effective expression of citizenship, the study discovered that students find the Internet a useful resource for learning and personal development, which translates to building their capacities as citizens. Respondents to the questionnaire administered show how internet use builds capacity, enhances academics, aid interaction and information sharing among students, (see figure 14-17). Respondent during the FGD observed that the Internet has contributed immensely to their academics. The group feelings from the FGD's conducted suggest that the Internet has become a vital component of the educational system today. This they attributed to the fact that there is hardly any institution today that students do not benefit from using the Internet as a source for materials.

Describing how the Internet has been of importance to him in his academics, one of the participants submits: "My department is a new department and we don't have access to new materials from the library; there are materials we don't have, but with the help of our phones we get materials from the Internet. I think it brought a lot to us" (FGD Response Group 1 BUK). For him, the Internet serves as a potent alternative to sourcing for materials where the conventional library has not been of great help.

Furthermore:

The internet has really helped in so many ways. There are e-books that you can download and keep in your phones or laptop. You spend a lot of time in the library going through large encyclopedias, looking for a specific thing but with

your phone you can narrow it down; the Internet makes it easier (FGD Response Group 1 BUK).

Again this attests to the ever increasing importance of the Internet to students - availability to and access to materials are very crucial to student's actualization of their academic dreams. This finding confirms Udende's (2010) position that the Internet enables students to solve their academic problems and likewise conveys the fact that there exists a significant relationship between students' use of the internet and their academic performance.

Despite the positive contributions of the Internet to student academic pursuit, there are also negative implications to its use. A participant in the FGD Group 2 BUK contends that:

The negative aspect of it is that you find out that student now become lazy they don't go into deep reading to understand what they are taught. I have a scenario where someone wants to do a project, you find out that almost everything is online, the guy had to download a project being done by someone else he didn't want to do a proper research of getting materials, reading hard and compose a proper project, he had to download a complete project then edit a few things to submit. With all this he can't defend the project because he is not the one that read for it, he didn't create it yourself it's just like copy and paste you don't know where the person got the materials from (FGD Response Group 2 BUK).

This therefore raises issues of plagiarism and the inability of students to acknowledge the materials they have used for assignments. Other participants across the focus groups in ABU and BUK also expressed their views about materials gotten from the Internet and how they think the issue of plagiarism as well as copy and paste could be stopped. A participant in the FDG group 1 ABU proffering a possible remedy observed that: "It's going to be difficult, but I think it is left for the students to buckle up. You don't just copy everything you see. Different sites will give you different opinions, so instead

of copying straight from the Net why not just read and understand and present your own view about the topic in question?” This perhaps stems from the understanding that as students, one of the ways to express good citizenship is to abide by the rules of scholarship. Acknowledging materials sourced is an important ethics guiding the conduct of scholarship and students must be responsible by following the rules of engagement in the academics. The implication of this is that those students who exhibit and abide by the ethics of the academics, in terms of avoiding plagiarism, are most likely to translate their good behaviours as citizens when they eventually find themselves in the outside world.

Nevertheless, the significant contribution the Net can make to the advancement of students academic pursuit cannot be overstated. “I think the authorities are failing to see the fact that we need to advance because the Internet makes people to get interested in education, because I can just go through my system, study the material on it without going through bulky materials and I understand and get through my exams. So I think the Net makes people interested in education” (FGD Response Group 2 ABU). This therefore is an advantage which should be properly appropriated. By creating interest in education, it also has implication for citizenship, because by means of education the individuals acquire knowledge and skills that favour the development of citizenship conscience and exercise, which is, in turn, indispensable for the construction of citizenship (De la Paz 2011:7).

The Internet is a repository of various foreign and indigenous scholarly researches and articles that offer new insights to issues, areas and specializations that can contribute to the knowledge acquisition of Nigerian students. This is in line with Ito, et.al., (2006) &

Jenkins' (2007:3) position that "the internet can facilitate learning and skill development outside formal learning environments by supporting peer-to-peer learning of knowledge and skills, collaboration, diverse cultural expression, development of skills valued in the modern workplace and a more empowered conception of citizenship."

Although the Internet creates the avenue for cultural expressions it is also important to note that it has negative implication for the Nigerian culture: "Today there is a trend where many pornographic things are being posted online and through those things people get morally unsound and morally weak and this is really degrading the moral values we used to have in those days of our forefathers" (FGD Response Group 1 BUK). The above submission by the participant brings to the fore Omekwu's concern on the exposure of youths to the Internet. He notes that:

The more dangerous dimensions of the digital revolution include pornography, money laundering, cultism, international terrorism and child abuse, which all constitute a threat to African cultural heritage. It is extremely difficult for African countries with strong Islamic and Christian cultures to tolerate the level of pornographic activities that go on the Internet. In traditional African culture, nudity is still not a virtue. In many African universities and urban centres, nudity has become and Africa's rich and elegant dress style are becoming outdated.

Most Nigerian youths have become so hooked onto strange western cultures emulated through these media that alienate them further from their traditional roots. Mode of dressing expressed through the exposure of various parts of the body is now a common occurrence among the youth. The males do what is referred to as 'sagging,' whereby the trousers is no longer worn around the waist but would be hanging on the buttocks thereby exposing their 'designer' underwear. For the ladies, they indulge in putting on outfits that leave them exposed in order to conform to their new found culture.

The use and abuse of drugs, use of arms and ammunitions, promiscuity, exposure to pornography and various other negative lifestyles are often fallout of accessibility to the Internet and cable channels. Unfortunately, indigenous languages, which are the most effective method of transmitting culture, are increasingly becoming extinct (Adesina 2012). Perhaps this is the reason why countries like china have evolved an extensive Internet censorship law to separate Chinese cyberspace from the rest of the world. While it helps to expand the growth of the Chinese ideology and uniqueness of its culture it has implication for citizenship expression. The government authorities not only block websites content but also monitor the Internet access of individuals. It is said to have the biggest prison for Netizens. Offences for which they are accused include communicating with groups abroad, signing online petitions, and calling for reforms and an end to corruption (Yu 2012). This further exposes the fact the Internet is not all Eldorado in terms of citizenship expression. There are forces of control that could restrict citizens from having access to the information and freedom they require on the Net.

However, findings from the quantitative data shows that majority of the respondents from both universities express a strong sense of citizenship by participating in online groups about Nigeria, providing useful information about happenings in Nigeria, mobilising people using the Net, and using the Net in ways that will not offend other citizens (see table 28-32). Corroborating this, many of the participants submitted that behaving positively online by making comments that foster unity, providing useful/beneficial information and participating in discussions is a way of expressing a strong sense of citizenship even as a Netizen. According to the participants:

I think the best way we can be good citizens is to start from ourselves by talking to people about things they should do and the consequences. The internet has provided a comfortable access that even at the comfort of my bed, classroom or office, one can access it to do stuff. The Internet should be a medium through which people will use to enlighten, inform and expose people about issues that will help them religiously, politically, morally and any other way one can think of that will help to build up someone and make the person a better person (FGD Response Group 1 BUK)

It is important to note that students' willingness to use the Net to express citizenship will be premised on the need to exercise their rights as citizens. This demonstrates that students are aware of their responsibilities as scholars. Being a responsible citizen means that you have regard and respect for constituted rules and regulations and being able to properly reference an academic material as a student, is tantamount to expressing a strong sense of citizenship.

It was also gathered from the FGD that students can express a strong sense of citizenship: "Criticizing false rumour; you can help people understand that certain information is not true. By doing this you must also come up with the facts to back up what you are saying. So I think criticizing false rumour can make you be a better citizen in a community" (FGD Response Group 2 BUK). The comments provided above underscore the fact that students can and use the Internet to express a strong sense of citizenship. Using information to better the understanding of and correcting the harmful mindset of fellow citizens is crucial to the expression of citizenship. The demonstration of this positive mindset by students has great implication for citizenship as they are most likely to translate this behaviour to their daily living.

