



Digital Technology Tools and Worship Engagement of Youths in The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Youth Province-12, Osun State, Nigeria

Ohwaseun Oyetunde FOLARIN

The Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria
oyetunde.folarin@rcm.edu.ng, oyetunde.folarin@gmail.com

Adekunle Olusola OTUNLA, PhD

Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
otunlad@yahoo.com

Ayodele Adeyinka ATOWOJU, PhD

Department of Religious & Intercultural Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
atowoju.ayodele@lcu.edu.ng

Abstract

Digital technology tools such as social media platforms are fundamentally reshaping human experiences; especially, with regards to religious worship experience and spiritual formation activities. While digital technology tools have the potential to guarantee rich worship engagements, there is a pressing need to examine whether the incorporation of social media platforms enhances or detracts worship experiences of youths; more so that there is perceived lack of understanding regarding effective use of specific social media platforms in worship. Hence, this study investigated digital technology tools and worship engagement of youths in The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) Youth Province-12, Osun State, Nigeria. The study is anchored on theory of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The study adopted descriptive survey research design and adopted stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select a sample of hundred and three (103) youths and sixteen (16) church leaders within the study area. Data were collected using a duly validated self-designed questionnaire and a rating scale. Summary of findings revealed a very high social media presence of churches within RCCG Youth Province 12 on WhatsApp (100%), Facebook (87.5%) and Youtube (62.5%); while extent of social media engagement recorded very high prevalence on WhatsApp is (93.8%); live streaming of church worship services on Instagram live scores 6.25% and YouTube live had 18.75%. Also, YouVersion (59.2%) emerges as the most frequently used religious mobile app. The study recommends the implementation of digital literacy



programme that promote diversified effective use of social media platforms for worship engagements with concerns real spiritual worship experiences among RCCG Churches.

Keywords: Social media, Online presence, Worship engagement, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Youths. Osun Province-12

Introduction

Digital technology is profoundly altering the human experience, particularly in the realm of spirituality and religion. As people increasingly integrate digital tools into their daily lives, the boundaries between the physical and digital worlds are blurring. This convergence is redefining the way individuals practice their faith, interact with their spiritual communities, and experience spiritual growth. For contemporary youths, who have grown up with the internet and mobile devices, this transformation is especially pronounced. As digital natives, they are seamlessly weaving technology into their spiritual practices, creating new forms of religious expression and community engagement. This seismic shift is having a profound impact on the religious and spiritual lives of young people, raising important questions about the future of faith in the digital age¹.

This technological revolution has not spared the realm of religion, where digital tools such as mobile applications, social media, web applications, multimedia, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, immersive reality, podcasts, webinars, mobile phones and online streaming tools have significantly impacted religious practices and worship experiences. As a consequence, religious communities worldwide are facing the challenge of adapting to these technological shifts to engage with their members effectively².

Mobile applications have become indispensable tools, offering believers access to religious contents, prayer guides, scriptural readings, devotionals, and other spiritual resources on their handheld devices. The convenience and availability of these apps have allowed individuals to deepen their engagement with faith on the go³. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful communication channels for religious organizations, enabling direct and instantaneous interactions with congregants. Through these platforms, religious leaders can disseminate



sermons, religious messages, and inspirational contents, fostering a sense of virtual community where members can connect and support each other, transcending geographical barriers ⁴.

Web applications and multimedia technologies have facilitated immersive and interactive worship experiences, breaking the confines of physical spaces. Believers can now partake in virtual religious ceremonies, events, and rituals, forging profound spiritual connections with others around the world ⁵. Virtual reality has taken worship experiences to unprecedented heights, transporting individuals into digitally rendered sanctuaries and sacred spaces. The sense of presence and immersion engendered by virtual reality fosters a deep spiritual connection that transcends physical limitations ⁶. Artificial intelligence has contributed to personalized worship experiences, tailoring religious content and practices to individual preferences and needs. AI-driven recommendations provide believers with personalized prayer suggestions, religious study materials, and spiritual guidance, enhancing their spiritual journey⁷. Immersive reality technologies, engaging multiple senses, enrich worship experiences by appealing to sight, sound, and touch, creating a deeper sense of spiritual immersion and transcendence. Podcasts and webinars have democratized religious education, allowing religious leaders to disseminate knowledge and wisdom to a broader audience. These digital tools facilitate ongoing learning, spiritual growth, and engagement with religious teachings ⁸. Mobile phones, being ubiquitous in today's society, serve as essential tools for worshipers to access religious content, participate in virtual events, and stay connected with their faith community ⁹. Online streaming tools have revolutionized religious services, providing congregants with opportunities to participate in real-time worship experiences from the comfort of their homes ¹⁰.

