

Exploring the Role of Digital Platforms in Enhancing Alumni Support Services: A Case Study of University of Education, Winneba (UEW) Alumni Engagement

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Abstract:

This study investigates alumni engagement and digital platform utilisation at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 300 UEW alumni through surveys and semi-structured interviews. The research explores alumni awareness, utilisation, satisfaction, and challenges associated with digital platforms for accessing support services. Findings reveal that many alumni were aware of digital platforms for support services. Utilisation rates vary, with notable barriers including technical issues, communication gaps, and perceived inefficiency or unfamiliarity with the digital platforms. Despite these challenges, alumni desire personalised communication and expanded support services through digital channels. Recommendations for UEW include improving digital platform usability, implementing personalised communication strategies, and fostering a culture of innovation. By addressing these recommendations, UEW can strengthen its connections with alumni, growing a vibrant and engaged community. This study contributes to the growing literature on alumni engagement strategies and offers practical insights for enhancing alumni relations in the digital age.

Keywords — Alumni Engagement, Digital Platforms, Higher Education, Support Services, University Relations

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive higher education landscape, universities worldwide are increasingly recognising the critical role of alumni engagement in promoting institutional success and sustainability (Rubejes-Silva, 2024). Central to nurturing robust alumni relationships is effective support services. These services such as personalised content and mentorship opportunities, are crucial for meeting diverse alumni needs, enhancing engagement, and fostering professional advancement post-graduation (Lacasandile et al, 2023).

However, despite the known importance of alumni engagement, many universities grapple with maintaining strong connections with their

graduates (Nisar et al, 2024). Challenges such as inadequate communication, delayed processing times, and the mismatch between alumni expectations and the reality of support services offered contribute to this disconnect (Arko-Achemfuor, 2017). These challenges often stem from inadequate communication channels, delayed response times, and a lack of tailored support services (Obeng-Ofori, 2021). Consequently, there is a pressing need to explore innovative strategies to bridge this gap and enhance alumni relations.

Digital platforms have transformed institutions' interactions with alumni (Rubejes-Silva, 2024). Digital platforms, including alumni portals, social media networks, and dedicated mobile

applications, offer universities unprecedented opportunities to engage with alumni globally (Lacasandile et al., 2023). These platforms facilitate seamless communication, personalised engagement, and convenient access to support services, potentially addressing some of the challenges encountered in traditional alumni engagement approaches (Rubejes-Silva, 2024; Lacasandile et al., 2023).

Despite the potential of digital platforms to address traditional engagement challenges, their effectiveness in enhancing alumni support services remains underexplored, particularly in the context of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Understanding the role of digital platforms in enhancing alumni support services is crucial for UEW to optimise its alumni engagement strategies and strengthen its alumni network.

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW), as a leading institution in teacher education and research, recognises the importance of nurturing lifelong relationships with its alumni. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive examination of the role of digital platforms in enhancing alumni support services at UEW. Through an in-depth analysis of UEW alumni perceptions and experiences, this study provides actionable insights for improving alumni relations and engagement strategies, ultimately contributing to advancing alumni support services in higher education institutions.

1.2 Problem Statement

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW), like many higher education institutions, faces challenges in maintaining strong connections with its graduates. In recent years, digital platforms have emerged as potential solutions to traditional alumni engagement challenges (Rubejes-Silva, 2024). These platforms, including alumni portals, social media networks, and mobile applications, offer opportunities for personalised communication, convenient access to resources, and enhanced alumni interaction (Patil et al, 2023). Previous research has highlighted the importance of alumni engagement for universities (Kwarteng & Obeng-Ofori, 2021). However, despite its significance, there remains a gap in understanding

the effectiveness of digital platforms in facilitating alumni support services, particularly in the context of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). While some studies have explored alumni expectations and challenges in accessing support services (Harryba et al, 2012), few have specifically examined the role of digital platforms in addressing these needs. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the perceptions and experiences of UEW alumni regarding digital engagement and support services, aiming to provide valuable insights for improving alumni relations and engagement strategies. Addressing this problem is crucial for UEW to optimise its alumni relations strategies and strengthen its alumni network, ultimately contributing to the institution's long-term success.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research aims to:

1. Evaluate the utilisation of digital platforms by UEW Alumni.
2. Assess alumni satisfaction with digital engagement.
3. Identify challenges and barriers to digital engagement

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions guide the researcher:

1. How do UEW alumni currently utilise digital platforms to access support services and engage with the university?
2. What are the factors influencing UEW alumni's satisfaction levels with the digital experience in accessing support services and engaging with the university through digital platforms?
3. What are the main challenges and barriers encountered by UEW alumni in utilising digital platforms for accessing support services, and how do these factors impact their overall engagement with the university?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of digital platforms and their potential to address

critical gaps in enhancing alumni support services, with a focus on the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). The study aims to investigate alumni engagement levels, awareness, utilisation, satisfaction, and challenges associated with accessing support services through digital platforms. In examining these factors, the study seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of current digital engagement strategies and identify opportunities for improvement, inform strategic decision-making, and guide the development of targeted interventions to enhance alumni relations efforts. Ultimately, the research aims to inform the development of actionable recommendations for UEW and other institutions to enhance alumni relations and support services through digital means.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of existing research on alumni engagement and digital platform utilisation in higher education contexts, with a focus on UEW. This section synthesises key findings, identifies gaps in the literature, and informs the theoretical framework guiding the study. By examining relevant literature, the study aims to build upon existing knowledge and contribute new insights to the field of alumni relations and digital engagement strategies.

2.1 Alumni Engagement Factors

Alumni engagement and support services are central to promoting lifelong connections between higher education institutions and their graduates. Understanding alumni engagement and support services provides a foundational appreciation for exploring the role of digital platforms in enhancing alumni support services at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Mathur (2019), provides insights that alumni engagement through social media platforms serves as a central component. This includes interactions on platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, facilitating networking, communication, and information sharing among alumni. Lacasandile et al (2023) emphasise the importance of building strong relationships with alumni

through digital platforms. This involves fostering a sense of community, creating opportunities for engagement, and maintaining personalised communication channels to keep alumni connected with the university. The deployment of digital platforms to keep alumni connected and engaged plays a crucial role in the institution's reputation. Positive experiences during their time at the university and continued support post-graduation contribute to alumni loyalty and engagement (Magasi & Bwemelo, 2022; Lacasandile et al, 2023; Bush, 2023).

2.2 Support Services Offered to Alumni

Manlagaylay & Añar, (2022) underscore the significance of career-related support services for alumni. This includes job placement assistance, professional development opportunities, and access to career resources to help alumni navigate their post-graduate careers effectively. Providing opportunities for continued education and lifelong learning is essential, as Kwarteng & Ofori-Obeng (2021) suggested. This may include access to online courses, workshops, and seminars to support alumni in their ongoing personal and professional development. Andersen & MoldStud (2024) emphasise the importance of alumni networking opportunities. This involves facilitating connections with fellow alumni, industry professionals, and current students to expand their professional networks and foster collaboration.

2.3 Role of Digital Platforms in Enhancing Alumni Support Services

Digital platforms offer convenient access to support services and engagement opportunities, as highlighted by Rubejes-Silva (2024). Alumni can easily connect with the university, access resources, and participate in activities regardless of their geographical location. Mathur (2019) posits that digital platforms enable personalised communication channels, allowing targeted engagement efforts tailored to alumni preferences. This includes customised notifications, event invitations, and alumni-specific content to enhance the relevance of interactions. Utilising

data analytics and feedback mechanisms can inform the optimisation of alumni support services on digital platforms (Lacasandile et al, 2023). Tracking engagement metrics, collecting alumni feedback, and analysing user behaviour can provide valuable insights for improving the effectiveness of digital engagement strategies.