Students of Nigerian Universities, as already seen from above, are at home with the use of the Internet and also using the Net to enlighten other citizens about issues ranging

from politics to religion is a familiar activity they engage in online contrary to the belief that they do not use the Net for anything positive. In describing how students can express a strong sense of citizenship on the Net, one of the participants notes: “I think as citizens we should be mindful of the kind of posts we make. Our post should be those that will foster unity. We should also be mindful of the kind of friends we accept on Facebook. We should check them out first because people can be deceptive and send you request because they want to carry out certain negative action” (FGD Response Group 1 ABU). Just as echoed by other participants, the need to be more involved positively by also being vigilant, cautious and acting responsibly online is critical to expressing a strong sense of citizenship online.

While there are possibilities for the expression of strong citizenship on the Net, there is also the question of anonymity of those who use the Net to commit various crimes of fraud and deception. The Net therefore is not devoid of negativity. Individuals use the net to perpetuate all sorts of crimes from deception to fraud. One of the respondents noted that: “The Internet gives people the opportunity to tell lies to other people, because since they are not seeing them it easy to just tell people things and they will believe or you see some people going to hotels to take pictures and they will post it to give the impression that they are living a good life” (FGD Response Group 1 ABU). This reveals one of the greatest problems associated with the Internet, where people hide under false identities to make claims, share information and mislead people because they supposedly have the freedom to do so. In as much as it gives people the opportunity to relate freely and reach out to others across vast distances, users have also become accustomed to the fact that they must be very careful and cautious while using Internet enabled platforms to meet new people as well as meet their needs.

As established in the discussion so far, the Internet helps students to become better citizens. It is the manner in which students use the Net as Netizens that shapes their lives and their understanding of who they are, what they know and what they can become as citizens of Nigeria. The students of both ABU and BUK demonstrate an understanding of the benefits using the Net brings to them as citizens. Their responses from both the instruments of questionnaire and FGD bring to the fore the overall understanding of this study that Internet use helps to foster expression of active citizenship.

Consequently, the focus of development communication has been long rooted in the domain of participation of citizens, increasing poor as well as marginalised people's influence over the wider decision-making processes which affect their lives. Contemporary citizenship encompasses a wide range of political, civil and social rights and responsibilities for both the individual and the state. Thus, development is engendered when citizens become active, effective and responsible citizens. This requires that people be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities towards other people, the community and the state. The Internet therefore, makes this possible, empowering citizen to become active by repositioning themselves at the forefront of issues that affect them. The communicative intent to the Net therefore, enables citizens to locate, access, retrieve, evaluate, interpret and act on information to be able to participate in community affairs, to develop community involvement and to have an informed opinion about problems occurring locally, nationally or internationally.

An increasing volume of information for citizenship is produced by (or about) national and local government, government departments and public sector organisations on the Internet; political parties, civic societies and interest groups are increasingly using Information and Communication Technologies to promote civic engagement. It is this type of empowerment that is capable of leading people to what Rogers (1976:133) describes as development: “a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment.”

4.3 Key Findings

The following are the key findings which emerged from the study:

- i. There is an increasing reliance on the Internet by students/ youth in Nigeria in terms of its use to meet their needs. This therefore means that Nigerian youths are Netizens. From the sample population studied, 88.0% of the respondents from ABU and 80% of the respondents from BUK use the Net regularly to meet their needs. These needs range from academic, social and political needs.
- ii. Access to information on the Net is a critical factor in developing active citizenship amongst youth. Students observed that their views about political events and trends are formed based on the discussion and information they gather both on social media platforms and online newspaper sites.
- iii. Students need a more student-centered approach to knowledge acquisition to suit the changing developments in technology. Technology has become an

integral part of human society and has affected almost every facet of human endeavour. The implication of this is that adequate education invariably translates to knowledgeable citizens, and knowledgeable citizens translate to active citizens.

- iv. Exposure to the Net has negative implications for the cultural values of Nigerian youths. Their exposure to violent images, pornography and negative lifestyles no doubt takes away the sanctity of the values which makes Nigerians youth's responsible citizens.
- v. While the Internet assists students in their studies, it can also lead to the decline of craftsmanship. This results from the fact that students are likely to become less interested in being critical with all their attention diverted by the possibilities that the Net offers (chatting, etc).
- vi. Group bond and collective responsibility of citizens is strengthened through the platforms enabled by the Internet. Part of the observations that respondents made is that the Internet can help strengthen collective bond and identity. Participants in the FGD observed that they are able to keep connected and communicate with one another through groups created on the Internet enabled platforms.
- vii. Acting responsibly online is a derivative of active citizenship. Data obtained from the questionnaire administered revealed that 83.7% of the respondents from ABU and 75.0% of the respondents from BUK believe that as responsible citizens, individuals should not use the Internet to perpetrate acts of fraud, incite violence and engage in other acts that might be considered unfriendly.

- viii. The effect of technology on society is dependent on the use that individuals have for it. Participants of the focus group sessions observed that people have different reasons for going online; some go to source for information while others go to make purchases. As such, what individuals gain from the Net is premised on what they go to find on the Net.
- ix. Internet users are exposed to false, unverified information on the Internet, which invariably can create false alarm. Resulting from the interconnectedness and interactivity which the Net has occasioned, any information or news which is unverified, untrue and false is most likely to create false alarm amongst citizens.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Summary

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations. There is no doubt that the Internet has become an integral part of human society today. It is described as the world's largest interconnected environment, the most recent communication tool of the world where a user can transcend borders and have access to various platforms of connectivity and interaction. The use of the Internet by students has mostly been seen to align with their need to connect and interact with one another. This need for interaction and connection is pointing to a situation of an ever increasing utilization of the Internet by Nigerian students. Inadvertently, this increase in the use of the Internet by youths has also culminated in new forms of expression of citizenship.

Thus students are not just interested in chatting and making new friends; they also find in the Net a useful source of information, education and an avenue to reflect on pressing issues of the Nigerian society. While the Internet may not be the answer to all the problems of citizenship, it has become instrumental in the actualization of people's engagement with and demand for information, which is key to active expression of citizenship. This results from the fact that information enables citizens to make informed choices about their lives and conditions.

By way of understanding the consequences of Internet use on citizenship in the Nigerian society today this study explored how citizenship can be enhanced through the use of the Internet. This position is however embedded in the theoretic assumption that the use of technology is determined by what needs people have for it. The study thus

set out to understand how students use the Net to express citizenship bringing to fore the correlation between access to information, education and citizenship.

Chapter One of this study presented the background to the study, providing an insight into Internet use and the new perspectives emanating from the discourse of Internet and citizenship. The chapter also presented the rationale for the study, the aim and objectives, the scope of the study as well as research questions.

Chapter Two presented a detailed review of literature in the area of Internet use by citizens reflecting their successes and failures. Chapter two also looked at communication, Internet, citizenship and citizenship participation. The chapter drew a correlation between communication, citizenship and Internet. It highlights Internet use in this modern world as critical to giving citizens a more active role in determining their own existence. Chapter two also presented the theoretical framework of technological determinism and social shaping of technology as the theory which gives this study impetus.

Chapter Three of this study discussed the methodology used for the research. Within this chapter, the justification of the methods, procedure and approaches used were presented. The chapter justified why the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were suitable for realizing the objectives of this study. The chapter described the population of study, the sample population and the sampling techniques employed in determining the sample size of the study. Chapter three also highlighted questionnaire FGD, and observation as the major instruments used to gather data from the sampled population.

Chapter Four of this study contains the presentation of data and analysis. The researcher also discussed and analysed the data got from the sampled population using both the qualitative and quantitative instruments earlier discussed. As such, data got from the questionnaire were interpreted, analysed (based on the objectives of the study) and presented in tables. The responses from the FGD were also presented and analysed based on the research questions formulated from the research objectives. A comprehensive synergy between the content of the four chapters already captured and formed the basis for drawing the conclusions arrived at by this thesis.

5.1 Conclusion

Students constitute a very important part of Nigerian society, resulting from the fact that as youths they are meant to fill up important aspects of the work force after graduation. Contrary to some opinion that today's youth only use technology to meet social needs of connectivity and chatting, this study was able to establish that the youths, especially students, use the Net in ways that build the bonds of citizenship.