In Nigeria, a country known for its cultural diversity and religious pluralism, the influence of digital technology tools on religious experiences is particularly noteworthy ¹¹. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), one of Nigeria's most prominent Pentecostal denominations, has experienced significant growth and influence in the country. Within the RCCG, youths represent a crucial demographic with the potential to shape the future of religious practices in the digital age¹². As technology enthusiasts and digital natives, youths often serve as early



adopters of innovative tools and are at the forefront of exploring the intersection between faith and technology¹³.

Understanding the role of digital technology tools in shaping the worship experience among youths is of paramount importance for religious organizations to effectively engage with this demographic. Digital platforms offer youth's unprecedented opportunities to access religious content, engage in virtual worship services, and build connections with fellow believers beyond physical boundaries¹⁴. However, this integration of technology raises essential questions concerning the preservation of traditional religious values and practices, the authenticity of worship experiences, and the potential risks associated with overreliance on digital mediums.

This study therefore seeks to examine the influence of digital technology tools on the worship experience among youths in RCCG, situated in the culturally and religiously vibrant state of Osun, Nigeria. Hence, the study's focus is on digital technology tools and worship experience of Youths in RCCG, Youth Province-12, Osun State, Nigeria.

Concept of Digital Technology

Digital technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. Well known examples include social media, online games, multimedia and mobile phones¹⁵. Nearly every element of modern life has been profoundly altered by digital technology, including communications, the workplace, entertainment, travel, banking, shopping, and worship experiences. Digital technologies used in religious contexts include online platforms, digital tools, and unique digital frames¹⁶. These technologies are employed to bridge, blend, and blur online and offline religious spaces and practices¹⁷. Overall, digital technologies play a significant role in shaping and facilitating religious practices and experiences in contemporary culture. In Omer Cengiz, it is reported that digital technologies are changing the way people practice religion by providing new platforms for religious practices and creating virtual communities for religious engagement. His work explored religious practices and found that digital media have become integral to daily life¹⁸. Correspondingly, the report of some scholars established that the global rate at which religion is growing on the internet and the adoption of digital media by religious groups is worth paying attention to as it gives increasing visibility and fostering



technological involvement¹⁹. More especially with the Generation Z, it is has become a crucial element for Pentecostal churches (Mega-churches) such as The Redeemed Christian Church of God to leverage the technological trend so that the youth can feel ‘among’ otherwise the youth will desert the church and religious worship void of the youth will be as boring as the graveyard²⁰.

Digital technologies used in religious contexts include online platforms, digital tools, and unique digital frames. These technologies are employed to bridge, blend, and blur online and offline religious spaces and practices, integrating technology use with religious lives in digital culture². Researchers in the realm of digital religion employ a range of digital techniques including; textual analyses, interviews, and ethnography, to investigate the convergence of digital technologies and religious customs²¹. The coupling of the terms digital and religion has led to the emergence of digital religion, where religion is mediated by technologies, including software and mobile applications¹⁷. Computer-mediated communication facilitates the fusion of religion and science online, allowing religious communities to strategically assemble religious authority based on scientific sources²². Digital media informs religious practice, with rituals being enacted through digital environments, highlighting common forms of religious practice found online. A scholar outlined the following as some of the digital technological tools used for religious worship¹⁶:

1. *YouVersion Bible App*
2. *YouTube*
3. *Facebook*
4. *Zoom*
5. *Devotional Apps*
6. *Telegram*
7. *Smartphones*
8. *Digital Televisions*
9. *Video Streaming*
10. *eBooks*
11. *Digital Music*
12. *WhatsApp*