2.4 The Importance of Alumni Engagement for Universities

Peruta & Helm's (2018) research emphasise the role of social media in alumni engagement within the higher education context highlighting the importance of leveraging digital channels to foster alumni relationships. Peruta & Helm underscore the significance of adapting to digital trends to maintain strong connections with graduates, ultimately contributing to advancing institutional goals. Nisar et al (2024) delve into the strategic implications of alumni relations for organisational performance in higher education. They highlight alumni engagement as a strategic tool for enhancing institutional reputation and effectiveness. Their insights provide valuable perspectives on how universities can leverage alumni relations to achieve broader organisational objectives and strengthen their position in higher education. Politis et al (2023) highlight the multifaceted nature of alumni engagement, encompassing aspects such as emotional attachment, perceived value, and satisfaction with the university experience. Politis et al offer valuable insights for universities seeking to enhance alumni relationships and foster greater alumni involvement. Their findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the importance of alumni engagement in building strong, enduring connections between universities and their graduates. Nisar et al (2024) highlight the significant role that alumni play in contributing to the advancement of their alma mater providing valuable perspectives on how alumni engagement initiatives can drive positive outcomes for universities, including enhanced fundraising, increased alumni participation, and strengthened institutional reputation. Veluvali & Suriseti (2023) underscore the importance of alumni involvement in supporting fundraising efforts and

philanthropic initiatives. They offer insights into effective strategies for cultivating donor relationships, mobilising alumni support, and leveraging alumni networks to advance institutional fundraising goals.

2.5 Challenges in Alumni Engagement and Support Services

Alumni engagement is crucial for universities, yet it is often accompanied by various challenges that hinder effective communication, participation, and support. Understanding these challenges is essential for exploring how digital platforms can enhance alumni support services at UEW. The following examines the key challenges in alumni engagement and support services:

Communication Barriers: Alumni often face challenges receiving timely and relevant communication from their alma mater (Northfell et al, 2016). This can include issues such as outdated contact information, ineffective communication channels, and a lack of personalised messaging. As a result, alumni may feel disconnected from the university and less inclined to engage with support services.

Limited Access to Resources: Alumni may encounter difficulties accessing support services and resources offered by their alma mater, particularly if these services are not readily available or well-publicised (Stephen, 2024). Limited access to career development resources, networking opportunities, and continuing education programmes can hinder alumni engagement and support.

Lack of Personalisation: Alumni support services may lack personalisation, making it challenging to address alumni's diverse needs and preferences (Marshall & Wilkins, 2020). Generic outreach efforts and one-size-fits-all approaches to engagement may fail to resonate with alumni, leading to decreased participation and satisfaction.

Resistance to Change: Resistance to adopting new technologies and digital platforms can pose challenges in alumni engagement efforts (Warren, 2019). Some alumni may be hesitant to engage with digital platforms due to concerns about privacy, security, or unfamiliarity with

technology, limiting the effectiveness of digital engagement strategies.

3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The exploration of the role of digital platforms in enhancing alumni support services at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), can be guided by a theoretical framework that integrates concepts from Social Exchange Theory, Relationship Marketing Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing alumni engagement and the adoption of digital platforms for accessing support services.

3.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory posits that individuals engage in social interactions based on the expectation of receiving rewards and benefits for their contributions (Yamao, 2024). In the context of alumni engagement, alumni may utilise digital platforms to access support services and engage with the university based on the perceived value and benefits they anticipate receiving.

3.2 Relationship Marketing Theory

Relationship Marketing Theory emphasises the importance of building and maintaining long-term relationships with customers based on trust, mutual respect, and personalised interactions (Berry, 1995). Applied to alumni engagement, this theory highlights the significance of nurturing ongoing relationships with alumni through tailored communication, support services, and engagement initiatives.

3.3 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposes that an individual's intention to use a technology is influenced by perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989; Mejía-Mancilla & Mejía-Trejo, 2024). In the context of alumni engagement, TAM can be applied to understand alumni's acceptance and adoption of digital platforms for accessing support services based on their perceived utility and usability.

Integrating these theoretical perspectives, the theoretical framework provides a holistic understanding of the factors influencing alumni engagement and the adoption of digital platforms for accessing support services at UEW. Social Exchange Theory informs the motivations behind alumni engagement, Relationship Marketing Theory emphasises the importance of nurturing relationships with alumni, and TAM sheds light on the acceptance and adoption of digital technologies among alumni. This theoretical framework serves as a guiding framework for investigating the role of digital platforms in enhancing alumni support services at UEW, providing a foundation for empirical research and analysis.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology outlines the systematic approach used to investigate alumni engagement and digital platform utilisation at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). This section delineates the study's design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques employed to address the research objectives. In detailing the methodology, this section ensures transparency and rigour in the research process, laying the foundation for valid and reliable findings.