Thus, the Net, as already established, has come to stay as an integral part of human society and as such, its deep influence cannot be ignored. It is influential to giving people voice, availing individuals the opportunity to be active as citizens, engaging in debates and discussions which invariably can lead to people forming a consciousness to make them responsible to their environment. With the findings from this study, it is no longer strange that Nigerian youths spend most of their time online. Thus, if Nigeria must continue to have youths that are responsible citizens of the country, then attention must be paid to appropriating Internet technology to the use of civic education.

This study has been able to draw a correlation between Internet use and citizenship, Internet use and acquisition of knowledge as well as knowledge and the expression of citizenship. Internet use, no doubt, has implications for active citizenship. This is premised upon the fact that it affords users the opportunity to express themselves and participate voluntarily in causes that add value to society. The key to development in any society lies with the ability of citizens to make informed choices and decisions so as to take action, individually and as part of collective processes. This is critical to ensuring that people play a full part as active citizens and to be civically engaged through the exercise of moral responsibility, community involvement and exercise of their rights and responsibilities.

The Internet, therefore, is key in making citizens conscious, knowledgeable and aware of what they need to do and how they need to do it, thereby giving them the power to take decisions resulting from a consciousness built out of interactive engagements. This is not to say that the Internet has no shortcomings. Notably, the Net is prone to manipulation by individuals who use it to commit crimes. Nevertheless, this study established that the Net has a lot of potentials to the actualisation of citizens rights and freedom. The capacity of the Net to foster common experience of sharing is instrumental to building the effectiveness of citizens in achieving their goals in society. If Nigeria must grow as a nation, then people need to be empowered to identify groups, spaces and opportunities that empower youths to actively participate as citizens in influencing event and changes in society.

5.2 Recommendations

- i. Students must learn to manage their time properly; between Internet use and their academics. Critical learning is essential as the whole essence of education is to become critical citizens and not just people who find the easy way out.
- ii. Students/ youths must take full advantage of the Internet in terms of contributing positively to society by commenting and participating in discussions that will help build unity and a patriotic spirit.
- iii. Universities should begin to develop a more student-centered approach to knowledge acquisition to suit the changing developments in technology. Technology has become an integral part of human society and has affected almost every facet of human endeavour. Therefore, teaching must also take into consideration the present technological changes so as to ensure effective knowledge delivery. The implication of this is that adequate education invariably translates to knowledgeable citizens, and knowledgeable citizens translate to active citizens.
- iv. Government must do more to ensure the provision of Internet access to Nigerian citizens. This can be achieved by making sure network providers undergo periodic assessment to keep the quality in check and also ensure that they improve in the provision of service.
- v. Higher institutions must also invest more to increase Internet infrastructure in the educational sector. Every public school and university should have at least a functional library equipped with Internet access to help improve the knowledge base and sources of students.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

- i. Further studies could expand the scope of the case study to include universities from other geographical locations in Nigeria so as to have a wider coverage. This will also aid in reaching generalisations and conclusions that might be different based on the cultural differences and exposure of students to the Net in the different areas.

- ii. Secondly, further research could also look at how citizens use the Net to facilitate political campaigns in Nigeria. This results from the fact that a lot of mobilisation and political education appears to be going on via social media platform; it will be an interesting field to research into.
- iii. There is the need for further studies into the effects (positive and negative) of participation on the Net by Fluid-anonymous and Hidden identities.
- iv. Further studies could also be undertaken to look at the effect of Internet use on the cultural mores and values of Nigeria as a cultural entity.

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APPENDIX A:

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to generate data for a Ph. D research study in Development Communication titled "Internet Use and the enhancement of citizenship amongst students of two Universities in Northern Nigeria.

N.B.: *The information you will give is strictly for this research purpose, therefore, it will be treated in absolute confidence.*

Instructions: *Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible by ticking in the appropriate boxes. For example:*

Today is going to be a great day for me

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

SECTION A

Sex: Male { } Female { } Age _____ Marital Status _____
Department _____

SECTION B

1. I use the Internet regularly

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

2. How do you mostly access the Internet?

a. Smart phone	b. Laptop	c. Tablet
----------------	-----------	-----------

3. How many hours do you spend online on the following

a. Chatting

i. 1hr-2hrs { } ii. 3hrs-4hrs { }, iii. 5-6hrs { } iv. All day { }

b. Social Networking

i. 1hr-2hrs { } ii. 3hrs-4hrs { } iii. 5-6hrs { } iv. All day{ }

c. Email

i. 1hr-2hrs { } ii. 3hrs-4hrs { } iii. 5-6hrs { } iv. All day{ }

d. Finding Educational Materials/Research

i. 1hr-2hrs { } ii. 3hrs-4hrs { } iii. 5-6hrs { } iv. All day{ }

SECTION C

4. The Internet has expanded my freedom of expression in ways that I have never experienced as a citizen?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

5. As a citizen of Nigeria I am entitled to the freedom of speech, freedom of association, as well as rights to religion

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

6. I often exercise my freedom of speech, freedom of association, as well as rights to religion freely on the internet

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

7. I don't feel restricted from airing my views in any way on the Internet?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

8. I often find it easy to express my political and religious views about Nigeria online

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

9. I do not find it difficult to express my views about relationships, academics, and entertainment online

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

10. I consider my contributions/comments to posts online as fulfilling my obligation as a citizen

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

11. The Internet enables me associate freely online with people irrespective of tribe, religion or social status

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

12. A NETIZEN (citizens of the Net) is someone who uses the internet regularly while a citizen is a native of a place with rights and obligations. As such if citizenship was to be determined by the amount of freedom you have to express yourself, where will you say you find more expression?

a) As a Netizen { } (b). As a Citizen { }

SECTION D

13. I acquire useful and vital information for my studies from the Internet?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

14. I am not able to access information about political, social and economic happenings in Nigeria through the Internet

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

15. The information I access on the internet about Nigeria gives me more understanding of the Nigerian society

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

16. Through my usage of the internet I am able to know about the latest fashion styles in the country

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

17. I am able to reconnect with old friends I haven't seen in a long while through information I get from the internet

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

SECTION E

18. I prefer to source for academic materials from the Internet rather than the library

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

19. My exposure to the Internet builds my capacity to handle academic matters competently

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

20. I get useful material for my assignments/projects from the Internet

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

21. I easily get distracted from my studies as a result of chatting and surfing the Net

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

22. I get important information concerning lectures, tests and tutorials by communicating with friends online?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

23. As a responsible Nigerian I should always acknowledge/reference any material I get from the Internet

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

SECTION F

24. Participating in online groups about Nigeria can help strengthen my identity as a Nigerian citizen

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

25. Providing useful information on the Internet about happenings in the Nigerian society is a way of expressing citizenship

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

26. Mobilizing people online to participate in voting during election is a way of fulfilling my obligation as a citizenship

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

27. As a patriotic and responsible citizen projecting a positive image of the Nigeria culture through comments and pictures online is not necessary

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

28. I do not use the internet to cause violence, explore pornography or engage in any immoral act that promotes fraud as irresponsible citizens do.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree
----------------	-------	------------	-------------------	----------

29. In what way do you think internet usage helps you to be a better citizen of Nigeria?

APPENDIX B:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome
2. Introduction
3. Ground rules
4. Warm up (getting to know each other)
5. Introductory question:

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the words citizen and Netizen?

6. Guiding Questions

- Who is a citizen?
- What are some of the attributes of being a citizen?
- From your experience with Internet usage, do you think the Internet has any benefit to you as a citizen?
- In what ways do you think you can use the Internet effectively as a citizen?
- How can the usage of the Internet assist you in being a better citizen of Nigeria?
- What do you think are the possible effects of internet usage?
- In what ways would you say the Internet has helped your appreciation of the political, social and economic situation in the country?
- Has the Internet helped the political system in Nigeria? If yes, in what ways do you think it has done so?
- As a student, what has the provision of Internet been able to contribute to your studies?
- Would you say the Internet has given people the opportunity to voice out their concerns freely about politics, economic as well as social events in the country?
- What kind of information do you have access to on the Internet? And how has this information impacted on you offline?

Concluding question

Of all the things we have discussed today, what would you say are the most important issues you would like to express?