Social Media and Digital Technology Usage Among Christian Youth

Social media and digital technology have become integral to the lives of Christian youths. This phenomenon is particularly accentuated during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, altering the landscape of church engagement. While social media platforms/digital tools offer alternative means for maintaining church life, they also present significant challenges to the users. Issues like potential over-reliance and threats to spiritual and moral values underscore the need for responsible utilization of these tools, emphasizing the importance of stewardship in the use of social media. The Church task of evangelization must take cognizance of vocally representing Christ in the digital age, by acknowledging the potential of the digital technology to reshape the concept of 'church' and widens the spectrum of voices contributing to religious conversations. Initiatives like 'The BIGBible Project' strive to encourage diverse engagement with digital culture within the Christian community, highlighting the evolving nature of Christian communication practices in the digital era²³. The landscape of Christianity is witnessing a significant evolution through the use of social media and digital technology. This shift is transforming worship practices, as more Christians engage with apps and online platforms to express and explore their faith, diverging from traditional church settings. Platforms like *YouVersion*, with over 260 million installations worldwide, exemplify this trend, redefining how individuals access religious texts. Moreover, social media is reshaping the concept of religious outreach, empowering ordinary Christians to engage in personal discussions about faith, presenting a more authentic portrayal of the faith community. This digital shift also fosters interactive engagement during sermons, allowing congregants to participate actively, extend discussions beyond Sunday services, and infuse Christian perspectives into broader societal dialogues, including politics. Ultimately, these technological advancements mark an exciting era for Christians as they navigate and redefine their religious experiences within these new digital landscapes²⁴.

The utilization of digital technology among youths brings forth a dual impact on religious engagement. Positively, it offers unprecedented access to a diverse array of religious resources, spanning online scriptures, religious apps, and virtual communities, fostering a deeper



comprehension of faith. Conversely, excessive reliance on these tools might diminish involvement in conventional religious customs and rituals, potentially causing distractions that steer focus away from spiritual pursuits²⁵. The Pew Research Center's recent survey unveils the swiftly evolving landscape of social media among American teens aged 13 to 17. TikTok emerges as a dominant force, with 67% of teens using it, 16% of them using it almost constantly, eclipsing Facebook's declining usage from 71% to 32% since 2014-15. YouTube remains the top platform, utilized by 95% of surveyed teens, followed by *Instagram* and *Snapchat*. Shifts in platform usage dynamics have occurred over time, with Instagram and Snapchat gaining traction while *Twitter* and *Tumblr* witnessed declines among teens²⁶.

Demographic variations such as gender and racial disparities have been found to influence platform preferences by youths. Whereas, male youths gravitate toward *YouTube*, *Twitch*, and *Reddit*, while female youths favor *TikTok*, *Instagram*, and *Snapchat*. More so, black and hispanic teens also exhibit higher usage rates on several platforms compared to White teens. Usage frequency, also reveals that 35% of teens are constantly engaged on at least one of the top five platforms. Engagement levels are notably high on *TikTok* and Snapchat, with a significant portion of users nearly constantly active. Overall, these findings illuminate the dynamic nature usage pattern of social media among American teenagers, emphasizing *TikTok's* remarkable ascent and the shifting landscape of platform preferences²⁶.

One strategy for effectively engaging with the internet-savvy Net Generation to achieve ministry objectives in the digital age involves leveraging online platforms. This approach enables churches to navigate the complexities of digital communication and reach out to the younger demographic. To implement this strategy effectively, it is essential to understand the characteristics and preferences of the Net Generation. This includes elucidating their digital behaviors, communication preferences, and expectations regarding online interactions. By grasping these aspects, churches can tailor their online ministry efforts to effectively resonate with the Net Generation²⁷. This can be extended to subjects on website design, social media engagement, email marketing, and content creation. Authenticity, relevance, and interactivity are underscored as crucial elements in online ministry initiatives, advocating for genuine connections and meaningful interactions with



the audience. Thus, addressing common challenges and pitfalls encountered in online ministry, such as digital overload, privacy concerns, and ethical considerations, practical guidance is crucial on navigating these issues while maintaining integrity and efficacy in digital outreach endeavors²⁷.