4.1 Research Design

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of alumni engagement and the effectiveness of digital platforms in enhancing support services at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). This approach allows for the triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

4.2 Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select 300 UEW alumni participants who represent diverse demographics, graduation cohorts, and levels of engagement with the university. This approach ensures the inclusion of perspectives from alumni with varying experiences and levels of interaction with support services (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

4.2.1 Selection of UEW Alumni Participants

The 300 Alumni participants were recruited through various channels, including alumni associations, personal contacts, and social media platforms. Efforts were made to reach out to both active and inactive alumni to capture a wide range of viewpoints (Mason, 2010).

4.3 Data Collection

Data was collected through two main methods: online surveys and semi-structured interviews. An online survey questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on alumni demographics, engagement levels, perceptions of support services, and usage of digital platforms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore in-depth experiences, attitudes, and suggestions related to alumni engagement and digital platform usage (Belina, 2023).

4.3.1 Survey Questionnaire Development

The survey questionnaire was developed based on established measures of alumni engagement and technology acceptance. Questions were designed to assess alumni satisfaction with support services, preferences for digital platform usage, and factors influencing engagement. The questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity and reliability before distribution (Belina, 2023).

4.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses from participants were conducted. The interview protocol covered topics such as alumni experiences with support services, perceptions of digital platforms, challenges encountered, and suggestions for improvement. Flexibility was maintained to allow for probing and exploration of emerging themes (Andalib, 2024).

4.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the surveys was analysed using descriptive statistics, including numbers, and percentages, to summarise key findings. Qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, involving coding, categorisation, and interpretation of themes and patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The study prioritised participants' rights and welfare, upholding integrity, respect, and beneficence. Informed consent was diligently sought from all participants involved, ensuring they were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained, with stringent measures in place to safeguard participants' personal data and privacy. Transparency and integrity were upheld throughout the research process, with researchers adhering to relevant ethical guidelines.

5.0 FINDINGS

The findings of the research offer insight into the dynamics of alumni engagement and digital platform utilisation at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). This section provides a comprehensive analysis of findings, highlighting key trends, challenges, and opportunities identified through the research. Through the findings, the study aims to inform strategic decision-making and enhance alumni relations efforts at UEW.

5.1 Utilisation of Digital Platforms for Alumni Support Services

Among the **300** UEW alumni surveyed and interviewed:

43% reported being aware of digital platforms provided by the university for accessing support services.

57% indicated that they were not aware of the availability of digital platforms for accessing support services.

When asked about specific digital platforms, the alumni mentioned the university's website and official social media accounts.

These findings suggest that while a considerable portion of UEW alumni is aware of the existence of digital platforms for accessing support services, there is more room for improvement in increasing awareness among the alumni community.

The findings regarding UEW alumni's awareness of digital platforms for accessing support services align with previous research emphasising communication strategies in enhancing alumni engagement (Magasi & Bwemelo, 2022;

Lacasandile et al, 2023; Bush, 2023). The results indicate that while most alumni are aware of digital platforms, a notably significant proportion lacks awareness, echoing challenges highlighted in prior research. Additionally, the mention of specific digital platforms, like the university's website and social media accounts, resonates with studies emphasising the role of social media in alumni engagement (Patil et al, 2023; Mathur, 2019; Peruta & Helm, 2018). The findings underscore the importance of effective communication strategies to increase awareness among alumni about available support services. These findings suggest that while a considerable portion of UEW alumni utilise digital platforms for accessing support services, there is a much more significant proportion that does not actively engage with these platforms. Addressing barriers to the utilisation and enhancing the effectiveness of digital platforms may help increase engagement among alumni.

5.3 Satisfaction Levels with Digital Engagement

Among the **300** UEW alumni surveyed and interviewed:

35% reported actively utilising digital platforms provided by the university for accessing support services.

65% indicated they did not actively utilise digital platforms to access support services.

The most cited reasons for non-utilisation included a lack of awareness, perceived inefficiency of digital platforms, and preference for traditional communication channels.