APPENDIX C:

ABU ZARIA FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GROUP 1

Good afternoon all. You are welcome to this discussion session. I am very grateful that you are able to make out time to be a part of this. Before we start, I would like to say that this discussion is meant to generate information for an ongoing PhD Thesis on Internet Use and the enhancement of Citizenship amongst Youths. So basically we will be sharing information about our experiences of using the Internet. So please feel free to share your opinion and ideas on the issues that will be raised here.

Researcher: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word 'citizenship'?

Bakari S. Sali: Belonging to a country or being part of particular geographical setting called a country.

Rosemary Nuhu: Someone who is a part of a community and is entitled to some certain rights and privileges.

Obed Philip: Someone who is legally a member of a particular community.

Any more responses?

Rosemary Nuhu: A citizen is someone who is a member of a community and is also entitled to some rights and privileges and is also expected to perform certain duties.

Researcher: What do you think are some of the attributes of a citizen? What are you expected to do as a good citizen?

Olubi Oluwaseun: Keeping to the rules and regulation guiding a community.

Samuel Obadiah: Participating in election and political activities.

Segun A. Abraham: Respect for the country, patriotism.

Researcher: Are you all familiar with the internet?

All: Yes.

Researcher: From your experience with Internet usage, do you think the Internet has any benefit to you as a citizen?

Samuel Obadiah: Yes it does. Take example of the recent National Identity registration, you first go online to do the initial registration before you go to the office to complete the registration.

Segun A. Abraham: I think it will also help to reduce crime rate. It is a means of tracking every citizen of Nigeria, having their bio-data stored and then when you commit a crime they can easily trace you.

Adamu Abigail: It also the easiest means of passing out information to others; it gives easy access of information.

Samuel Obadiah: It also helps the country track its citizens outside, because Nigerians love to travel a lot. When people go out and make a post it shows that you are out of the country, so it also helps people know your whereabouts.

Researcher: Do you think that the Internet helps you better appreciate the political and social events in Nigeria, for instance?

Samuel Obadiah: It has, but a country like ours is more on the negative side but a country like U.S. use the Internet for positive things. U.S. is the number one country in the whole world, not because it is actually the number one country but because of positive press and promotion that helps the country, but in our own case we are using it to sensationalize issues. For instance, you will see headlines like “Buhari’s Trip to the U.S. Cost Nigeria 2.2 Billion” instead of saying something that won’t incite people.

Rosemary Nuhu: I don’t think that is a negative part of it; it is like informing the citizens. It depends on how you see it. If they are saying Buhari’s trip to the US is

costing Nigeria 2.2 billion naira, then the essence of that trip is what citizens will be thinking about. They will wonder why that amount of money should be spent on such a trip and then it is going to arouse debate. It is informative. This is the issue going on politically and this is what our money is being used for and if, for instance, they are coming up with a budget then you will have an idea this is what they are doing and it gives different opinions, so to an extent it is informing people on the finances of this country.

Researcher: Can we say that the Internet enhances freedom of expression? How has it helped you as students or as Nigerians in terms of the information you receive about certain happenings around you?

Samuel Obadiah: Thank God for Twitter and Facebook. I can go on Facebook and just type “Buhari is wasting our money” and people will want to know why and from what perspective I am coming from. Thank God for Twitter. I can also tag Buhari and he can see my comment except if he doesn’t want to check, so it is actually helping us to express ourselves more and to understand other people’s way of thinking and view. I saw a post on Facebook where one guy wrote “I love the North” and then one other person who was from the East responded, “What is there in the North if not Boko Haram?” and they began to exchange comments and other people joined in the conversation and they forget that whether East or North we are all Nigerians. The conversation got over 500 comments

Researcher: Do you think the expression which the Internet has enhanced makes any impact, especially in helping us understand ourselves as citizens, influencing policy makers or making people change their views. For instance, do you think the amount of expression enabled on the internet in the last election helped you to be

aware of Buhari's campaign or Goodluck's campaign? And how do you think this helps you as a Nigerian?

Segun A. Abraham: From my own point of view, there was a page I checked on Facebook where they were asking who was going to win between Buhari and Goodluck. People started voting and I discovered that the people who voted for Buhari were more than the people that voted for Goodluck. So it was becoming glaring that people were already buying into the idea of Buhari. Again, the Internet was a big help to Buhari's campaign, because there were people who got convinced along the line through the comments of other people, even though they didn't support him initially. Sometimes through continuous conversation on the topic they begin to support the initial idea they didn't subscribe to. Even when the results were announced, those who did not have access to the television because of one reason or the other, were able to follow it online.

Bakari S. Sali: Let us not also forget that false information about the results was also posted on the Internet and INEC had to be refuting some of the results and warning people not to rely on results on the Net.

Obed Philip: Initially I thought it was only the Northerners that supported Buhari, not until I saw a post and they said "if you support Buhari write *sai baba*. Most of the people that made comments were Yoruba people.

Rosemary Nuhu: The internet also deceived us during the election, because if you were following the trend on the Internet you will see that most of the northerners didn't show support for Jonathan, they only showed for Buhari. What surprised me was the result of Rivers State where over one million votes went to Jonathan. How will they give Jonathan 1.4 and the government is against Jonathan. They were fighting Jonathan and he still got that much votes.

Samuel Obadiah: The internet gives people the opportunity to tell lies to other people, because they are not seeing them so it is easy to just tell people things and they will believe. Some go to hotels and take pictures and they will post it to give the impression that they are living a good life.

Olubi Oluwaseun: The Internet also gives room for people to scam others. My elder sister was scammed. Someone called her that he was in the states and the description just fit that of my sister's friend. The person said he was sending twenty laptops and phones for sale to Nigeria and then my sister sent money and the following morning the person called to say the goods were in the port at Lagos, but when she got to the port nothing was found.

Bakari S. Sali: Let us look at the brighter side of the Internet, like the ease with which one can shop online; internet banking has made life really easy. You can sit at home and buy things or make transactions online.

Olubi Oluwaseun: My only worry is that these people are not being tracked or caught so they go scot-free

Researcher: What about freedom of association? Are you able to connect with people?

Olubi Oluwaseun: You can relate with people easily, especially through sites such as Facebook, Instagram and the likes. There are also guys for instance that will want to talk to you but when they see you in person they will not say anything.

Segun A. Abraham: The way people relate and express themselves through chat is not the way they relate in real life, probably because you are not seeing the person. Through chat they can say anything they want to say.

Researcher: How would you say the Internet has helped you in your academics?

Rosemary Nuhu: Ahhh!! Copy and paste.

Samuel Obadiah: I think it has helped us a lot, especially academically because to an extent all what we read today is from the Net.

Rosemary Nuhu: There are some materials that we are able to access on the Net; we can download them to our phones and read them.

Segun A. Abraham: For example, if it is urgent for you to leave the school and there is an assignment, you can easily do the assignment and send through email to somebody to print for you.

Bakari S. Sali: You cannot talk about academics in this century without mentioning the Internet, because my younger sisters in secondary school even check their result online. If you have your pin, you can access your result online.

Rosemary Nuhu: Even here in school everything is done online. Even our accommodation is done online, though it is tasking but you are sure of getting it. Once you are able to click you are sure of getting your own space unlike when it was manual that you needed to know someone first. Though there are issues of many people clicking one room, but even that is rectified in no time.

Segun A. Abraham: Even sometimes if you are trying to call someone to inform him about a test or lecture and there is no network, you can send messages through WhatsApp and it will be delivered. I think we are even limiting it to ABU. In Ilorin they have a website where students go and download materials on their courses.

Rosemary Nuhu: It has also helped some people further their studies online. You can do your Bachelors and Master's degree online You can even register for courses abroad, so it has really helped a lot.

Researcher: So do you think there are dangers associated with the use of the Internet in academics?

Samuel Obadiah: Yes, plagiarism.

Researcher: How do you then guard against plagiarism as students?

Rosemary Nuhu: It is going to be difficult, but I think it is left for the students to buckle up. You don't just copy everything you see., Different sites will give you different opinions, so instead of copying straight from the Net why not just read and understand and present your own view about the topic in question?"