Worship Experience

Worship experiences encompass four domains of human being.; these include: emotional, social, spiritual, cognitive domains. These domains are intertwined and they contribute to the overall worship experience. The emotional domain involves experiencing spiritual emotions such as awe and gratitude. The social domain of worship experiences involves a sense of community and interactions with other worshippers within the faith community²⁹. The spiritual domain involves experiencing closeness to God, spiritual struggle, and spiritual transformation³⁰. And the cognitive domain influence thoughts and decision-making³¹.

Worship experience has a significant impact on the identity and sense of belonging of youth in the faith community. Research has consistently shown that formal worship experiences play a vital role in shaping youth religiosity and fostering religious behaviors. Specifically, aspects such as, sense of belonging and meaning-making; openness to God's authority; opportunities for youth contribution to the community are crucial in influencing the religious development and practices of young people ³³. Additionally, youth worship emphasizes the importance of "being together" as a primary quality, which includes celebrating community through physical presence, fostering empathy and emotional connection, crossing social and ecclesiological boundaries, and sharing faith and being in God's presence³⁴. Furthermore, the sense of community in the faith community is related to a lower sense of suicidal ideation, highlighting the importance of belonging in promoting well-being among youth³⁵. Overall, worship experiences provide opportunities for youth to develop their spiritual identity, engage in personal devotional activities, and receive religious support, which contribute to their spiritual transformation, maturity, and connectedness to the faith community³⁶.



Theoretical Framework Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a widely used framework for understanding and predicting individuals' acceptance and usage of technology. It posits that the intention to use technology is influenced by factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, social influence, and trust³⁷. Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which individuals believe that using technology will enhance their performance or productivity. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which individuals perceive the technology as easy to use and understand³⁸. Social influence refers to the impact of others' opinions and recommendations on individuals' acceptance and usage of technology. Trust depicts the level of confidence and belief individuals have in the technology and its providers. TAM has been applied in various contexts, including insurance, higher education, online banking, and disaster management in order to understand and enhance technology acceptance and adoption³⁹.

However, there are some identified limitations to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). These limitations include the need to overcome technical barriers and improve user-friendliness of applications. Further, the complexity and multi-dimensionality of intelligent systems pose challenges to their widespread, adoption and acceptance³⁷. In the context of online banking, factors such as system quality and social influence can influence the level of trust, ease of use, and usefulness, which in turn affect the intention to use and the actual usage of online banking systems.

Research has shown that, application of TAM in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) predominantly used a quantitative approach and focused on manufacturing companies, limiting the generalizability of findings⁴⁰. In the case of e-learning portals, factors such as self-efficacy and complexity can hinder their optimal use⁴¹. In the context of Christian youths, social media, digital technology, and their worship experiences, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) assumes a pivotal role in understanding their interaction with technology:

- **Perceived Usefulness:** For Christian youths, technology's usefulness aligns with how digital platforms facilitate spiritual growth, Bible study, access to religious content, or participation



in virtual worship services. Their perception of technology's role in enhancing their spiritual journey significantly influences its adoption.

- **Perceived Ease of Use:** A user-friendly interface and comprehensible digital tools enable Christian youths to engage actively in religious activities, attend online church services, and interact with religious content easily. The ease of navigating digital platforms impacts their participation in religious practices.
- **Social Influence:** Peers, religious leaders, and community opinions play a substantial role in shaping the acceptance and use of technology among Christian youths. Recommendations, shared experiences, and social norms within religious circles influence their digital engagement for worship and spiritual growth.
- **Trust:** Christian youths' trust in digital technology for worship experiences involves confidence in the authenticity of online religious content, the security of virtual religious communities, and the reliability of platforms for spiritual guidance.

In this context, the TAM gives insights into how Christian youths navigate digital spaces for religious purposes. The model aids t comprehension of their attitudes toward and adoption of digital tools for worship, prayer, fellowship, and religious education.