The study's findings on alumni satisfaction with digital engagement and the factors influencing alumni satisfaction levels align with existing literature on alumni relations and digital platforms. Like previous research, the study highlights varying levels of satisfaction among alumni with the digital experience, emphasising factors such as usability, responsiveness, personalisation, and content relevance (Stephen, 2024; Politis et al, 2023; Marshall & Wilkins, 2020; Warren, 2019; Northfell et al, 2016). Addressing these factors is crucial in enhancing alumni satisfaction and engagement with digital platforms (Rubejes-Silva, 2024; Lacasandile et al, 2023; Bush, 2023; Magasi

& Bwemelo, 2022; Mathur, 2019; Peruta & Helm, 2018). Overall, the study underscores the importance of providing valuable and user-friendly digital experiences to engender stronger connections with alumni. Furthermore, the results suggest that alumni satisfaction may be influenced by the perceived value of digital engagement, including the relevance and timeliness of information provided through digital channels. This finding aligns with Rubejes-Silva (2024) and Lacasandile et al (2023), who emphasised the importance of providing valuable and relevant content to alumni through digital platforms to enhance satisfaction and engagement.

5.4 Challenges and Barriers to Digital Engagement

Among the **300** UEW alumni surveyed and interviewed:

- **40%** reported encountering challenges and barriers in utilising digital platforms for accessing support services.
- The most cited challenges included technical issues with digital platforms, such as difficulty navigating websites or accessing information.
- Other barriers included a lack of personalised communication, limited availability of support services through digital channels, and concerns about data privacy and security.
- Alumni indicated that these challenges and barriers negatively impacted their overall engagement with the university, leading to frustration, disconnection, and reduced utilisation of digital platforms.

These findings suggest that while digital platforms offer opportunities for enhancing alumni engagement, various challenges and barriers hinder effective utilisation. Addressing technical issues, improving communication strategies, expanding support services available through digital channels, and addressing concerns about data privacy and security are essential steps in overcoming these barriers and engendering stronger connections with alumni.

The findings on challenges and barriers to digital engagement among UEW alumni align with existing literature on alumni relations and digital platforms. Technical issues, communication gaps, and concerns about data privacy emerge as significant obstacles, impacting alumni engagement with the university. These challenges mirror previous research emphasising the importance of user experience and communication strategies in fostering alumni engagement (Stephen, 2024; Marshall & Wilkins, 2020; Northfell et al, 2016). Addressing these barriers is essential to improving alumni engagement and using digital platforms to access support services.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 Implications for UEW Alumni Engagement Strategies

The findings and theoretical insights of this study have several practical implications for the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), and other institutions seeking to enhance alumni engagement and support services through digital platforms.

Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation:

The study underscores the importance of strategic planning and resource allocation for the development and implementation of effective digital engagement initiatives. UEW should prioritise investments in technological infrastructure, staff training, and user-centric design principles to ensure that digital platforms meet the diverse needs and preferences of alumni (Rubejes-Silva, 2024; Lacasandile et al., 2023; Arko-Achemfuor, 2017).

Tailored Communication and Engagement:

UEW should leverage insights from Relationship Marketing Theory to personalise communication and engagement efforts with alumni. By segmenting alumni based on their interests, preferences, and engagement levels, UEW can deliver targeted content, invitations, and opportunities that resonate with alumni and foster deeper connections with the university (Lacasandile et al., 2023; Mathur, 2019).

User Experience Optimisation: Building on the principles of the Technology Acceptance Model, UEW should prioritise user experience

optimisation to enhance the usability, accessibility, and effectiveness of digital platforms. This may involve conducting usability testing, gathering user feedback, and iteratively refining digital platforms to ensure a seamless and engaging user experience (Davis, 1989; Mejía-Mancilla & Mejía-Trejo, 2024).

Privacy and Security Measures: UEW must implement robust privacy and security measures to address alumni concerns and build trust in digital engagement initiatives. This includes adopting industry best practices for data protection, encryption, and transparent data handling to safeguard alumni information and mitigate privacy risks.

Change Management and Adoption Strategies:

To address resistance to change among alumni, UEW should develop change management strategies and adoption initiatives that emphasise the benefits and value proposition of digital engagement platforms. Providing incentives, offering training and support, and showcasing success stories can help encourage alumni to embrace digital platforms and participate in digital engagement efforts.