Samuel Obadiah: Most of us read to pass exams, and most of us read like a week to exams and we don't really check our books seriously. Most of the readings we do is from Google. The lecturers teach us in class, we attend lectures quite alright, but one week to exams and you will see everybody being a friend to his/ her phone checking Google for different perspectives of the course and this to me is the harm being done. We are not opened to learning, we just want to pass.

Rosemary Nuhu: If you say you are reading to pass or to get a good result you will find out that our society is now being fashioned in such a way that it is about what you can do and not what paper you have. If you survive on plagiarism and reading to pass you will not have anything to offer when you graduate.

Researcher: How does the Internet help you as students communicate with one another?

Sam: It is the easiest means of communication because sometimes we are lost. Some people are not aware of a lecture, especially if it is a fixed class. We just get it on WhatsApp that there is a fixed class at so and so time and we will be prepared.

Sam: Like today, we got to know about a fixed class through our group chat.

Researcher: So what do you do the most when you go online?

Olubi Oluwaseun: Most times I go online to get latest fashion styles for dresses and latest decoration for occasions; because I am into sewing, so I need to know the latest styles.

Segun A. Abraham: We also go online to know about the latest information on politics or football and I like to comment on these topics;, it keeps me active and informed.

Rosemary Nuhu: I go online to learn new things. I learn different recipes online. There was a day I tried to cook a recipe I learnt at home and when my dad tasted the food he shouted and was wondering what it was and I told him it was an Israeli recipe.

Sunday: I follow football and I like to know about the latest music and music videos.

Researcher: How do you think you can contribute to society as students through the Internet. How can you use the Internet to be good citizens?

Rosemary Nuhu: I think we should always condemn what is bad and encourage positive things. If you are good at writing, you should write articles that will foster positive actions.

Adamu Abigail: I think as citizens we should be mindful of the kind of posts we make. Our post should be those that will foster unity. We should also be mindful of the kind of friends we accept on Facebook. We should check them out first because people can be deceptive and send you request because they want to carry out certain negative action.

Researcher: Do you think sharing of information is a way of being a positive citizen?

Segun A. Abraham: I think it even saves people lives. During the killing in Saminaka, some people escaped it through information they got on WhatsApp. A student was on his way travelling home when he received the information; he told the driver and they stopped.

Olubi Oluwaseun: Before some TV stations give a report, you will get it on your phone as it happens.

Researcher: What are the key points you think we have raised?

The negative and positive sides of the Internet and how we can use the Internet to better our society.

Thank you very much for being part of this great session; it will be really useful for this research.

APPENDIX D:

ABU ZARIA FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GROUP 2

Researcher: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the term citizenship?

Badanary Joy: Someone in a country that has the right to do certain things in a country.

Andrew Nandang: A legal entitlement to belong to a community.

Researcher: What do you think comes with being a citizen of a particular community?

Bok Salome: Responsibility. You have to be responsible to your community or country at large. Responsibility in the sense of the property in your care; for instance in school here you have to take care of the environment, that is one of the responsibilities of a citizen.

Omoniyi Oluwatimileyin: I think participation also. A citizen has the right to participate in certain decision-making in a community. For instance now, the right to vote and be voted for is one core responsibility of a citizen because it is purposely to advance the country at large. So you find out that the citizen of a country has the attributes of participation.

Bok Salome: Also, as citizens, you have the responsibility of defending you territory against external forces, most especially now in our society that we have security challenges.

Bello Saidu: You should also be able to stand out and be patriotic.

Omoniyi Oluwatimileyin: The citizens of a community must know the rules and regulation that is governing the community.

Andrew Nandang: To an extent, you can see the attribute of expression in a citizen. A citizen has the right to expression.

Bok Salomi Hwojah: As a citizen, you should promote the good interest of your country. Even though there are so many things that are not right as a citizen, you are not to go around painting the country in a bad light. You should promote the interest of your community by promoting the good values and best interest of your community.

Badanary Joy: As a good citizen you need to be identified. I don't think you can be a citizen without being identified. You need to be known, that this is where you belong and you also have to identify with your environment. You will need to know some basic things about your surroundings.

Ikechukwu Amaozodi: Citizens should also be able to sacrifice for their country or community because some kind of situation may occur where someone might need to defend his nation. A good citizens should be able to defend his nation.

Researcher: Do you think things like freedom of speech and freedom of association are core principles of citizenship?

Boke Salome: As a citizen, freedom of association brings about unity, because the way you relate with people of other ethnic groups brings about understanding and unity amongst the different people in Nigeria.

Ikechukwu Amaozodi: Freedom of speech shows that you are a citizen of a particular community.

Researcher: I am sure we are all familiar with the use of the Internet. How do you think the Internet helps you express yourselves as citizens? How has it contributed to your status as a citizen?

Andrew Nandang: The Internet is very powerful when it comes to identifying yourself as a citizen. You can go to the Internet and see people expressing themselves about

happenings in a society or about the present administration, and from your bed you can share your thoughts about what that individual has said about the country.

Omoniyi Oluwatimileyin: I think it has helped to bring government closer to the people. If you look at it critically, almost all the newspapers have their own online channel through which they disburse information on a daily basis. Being a fan of the Internet, I do check these news sites once or twice every day and you will find out that there are critical topics that you will be prompted to drop your comment about. Definitely you might not be able to go to Aso Rock to complain but you can post it online. You see there is one thing about information; if you are not informed you will be deformed. When you are informed you will be posting your own opinion about issues and others will be correcting you or adding more information about what is being discussed. That is one of the ways the internet has helped us reason together on certain issues for national development

Bello Saidu: I think the internet helps you to be versatile, to get acquainted with new happenings around except for the fact that things are not taken too seriously in contemporary society. I think if opinions or views of people are being looked into seriously, development will be rapid such that if you are not connected you will be left behind. So I think it is another basis for sending information that will lead to development.

Andrew Nandang: The Internet eliminates all restrictions concerning expressing views about your country. You don't need to worry about going to the media houses but just use your phone to express yourself about the happenings in your community or country. You don't need to spend money for instance to project your country or where you are coming from you can do it freely.

Ikechukwu Amaozodi: The Internet has empowered the low class in the society because the Internet has become a common thing; everybody has access to Internet. I can stay in my house and make suggestions that will better my country and all that. Like we said, there is freedom of speech. Citizens ought to know about their country very well. Through the Internet you get information about what is happening in your society; it helps you as a citizen to know more about your community. Before now, when internet was not popular, some people in far places found it difficult to access information about what was happening in other places, but through the Internet all you have to do is just Google and you will find whatever news or information you need.

Bok Salome Hwojah: I think the Internet has also helped us to know about events in neighbouring countries. Through the Internet you can make transactions, buy things online and it will be delivered at your door step.

Rahimat Sulieman: I think the Internet has also brought the citizens closer to the government. Like I saw a page on Facebook called APC. You can share your view about issues of governance, like me, who loves to comment on anything politics. The internet has been the medium people air their views about issues of governance, even though they do not see those in power but at least it gives people the opportunity to share their views about what is happening on the political scene, so there is this connection between government and the people

Rachael Suleiman: Also, the Internet helps to curtail violence. Instead of people gathering to protest, arguing amongst themselves and destroying things, they can just use the medium of the Internet to pour out your mind without necessarily causing harm to anyone or creating a tense environment.

Adedibu Victoria: It also helps people pour out their minds without fear of arrest. If you go to a media station they can cut you off while speaking, but on social media you

can say what you want freely without fear of being caught. Also, it is very cheap to access the Net with a phone, so you can say what you want to say.

Researcher: Do you think there are dangers associated with Internet usage?

Adedibu Victoria: It's also dangerous because on the Net there is nobody to edit anything you are posting unlike the traditional media that goes through gatekeeping process. For instance, you can post anything on social media that can cause chaos, say, "100 Christians died and 20 Muslims died in a crisis." This can cause unrest. Traditional media will never do that; they will just say about so and so number of people died during the crisis. It can also be used to tarnish one's image.

Rahimat Suleiman: Some people do abuse the Net. Some people just go online and post things that are not appropriate. Some citizens do abuse their rights because people just go online to say things they shouldn't say. For example, some people just go online to insult Muslims or Christians.