However, despite the potential benefits, there exist challenges specific to this demographic:

- **Balancing Authenticity:** This is about the challenge in maintaining the authenticity of spiritual experiences in a digital realm, ensuring that online interactions genuinely contribute to their spiritual growth.
- **Distractions and Overload:** Over-reliance on digital platforms might lead to distractions or information overload, potentially diluting the depth of religious experiences or causing a sense of disconnect from traditional worship settings.
- **Engagement and Community Building:** Christian youths' adoption of technology for worship experiences must focus on fostering genuine community engagement, emphasizing relationships, discipleship, and mentorship within the digital



space.

Integrating TAM within this context enables a deeper comprehension of how Christian youths navigate, engage with, and adopt digital technology for worship experiences. It underscores the need for technological solutions that, align with spiritual values, enhance engagement, and contribute meaningfully to their faith journey.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the rapid advancement and widespread adoption of digital technology tools have transformed various aspects of society, including religious practices. Among the demography most affected by this digital revolution are youths, who often have unique experiences and expectations regarding their worship encounters. In the context of The Redeemed Christian Church of God Province-12 in Osun State, Nigeria, the utilization of digital technology tools by the youth demographic in their worship experiences is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon.

Despite the potential of digital tools to revolutionize worship engagement, significant knowledge gaps persist. Specifically, there is a pressing need to investigate the presence, usage, and adoption rates of these tools within religious communities. To bridge this knowledge gap, a focused inquiry is necessary to provide actionable insights that can inform decision-making within the church community and contribute meaningfully to the broader discussion on the role of digital technology in shaping religious practices among Nigerian youths.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of Social Media presence of RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12?
2. To what extent are RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12 are engaged in the use of social media?
3. What digital technology tools are used by youths in RCCG Youth Province-12 for their worship engagement?

Methodology

For the study, descriptive survey research design is adopted. Data were collected using a duly validated self-designed questionnaire and rating



scale. The population for the study consists of youths within RCCG Youth Province-12, Osun State, Nigeria. A sample size of 103 youths was identified through stratified and simple random sampling from RCCG Youth Province-12. Also, 16 church leaders were selected from the Province encompassing zonal pastor, area pastor, parish pastor and church worker. The data generated was subject to analysis by the researchers and presented below in simple percentage tables for easy understanding and simplicity.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (N=103)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	55	53.4%
	Female	45	43.7%
	No response	3	2.9%
Age	Under 20 years	17	16.5%
	21-30 years	51	49.5%
	31-40 years	26	25.2%
	41-50	8	7.8%
	No response	1	1.0%
Education	Secondary	17	16.5%
	ND/NCE	13	12.6%
	HND/B.Sc	54	52.4%
	Postgraduate	19	18.4%
Marital Status	Single	75	72.8%
	Married	28	27.2%
Ministerial Status	Worker	48	46.6%
	Minister	31	30.1%
	Pastor	17	16.5%
	Member	7	6.8%

Source: Fieldwork, 2023



Table 1 reveals the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table revealed that out of the 103 respondents, 55 respondents representing 53.4% of the sample represented male while 45 respondents which constitutes 43.7% represented the female participants. Three of the respondents representing 2.9% chose not to indicate their gender. The gender distribution among the respondents reveals a relatively balanced representation, with a slightly higher percentage of males 55 (53.4%) than females 45 (43.7%). The table also shows that majority of the respondents 51 (49.5%) were aged between 21 and 30 years, while the least 8 (7.8%) were between 41 and 50 years and only 17 (16.5%) were below 20 years. This clearly indicated that majority of the respondents comprises a significant proportion of the youth demographic. Also, the table revealed that 54 respondents representing 52.4% of the sample had first degree education, 13 respondents representing 12.6% had National Diploma/Nigeria Certificate of Education, 19 respondents representing 18.4% had Post Graduate degrees while 17 respondents which constitute 16.5% had Secondary School education. The educational background of the respondents reflects a diverse range of academic qualifications, spanning from secondary education to postgraduate studies. In addition, majority (72.8%) were single while the least (27.2%) were married. This clearly indicated that the majority of respondents are single, comprising a significant proportion of the youth demographic. The distribution of ministerial status demonstrates the diverse roles within the church community. The table also shows the ministerial status of the respondents. The prevalence of workers and ministers indicates active participation in church activities, while pastors and members represent different levels of engagement.