In implementing these practical strategies, UEW can enhance alumni engagement, strengthen relationships with its alumni community, and maximise the impact of digital platforms in delivering support services and fostering lifelong connections with the university.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

The study's limitations may impact its findings' interpretation and generalisability. Sampling bias may arise because the participant sample does not fully represent the alumni population, affecting result reliability. Moreover, reliance on self-reported data via surveys and interviews may introduce response bias, impacting accuracy. Findings may not apply universally, being specific to UEW's context. A low response rate may introduce non-response bias, potentially skewing results.

6.4 Directions for Future Research

Future research in this area could focus on addressing the identified limitations and expanding the scope of the investigation to further

enhance understanding of alumni engagement and digital platform utilisation in higher education settings. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the dynamics of alumni engagement over time and assess the long-term effectiveness of digital engagement strategies. Additionally, comparative studies across different institutions could offer valuable insights into the generalisability of findings and the impact of institutional factors on alumni engagement. Further exploration of specific factors influencing alumni satisfaction with digital platforms, such as content relevance and personalisation, could inform the development of targeted interventions to improve engagement. Moreover, qualitative research approaches, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could provide deeper insights into the underlying motivations and experiences shaping alumni engagement behaviours. Finally, exploring innovative technologies and strategies for enhancing digital engagement, such as virtual communities or gamification, could offer new avenues for strengthening connections between universities and their alumni communities.

7.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shows how important it is for higher education institutions to engage with their alumni and provide support services. In looking at digital platforms at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), we found both challenges and opportunities for building stronger alumni connections. This section highlights key recommendations for UEW to improve its alumni engagement strategies and outlines what these findings mean for alumni relations in the digital age.

7.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are made to improve alumni engagement and support services at UEW. These suggestions aim to address challenges and enhance the use of digital platforms for alumni. By using targeted strategies, UEW can build stronger connections with alumni, create a sense of community, and improve the overall alumni experience. It's important to prioritise these

recommendations to meet the changing needs and preferences of the alumni, helping the university succeed in the long run and maintain its good reputation. The recommendations are as follows:

1. **Invest in Technological Infrastructure:** UEW should invest in technology to create digital platforms and solve problems with digital usability and accessibility (Rubejes-Silva, 2024; Lacasandile et al., 2023; Arko-Achemfuor, 2017). This means upgrading hardware and software, improving internet connectivity, and providing technical support to make the digital experience better for alumni.
2. **Enhance Communication and Awareness:** Implement targeted communication strategies to raise awareness of digital platforms and support services among alumni (Mathur, 2019; Lacasandile et al., 2023). Utilise email, social media campaigns, and alumni outreach events to effectively promote available resources and engage alumni in ongoing communication.
3. **Personalise Engagement Efforts:** Adopt a personalised approach to alumni engagement, leveraging insights from Relationship Marketing Theory (Nisar et al., 2024; Berry, 1995). Segment alumni based on their interests, preferences, and engagement levels to deliver tailored content, invitations, and opportunities that resonate with their individual needs.
4. **Optimise User Experience:** Prioritise user experience optimisation to ensure that digital platforms are intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible to all alumni (Lacasandile et al., 2023; Mathur, 2019). Conduct usability testing, gather user feedback, and iteratively refine digital platforms to enhance usability and effectiveness.
5. **Address Privacy and Security Concerns:** Implement robust privacy and security measures to address alumni concerns and build trust in digital

engagement initiatives. Adhere to industry best practices for data protection, encryption, and transparent data handling to safeguard alumni information.

6. **Provide Ongoing Training and Support:** Offer ongoing training and support to alumni to enhance their digital literacy and proficiency. Provide resources, tutorials, and workshops to help alumni navigate digital platforms and utilise available support services effectively.
7. **Collect and Utilise Alumni Feedback:** Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from alumni to inform continuous improvement of engagement strategies and support services. Conduct alumni surveys, focus groups, or feedback sessions to gather insights into alumni preferences, satisfaction levels, and suggestions for enhancement.
8. **Prioritise Training Personnel for Alumni Support Services:** This training should cover technical skills for digital platform management and interpersonal skills for effective engagement. Personnel should learn to use digital platforms for information dissemination, support provision, and alumni engagement. Additionally, they need strong communication skills to enhance alumni satisfaction and engender connections. Training personnel will ensure efficient service delivery, improve alumni relations, and strengthen the alumni community at UEW.

Implementing these recommendations will strengthen alumni engagement efforts, deepen relationships with alumni, and create lasting value for both the university and its alumni community

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