Ikechukwu Amaozodi: You see, the media is very fast in disseminating information and people tend to believe what they see on screen than what they hear on air. For instance, somebody just woke up one night and posted online that people should bath with salt to prevent Ebola and it was all over the place within hours. Almost the whole nation bathed with salt. The thing is that it has its advantage and its disadvantage. I think we the users must know how to use it for the development of our nation.

Rahimat Suleiman: Some people also post wrong information online without verification. For example I got results of election before Jega announced the results and what I received online was wrong.

Bok Salome Hwojah: It also makes lots of people lazy. You find out that when some people wake up in the morning, all they do is look at their phones and they will be laughing and talking to themselves. Some will be chatting and walking on the road and sometimes before you know it, they will be hit by a vehicle.

Andrew Nandang: The new media is the most powerful means of publicity, because you can pass across messages that everybody will believe once it goes viral. It is very powerful, but also very dangerous.

Omoniyi Oluwatimileyin: Despite the fact that it is meant for everybody, there are certain information that shouldn't be displayed online.

Ikechukwu Amaozodi: There is no privacy; anything you put online can be seen.

Andrew Nandang: There are some information that can be set as private and public depending on whether you want people to see it.

Researcher: How do you think the Internet helps you in your academics?

Bok Salome Hwojah: The internet is economical. You get books that you can get access to in the library from the internet and make use of them for your assignment or even make notes from them.

Rahimat Suleiman: I still think not all things you get from the Net is correct. There are some things or materials from the Internet that are not correct, so we have to be careful the materials we use.

Omoniyi Oluwatimileyin: I wrote an assignment using materials from the internet and I got zero.

Bello Saidu: I think the authorities are failing to see the fact that we need to advance because the Internet makes people to get interested in education, because I can just go through my system, study the material on it without going through bulky materials and

I understand and get through my exams. So I think the Net makes people interested in education.

Andrew Nandang: Internet also makes you very current even more than current affairs. This is because there are different blogs with updated information where you can find whatever you need to support your previous knowledge about things you are looking for.

Adedibu Victoria: It makes you read ahead of time. You can go online and get materials which will help you in class. If the lecturer maybe talks about a new topic, you can search for it online and update your knowledge about what he has said. There are also books that you cannot find the hard copy, if you go online you will find the soft copy.

Rahimat Suleiman: I also think the Internet serves as an alternative library, because if you go to our departmental library there are no recent books there, only projects no textbooks. So if you have an assignment you can just check using your phone and you will find information on what you want.

Bok Salome Hwojah: The Internet is like a mobile library; even in class you can access meaning of words on the go wherever you are.

Andrew Nandang: I think if there is anywhere that the internet has helped students very well, it's in ABU. We can access the Net anywhere if we are around the school premises. There is virtually no research that you will carry out now that you will not find resources from the Net. There are PDF materials that you can download, save and use to enhance whatever you are writing on. You see, some of us don't have television here in school, so the internet keeps us informed about happenings in the country. We get to know about the latest political decisions that have been taken or the latest news trending maybe Boko Haram, Buhari or what have you.

Bok Salome Hwojah: The Internet has also helped people access education. We have the Open University system where people, like mothers, can seat in the comfort of their houses and get a degree/ certificate.

APPENDIX E:

BUK FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION - GROUP ONE

Researcher: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear citizenship?

Blessing D Yero: Rights. A citizen is somebody that lives in a particular place and the rights you have as a citizen. Citizenship is what you are entitled to as a member of that society or community. It is also the freedom to carry out certain responsibilities in that particular place.

Ibrahim garba babangida: Citizenship has to do with nationality, being born in a country.

Researcher: As a citizen with rights what do you think you should do as a someone with rights?

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: Education, helping to promote peace, obeying laws and rules. People can come together and determine how to promote the well-being of the country. There are places in Nigeria that are suffering from poverty. They can come together to decide on what to do on their own without waiting for the government. Also they should be obeyed so as to maintain harmony; law should be obeyed to ensure living a life that is harmonious.

Researcher: What are those things that you can do as citizens that can lead to chaos?

Zahradeen Usman Alyiu: Ethnicity is one of those things that can bring about chaos, when people are so concerned about where they come from.

Alkasim Harisu ALkasim: Political affiliations can be a cause for chaos. For instance I belong to a political party such freedom can lead to social chaos and social disharmony which at the end of the day results to killing. Just yesterday I heard one of

the PDP leaders saying that the APC government will collapse because Buhari is advised by people who are self-centered and can cause trouble.

Ibrahim Babaginda: I think the people should be able to think on their own. They are conscious to know that violence is wrong; it shouldn't be about affiliations.

Researcher: You are all familiar with the internet. How do you access the internet?

All: Mostly through phones.

Researcher: So what do you do when you are on the internet?

Fiddausi Kabir Adam: Research.

Ibrahim Bala Abubakar: Research and chatting.

Blessing D Yero: Mostly what I do when I go on Net is that I chat; I chat with a lot of people. I communicate with friends. Honestly, the time I use to chat is more than the time I use to research.

Researcher: How do you feel when you chat? Does it make communication easy?

Fiddausi Kabir Adam: Yes. I may not have seen someone in a long while, maybe in five to ten years, but through chatting you can connect with such a person within seconds.

Ibrahim Garba Babangida: I have an uncle in Italy whom I have not seen for long, but because I have his number I do chat with him through WhatsApp or Facebook.

Researcher: Would you say Internet helps you achieve your rights of expression?

Blessing D. Yero: It helps achieve rights of expression but I won't rate that to a hundred. The fact that it makes communication accessible and easy does not mean it doesn't have its limitations, because you can't always get a hundred percent satisfaction

from anything. Concerning the internet, there must be a little hitch that hinders you from getting complete satisfaction to whatever it is you are looking for.

Researcher: So what kind of hitch are you referring to?

Sometimes the network itself might have problems and especially when you want to communicate with someone, say via Skype urgently, the network becomes a barrier because it is not allowing you to connect. At that moment it is an urgent need and it has not been met.

Ibrahim Garba Babangida: You raised the issue of expressing views on the Internet, yes I think in Nigeria today we are free to express ourselves on the Internet. You take countries like Turkey or China, most of them don't have this freedom, but we can go on the Internet and say whatever we want, even insult the President. We have seen a lot of videos.

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: Well, I think the Internet is resourceful. I think it is a disadvantage in Nigeria. I usually surf the Net purposely to boost my academic strength, but a lot of people are using it today very negatively. For example, those who use Facebook and WhatsApp really misuse it. For example, I have a friend who uses the Internet always without reading his book; this is a negative trend of the Internet. Today, people post many pornographic things online and through those things people get morally unsound and morally weak and this is really degrades the moral status quo we used to have in those days of our forefathers.

Ibrahim Bala Abubakar: Well, I think this is the twenty first century so I see no problem in that concerning pornography.

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: It depends on the perspective you are looking at it from. I won't say it has no disadvantages at all, but I think to Nigerians its disadvantages outnumber its advantages.

Blessing D Yero: Why do you limit it to Nigeria?

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: Nigeria is the country I live in, the country I know the most. The problem we have in Nigeria is that we are not yet developed and people think that anything European, anything foreign is like a messiah, a godsent. We then embrace it and give it all our attention and shy away from all other responsibilities that must be carried out by us. For example, some people even forget about their religious responsibilities. They cannot read the holy Quran but spend hours on WhatsApp chatting and can't spend a day without tweeting or chatting; they can't cope without it.

Blessing D. Yero: Using the social network to chat depends on what you do with it. I can use my WhatsApp to collect information for education, I can use it to chat with people that will increase me spiritually or make me grow morally or educationally. When it becomes useless is when you use it to talk about rubbish, things that don't add value to you, or talk to people who don't make you grow; that is when it becomes rubbish to you. But when you are have the number of your classmate and probably you are not able to go to school that day, you can text him and ask if the class held.

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: What I am saying is that students nowadays, especially to students in Nigeria, it is a great misfortune to us. For example, Mr Joe, our lecturer told us that in an exam we wrote, there were people who were writing in shorthand as a result of chatting; I think that is a big disadvantage.

Blessing D. Yero: The only time it can cause you problems is when you get too used to shortening your spellings.