Research Question One: What is the level of Social Media presence of RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12?

To answer this question, the data obtained from the church leaders within RCCG Youth Province-12 in Osun State, Nigeria was subjected to descriptive statistics and the result is presented in Table 4.2.



Table 2 Online Presence of RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12 (N=16)

S/N	Social Media Platforms	Available No %	Not Available No %
1.	WhatsApp Group	16 (100%)	0 (0.0%)
2.	Facebook	14 (87.5%)	2 (12.5%)
3.	Instagram	5 (31.25%)	11 (68.75%)
4.	Telegram	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)
5.	Youtube	10 (62.5%)	6 (37.0%)
6.	Church website	3 (18.8%)	13 (81.3%)
7.	Tiktok	5 (31.3%)	11 (68.8%)
8.	Mixlr (Online Radio)	4 (25%)	12 (75%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 shows the level of social media presence of RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12. The table revealed that all surveyed churches 16 (100%) operate an active Church WhatsApp account, indicating the widespread use of this platform for church communication. The majority of churches 14 (87.5%) have an active Facebook account, making it a prevalent platform for church outreach. YouTube is the most commonly used video platform, with 10 (62.5%) of churches having an active account. The majority of churches 11 (68.8%) do not have an active TikTok account, suggesting a lower interest in this platform. Mixlr (Online Radio) is embraced only by 4 (25%) of churches. This clearly indicates that there are varied levels of online presence among RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12. WhatsApp groups have the highest adoption rate, with all churches having a presence, while church websites have the lowest adoption rate. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok, and Mixlr show a mix of availability and non-availability across the churches surveyed.

Research Question Two: To what extent are RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12 are engaged in the use of social media?

To answer this question, the data obtained from the church leaders within RCCG Youth Province-12 in Osun State, Nigeria was subjected to descriptive statistics and the result is presented in Table 3.



Table 3 Extent of Social Media Engagement with the Youths (N=16)

S/N	Statements	Available No %	Not Available No %
1.	Online Streaming of Church services/programs	7 (43.8%)	9 (56.3%)
2.	WhatsApp Chat postings of Church information circulation	15 (93.8%)	1 (6.25%)
3.	WhatsApp Audio Broadcast of Sermon/Church programs	10 (62.5%)	6 (37.5%)
4.	Facebook Video posts of Sermons/Church programs	7 (43.8%)	9 (56.3%)
5.	Facebook Live of Church Service Programs	3 (18.75%)	13 (81.25%)
6.	Instagram Live of Church services/programs	1 (6.25%)	15 (93.75%)
7.	Youtube Live of Church services/programs	3 (18.75%)	13 (81.25%)
8.	Telegram message sharing of Sermons/programs	5 (31.3%)	11 (68.8%)
9.	Virtual Church services/programs	5 (31.3%)	11 (68.8%)
10.	Use of Short Message Services (SMS) for Church information circulation	8 (50%)	8 (50%)
11.	Multimedia services for Church programs	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)
12.	Easy Worship (Church presentation software)	11 (68.8%)	5 (31.3%)
13.	Smart/Led Tv/Multimedia Projector for presentation purposes	10 (62.5%)	6 (37.5%)
14.	Church Media Team	9 (56.3%)	7 (43.8%)



Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 shows the extent of social media engagement with the youths. The findings revealed that while WhatsApp chat is widely employed for church information circulation by 93.8% of churches, online streaming of church services/programs is offered by 43.8% of surveyed churches, showing moderate adoption for virtual attendance. Furthermore, 62.5% of churches engage in WhatsApp audio broadcast of sermons/church programs, suggesting a moderate utilization for sharing audio content. Conversely, platforms like Instagram Live and YouTube Live are less utilized, with only 6.25% and 18.75% of churches utilizing them, respectively, indicating minimal engagement for streaming church services/programs. Additionally, multimedia tools such as Easy Worship software and Smart/Led TV/Multimedia Projectors are more widely adopted, with 68.8% and 62.5% of churches using them, respectively, suggesting a higher utilization for multimedia presentations and visual aids in church services. Table 3 revealed varied levels of engagement with different social media platforms and multimedia tools among RCCG Churches in the province, reflecting a diverse approach to social media interaction and multimedia utilization within the surveyed churches.