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: Now you are coming to the point.

Blessing D Yero: There is a difference between addiction and doing something. When you are addicted to it that is when it becomes a problem, but if you are doing it

consciously, you will know the difference between chatting on your phone and writing in the class.

Researcher: As a citizen, what do you think the internet has added to your learning process? What value has the Internet added to your academics?

Ibrahim Bala Abubakar: For instance, my department is a new department and we don't have access to new materials from the library. With the help of our phones we get materials from the Internet. I think it brought a lot to us.

Zahradeen Usman Alyiu: I think even in academics it has its advantage and disadvantage. Before the Internet, students use to go the library to research but due to the Internet students just sit at home and chat or download.

Ibrahim Garba babangida: I don't think so. We have the library on the Net now that students of the Open University learn very well while working..

Blessing D. Yero: The internet has really helped in so many ways. There are e-books that you can download and keep in your phones or laptop. You spend a lot of time in the library going through large encyclopedias, looking for a specific thing but with your phone you can narrow it down; the Internet makes it easier

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: But we were told that the Internet is a place where junk materials are stored.

Blessing D. Yero: That is why I said eBooks. I am not talking about Wikipedia where people just put their own ideas online. I am talking about e-library and eBooks that are written by authors for scholars to go through.

Fiddausi Kabir Adam: When I am lazy to read novels, I just go and read the summary and go and write it down.

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: It is expected that each book allocated should be read by the student and then there is a book of 500 pages. If you decide to go to the Net to read

the summary there will be a great difference from someone who has read the entire book, and the difference will be clear. It makes students lazy to read and it is a disadvantage because you can never be an academic guru.

Researcher: In terms of access to research material, what would you say the Internet has done to the process of research?

Blessing D Yero: It depends on where you go to get this information. There are sites where you get very good information about what you need and it is very solid and critical, but you also need to be careful to read and understand before you make use of it.

Ibrahim Garba Babangida: Actually, it has done a lot. I don't like paper; I love flipping through my screen. It is very interesting because you can just be reading through books at any time, even on your bed. So for me it has helped.

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: I think the Internet has done a great job in bringing books to our doorsteps. For me, I don't think I can trade a book for any one on the Net or soft copy. I have to print it out because I love carrying/ holding a book,, because when it comes to an important place and you need to underline how do you do it?

The point is about access. When you get the materials you can print them. Getting these materials, printing them and having access to them is what we are talking about. Do you get access to these materials more online or in the library?

Blessing D Yero: You get more from the Internet when you are looking for something that is not too old, but when you are looking for something ancient you really have to go back to the books.

Researcher: Back to issues of expression. In terms of politics for instance, how would you rate the amount of information you got from the internet in the last

election? Would you say the Internet gave you a lot of awareness about the election?

All: Yes

Ibrahim Bala Abubakar: For instance, I don't use radio like my old man at home does, but with the help of my phone I already know who won. I had the analysis on my phone and I received updates even before the radio announcement.

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: On the other hand, some of the updates about election made people very confused and some made them feel like dying. For example, people supporting Buhari, like me, saw so many updates that shocked me. I felt like leaving this world. Some people were concocting stories, people posted different things and it caused confusion.

Blessing D. Yero: I think this is where the issue of citizenship comes in; because as citizens we have rights, even the person we are voting for has rights. We should exercise our rights properly. If my party loses or your party loses there should be some understanding, people shouldn't begin to post things that are negative that might cause problems, besides it is one party that will rule Nigeria.

Researcher: In terms of expressing yourself on the Internet, how would you rate the level of expression which the Internet has created?

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim: With the emergence of social media, a lot of people have become vocal. The government has no any way of vocalizing their views and this is like a big avenue for people to say their minds without going to the radio stations where they can be easily attacked.

Blessing D Yero: The social media has done a lot of positive things when it comes to expression because back then when we just had the radio and television. If you go online and criticize the politicians they are going to find you and if they find you, they

lock you behind bars or you are gone. But presently, I could just wake up in the morning and maybe I just heard news that is disturbing, I will just pick my phone and say “kai this guy don mess up” and people will begin to comment anyhow. If the presidents sees it, nobody cares. So I think the medium of expression has really been expanded that everybody could feel free to air their views and say their minds and say whatever they think is the solution to a problem or something that has happened in the country..

Fiddausi Kabir Adam: Also you can buy something through the Internet. You’ll stay in your house and pay for it and they will bring it to you wherever you. You can also advertise your products on the internet.

Ibrahim Bala Abubakar: You can also buy recharge cards also through the Net.

Researcher: How do you think you can contribute and be a good citizen through the Net?

Fiddausi Kabir Adam: By behaving in a good manner, by not posting bad things that can provoke or cause people to act negatively.

Blessing D Yero: I think the best way we can be good citizens is to start from ourselves, by talking to people about things they should do and the consequences of our actions. The Internet has provided a convenient way of accessing information that even at the comfort of one’s bed, classroom or office, one can access it. So it should be a medium through which people can enlighten, inform and expose others to issues that will help them religiously, politically, morally and any other way one can think of that will make others better.

Ibrahim Garba Babangida: I think the way we can help others let me give you an example, My father, who is an expert in hides and skin, loves cattle. Most of the time he goes to these Fulani villages in the outskirts of Kano and tries to teach them how to

take care of their cattle. It is very difficult for him to be going round because of his old age, so he watched a documentary on *Aljazeera* about Ghana where a group of youths are using the Internet to help farmers and teach them how to cultivate their crops without having the stress of going into the village. He decided to try and invest in that and help others and of course, he has done a lot of that especially in the village we come from (Chawa, Katsina) He has bought a lot of phones to help farmers and they have been teaching them how to take care of their cattle and how to vaccinate them.

Researcher: As students how can you use the Internet to assist yourselves as citizens?

Blessings D. Yero: For instance, we have a group for the class through which we pass across information to one another. For now I think it is a good way to reach out to assist one another, because we know when we have to do things and know about what is going on in school.

Researcher: What do think is the important thing we have discussed here this morning

Ibrahim Bala Abubakar: I'll go with the expression of freedom and how the Internet helps us to express ourselves freely.

Blessing D. Yero: Importance of the Internet,

Fiddausi Kabir Adam: Rights of citizenship.

APPENDIX F:

BUK, FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – (GROUP TWO)

Researcher: What comes to your mind when you here the term ‘citizenship’?

Hussaini Isiaku Gwiyimna: An indigene of a local place.

Bukisu Habib Maigaskiya: Indigene of a particular locality.

Rachael Aigbogun: A member of a community.

Researcher: What do you think comes with citizenship? Are there obligations, things you need to do?

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: Civil duties and responsibilities.

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: I think it comes with rights and responsibilities as a citizen of a particular place. You are expected to enjoy certain rights and apart from enjoying rights you are expected to carry out some responsibilities such as paying of tax.

Hussaini Isiaku Gwziyimna: You must belong to a community and you must be willing to obey their terms, rules and regulations.

Researcher: What are some of these rights you are entitled to as a citizen?

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: Freedom of worship, right to life, freedom of association, freedom to question anything you like.

Hussain Ishiaku Gwiyimna: Freedom of speech and freedom of association.

Researcher: You are all familiar with the Net. How do you mostly access the Internet?

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: Mostly through our phone. You might have a system but still use your phone to browse.

Hussain Ishiaku Gwiyimna: Phones are very accessible because they are mobile; you can carry them along with you wherever you go, so it is easy to use in accessing the Net.

Researcher: How do you think the Internet helps you as a citizen in accessing your rights?

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: The Internet can make it easy for you not to be shy to express your feeling. It makes you feel free to express your opinion wherever you are so you can know the situation of the community even though you are not in the community. You can also share your opinion with the people of the community, whether you there or not.

Hussain Ishiaku Gwiyimna: Let me share my own experience. My mother and I went to haj and an Arab man walked behind my mother and kept saying things. We stopped and confronted him before he went away. I can't go on radio to share this experience, but I can do so with my phone. The Internet helps us create awareness.

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: In Niger State, around 2008, the governor was on Facebook. We had issues with our light in my vicinity. We were able to communicate with him via Facebook and within two weeks the problem was solved.

Bulkisu Habib Maigaskiya: It is cheaper and easier to communicate through the Internet. I can leave a message on the wall of someone's Facebook page asking if there will be a lecture if I don't have airtime on my phone.

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: The Internet has also educated people, to a large extent, on their rights, because it is one thing to be a citizen of a particular country and it is another to be aware of your rights. So if you are ignorant of your rights technically it is as good as not being a citizen. It is only when you are aware of your rights that you can

demand for it. In addition, you can interact with people from different cultural background. It has helped us know about other people's culture.

Researcher: Would you say the Internet allows you access to information about happenings in Nigeria

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: It has really helped, but the problem is that there are people who bastardize the whole process because they use the Internet to spread propaganda telling people what does not exist. Instead of going straight to the point they just say anything to favour themselves.

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: I will like to add that transparency is another point. If you look at it the last election that was conducted, it was with the help of the Internet. People were able to get results when the election was conducted and in a way it helped transparency because most of the things that would have been done surreptitiously were revealed.

Hussein Ishiaku Gwiyimna: I think it helps a lot in giving information. It really helped me during the Nyanya bombing. I was about to go to Nyanya when I opened my Facebook page and saw the information; I just stayed back home.

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: In the last election the Internet played a vital role. Essentially, the Internet made it easy to be up to date especially if your phone is connected. During the last election most people were able to have up-to-date news about the election through their phones, because the light kept fluctuating and not everybody has generator even though a large population of people who wanted to be up-to-date about the election Internet played a vital role because once you read online you can also show others and they know what is happening in their country. So I think it plays a vital role in providing information as citizens.

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: Again the Internet has helped a lot of people in terms of employment; people get information about jobs on the Internet. Instead of spending lots of money to go somewhere to buy something or meet with someone, you can use the Internet to transact business.

Researcher: In what way can you contribute to information sharing on the Net?

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: In terms of news, you can only tell what is happening around you with news update. You can only inform others about what is happening currently. You cannot tell a story about what is happening somewhere else unless the news is being posted from where it is happening. So you can keep people up to date through the Internet if the event is happening around you. If you are in a scenario where something strange is happening all you just have to do is to take a picture to make it real, then you go on the Net and post it on whatever social network you want to use.

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: You can also help by sharing valuable information that you may have read or seen online; for instance, if someone posts information about a bomb blast, you can share it on your wall for others to also read thereby increasing the spread.

Researcher: How would you say the Internet has facilitated your learning process?

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: It has gone a very long way in helping students. Personally I don't spend more than two hours in the library. With the help of my phone I can do assignments without going to the library.

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: Internet has contributed immensely to education. If, for example, you are absent in class and you happen to be among one of the groups that has been created for the class, you can ask if they had an assignment or what happened

in the class.. Essentially, you can easily make use of the Internet to do most of your assignments, get reading materials or even download materials.

Hussaini Isiaku Gwiyimna: There was this time we were asked to review a film. I downloaded it from the Internet, watched it and was able to answer the question. Funny enough it came out in the exam.

Researcher: Is there any negative side to the use of Internet?

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: The negative aspect of it is that students have now become lazy; they don't read deep to understand what they have been y taught. If someone wants to do a project, you will find out that almost everything was gotten online A guy once downloaded a project being done by someone else because he was lazy to carry out a proper research. He downloaded the complete project, edited a few things and submitted. Eventually, he won't be able to defend the project because he is not the one that worked on it. Another thing is that it has increased the rate of immorality, in the sense that now, especially girls, surf porn sites more than the guys; it is what I have observed, Girls now engage more in immoral things than the male. Formerly, girls did not have access to these things, but now they can be at home on their phones to download and watch.

Bulkisu Habib Maigaskiya: Well what I want to say is concerns academics. You see, the Internet only helps when you just want to know or get information about , but in terms of assignments our lecturers do not tolerate that.

Rachael Aigbogun: Although the Internet has helped a lot, it has also caused a lot of harm. When the Ebola crisis was going on, for instance, somebody just typed "use salt" and people used salt to bath and a lot of people lost their lives.

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: You see it has to do with two things. When someone is sincere and you know people's lives are at stake, you won't spread false rumour. When

we did not have the Internet, we were conversant with reading Quran. Although we normally download Quran from the Internet to read, we don't normally access it the way we access the Internet. Some Muslims have Quran on their phones but their minds do not connect with it. All they want to do is chat and their minds have deviated from being Godly to ungodly.

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: I think it depends on how you want to use it. There are so many Internet websites that you can access like Club Islam and so on. You can even watch videos; it depends on how you want to use it. If you want to use it for negative things you will and if you want to use it for positive things, that is what you will use it for.

Hussaini Isiaku Gwiyimna: The Internet has helped me a lot. My mother is not in Nigeria so we skype a lot; that is how we communicate.. Also, Ahmed Dida was my favourite scholar; I use to listen to listen to him through the internet. So the internet is a very good development.

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: The Internet makes people to shift away easily from their moral standing because it makes available so many things that people can be attracted to. Now kids have access to the internet and their minds can be easily swayed by little things such as bad sites. If you are matured you can operate on a level where you make a choice because you can take responsibility for your action; kids cannot.

Researcher: Where do you get your materials from? Do you get it more online or from the library.

Rachael Aigbogun: We get materials more online, because of the nature of our course.

Researcher: When does getting materials online and using them become a crime?

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: It is one thing for you to use my material or intellectual material and quote me, it is another to use and not acknowledge me. If you use my material you must quote me; you don't use it as if it is your own.

We are always advised not to copy Wikipedia and blogs that have no credible sources of information, but if you download a PDF material, for instance, you will find the name of the author and you can quote and make reference to them. I think that is acceptable.

Researcher: What do you think you can do online that will constitute bad citizenship?

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: Providing false information.

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: Creating wrong awareness about certain events, Creating a scenario that does not exist.

Hussaini Isiaku Gwiyimna: Promoting of immorality.

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: Divulging important/ sensitive national information that will cause national disintegration or incite actions that are violent.

Researcher: What do you think you can do to promote good citizenship

Hussaini Isiaku Gwiyimna: Appreciating the good actions of our leaders so that people recognize what they have done and not criticize what they do wrong.

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: Criticizing a false rumour. You can criticize it to make people know that the story is not true. You also have to produce facts to back you up. So I think criticizing a false rumour can make you be a better citizen in a community.

Melverick Uyenge Franklin: By educating people to be patriotic. The country needs unity, so put up positive posts that encourage people and emphasizes on the need to come and live together irrespective of religious or social affiliations.

Hussaini Isiaku gwiyimna: Creating job opportunities for people in the community.

Rachael Aigbogun: You can also use the Internet to create awareness about the bad things that are happening around you, so people know that what they are doing is wrong.

Researcher: As students of various departments, how can you be good citizens?

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim: Being a class representative requires one to always be up-to-date by providing information about lectures, assignments and things generally that are happening in the department and school. I have to share information online with friends and members of the class so it can be received by everybody.

Bulkisu Habib Maigaskiya: By avoiding plagiarism and always making reference to books we have read and not making it look like the idea is our own.

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo: It can be used to advertise our performances, whereby we invite people to come and watch our programmes.

NAMES OF RESPONDENTS

Muhammed Muhammed Gambo

Shuaibu Musa Ibrahim

Hussaini Isiaku Gwiyimna

Melverick Uyenge Franklin

Rachael Aigbogun

Bukisu Habib Maigaskiya

Alkasim Harisu Alkasim

Ibrahim Bala Abubakar

Ibrahim Garba Babangida

Zahradeen Usman Aliyu

Fiddausi Kabir Adam

Blessing D. Yero

Racheal Isreal Adah

Adedibu Victoria O

Rahimat Suleiman

Bok Salome Hwojah

Omoniyi S. Oluwatimileyin

Amaozodi Ikechukwu

Andrew Nanyak Nandang

Dan Saidu Bello

Segun A. Abraham

Samuel L. Obadiah

Adamu Adamu Abigail

Bakari Sali

Philip Obed Philip

Nuhu Rosemary

Olubi Oluwaseun

APPENDIX G

PICTURES WITH FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION RESPONDENTS