Research Question Three: What digital technology tools are used by youths in RCCG Youth Province-12 for their worship engagement? To answer this question, the data obtained from the youths within RCCG Youth Province-12 in Osun State, Nigeria was subjected to descriptive statistics and the result is as presented in Table 4a; Table 4b; Table 4c; Table 4d and Table 4e.

Table 4a Identification of Religious Mobile Apps Used (N=103)

S/ N	Religiou s Mobile Apps	Frequentl y Use No %	Occasionall y Use No %	Never Use No %	No Respons e No %
1.	<i>Youversio n</i>	61 (59.2%)	32 (31.1%)	9 (8.7%)	1 (1.0%)



2.	<i>Open Heaven Devotional</i>	46 (44.7%)	27 (26.1%)	29 (28.2%)	1 (1.0 %)
3.	<i>Digital Hymnal</i>	36 (35.0%)	53 (52.0%)	13 (12.6%)	1 (1.0%)
4.	<i>Daily Scripture</i>	35 (34.0%)	40 (38.8%)	27 (26.2%)	1 (1.0%)
5.	<i>OH Prime TV</i>	5 (4.9%)	71 (68.9%)	26 (25.2%)	1 (1.0%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4a indicate varying usage patterns of mobile apps designed for religious content among the respondents. The most frequently used app is *YouVersion*, with a substantial 61 (59.2%) of respondents reporting frequent usage, while only 9 (8.7%) never use it. *Open Heavens* follows closely, with 46 (44.7%) reporting frequent use, and 29 (28.2%) never using it. *Digital Hymnal* is frequently used by 36 (35%) of respondents, and *Daily Scripture* has a usage frequency of 35 (34%). Interestingly, *OH Prime TV* sees a different pattern, with a majority 71 (68.9%) reporting never using it. These findings suggest a notable preference for *YouVersion* among the respondents, indicating its popularity as a go-to mobile app for religious content, while *OH Prime TV* seems to be less utilized among this demographic. These usage patterns provide insights into the preferences and habits of the youth within The Redeemed Christian Church of God Youth Province-12 concerning mobile apps tailored for religious purposes.



Table 4b The Usage of Social Media Platforms (N=103)

S/ N	Social Media Platform s	Frequentl y Use No %	Occasionall y Use No %	Never Use No %	No Respons e No %
1.	<i>Facebook</i>	66 (64.1%)	33 (32.0%)	8 (3.9%)	0 (0.0%)
2.	<i>Instagram</i>	43 (41.7%)	47 (45.6%)	13 (12.6%)	0 (0.0 %)
3.	<i>Telegram</i>	39 (37.9%)	52 (50.5%)	11 (10.7%)	1 (1.0%)
4.	<i>WhatsApp</i>	95 (92.2%)	7 (6.8%)	1 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)
5.	<i>TikTok</i>	20 (19.4%)	35 (33.9%)	48 (46.6%)	0 (0.0%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4b highlight diverse patterns in the use of social media platforms among the respondents. Notably, *Facebook* emerges as the second most frequently used platform, with 66 (64.1%) reporting frequent usage and only 8 (3.9%) never using it. *Instagram* follows closely, with 43 (41.7%) reporting frequent use and 13 (12.6%) never using it. *Telegram* is utilized frequently by 39 (37.9%), and *WhatsApp* stands out with the highest frequency of 95 (92.2%) reporting frequent usage. In contrast, *TikTok* demonstrates a different trend, with a substantial 48 (46.6%) reporting never using it. These findings suggest a prevalent and active engagement with mainstream social media platforms, particularly *WhatsApp* and *Facebook*, among the youth in The Redeemed Christian Church of God Youth Province-12. The data provides insights into the digital social landscape of the respondents and underscores the platforms that hold significance in their daily online interactions.



Table 4.4c The Usage of Online Streaming Platforms (N=103)

S/ N	Online- Streamin g Platform s	Frequentl y Use No %	Occasionall y Use No %	Never Use No %	No Respons e No %
1.	<i>Youtube</i>	58 (56.3%)	35 (33.9%)	9 (8.7%)	1 (1.0%)
2.	<i>Stream Yard</i>	4 (3.8%)	21 (20.3%)	76 (73.8%)	2 (1.9 %)
3.	<i>Instagram Live</i>	18 (17.5%)	34 (33.0%)	50 (48.5%)	1 (1.0%)
4.	<i>Facebook Live</i>	32 (31.1%)	37 (35.9%)	34 (33.0%)	0 (0.0%)
5.	<i>Telegram Live</i>	24 (23.30%)	24 (23.3%)	53 (51.5%)	2 (1.9%)
6.	<i>Mixlr</i>	35 (33.9%)	43 (41.7%)	23 (22.3%)	2 (1.9%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4c reveals diverse engagement with live streaming and content-sharing platforms. *YouTube* is frequented by 58 (56.3%) of respondents, demonstrating its popularity, while 9 (8.7%) never use it. *StreamYard* sees limited use, with 76 (73.8%) reporting never using it. Notably, *Facebook Live* is employed by 32 (31.1%), *Instagram Live* by 18 (17.5%), and *Telegram Live* by 24 (23.3%), with varying degrees of never usage. *Mixlr* is utilized regularly by 35 (33.9%), indicating a moderate adoption. These findings highlight a prevalent use of mainstream platforms like *YouTube* and *Facebook Live* for live streaming purposes, whereas platforms like *StreamYard* and *Telegram Live* are less commonly used among the respondents. The data provides insights into the platforms that hold significance for the youth in The Redeemed Christian Church



of God Youth Province-12 in terms of live content consumption and creation.

Table 4d The Usage of Special websites/OnlineForums for Religious Discussions, Resources and for Paying Tithes/Offerings (N=103)

S/ N	Special websites/ Online Forums	Frequen tly Use No %	Occasiona lly Use No %	Neve r Use No %	No Respon se No %
1.	Dove Vision TV	18 (17.5%)	29 (28.1%)	55 (53.4 %)	1 (1.0%)
2.	RCCG.org	17 (16.5%)	50 (48.4%)	36 (34.9 %)	0 (0.0 %)
3.	RCCGYAYA.co m.ng	15 (14.6%)	27 (26.2%)	59 (57.2 %)	2 (1.9%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4d indicates varying levels of engagement among respondents on the use of special websites and online forums. *Dove Vision* is infrequently used, with 55 (53.4%) of respondents reporting never using it, while 18 (17.5%) use it frequently. *RCCG.org* sees a more balanced distribution, with 36 (34.9%) never using it, 17 (16.5%) frequently using it, and 50 (48.5%) using it occasionally. *RCCGYAYA.org* also demonstrates a significant portion 59 (57.2%) never using it, with 15 (14.6%) using it frequently. These results suggest that among the surveyed youth in The Redeemed Christian Church of God Youth Province-12, certain special websites and online forums have limited utilization, while others like *RCCG.org* have a more even distribution across frequent, occasional, and non-usage. Understanding these patterns sheds light on the online platforms that are central or peripheral to the digital experiences of the respondents within the church community.



Table 4.4e The Usage of Digital Software for Church services (N=103)

S/N	Digital Software	Frequently Use No %	Occasionally Use No %	Never Use No %	No Response No %
1.	<i>Easy Worship</i>	16 (15.5%)	35 (33.9%)	50 (48.5%)	2 (1.9%)
2.	<i>Vmix Pro</i>	3 (2.9%)	25 (24.3%)	73 (70.8%)	2 (1.9 %)
3.	<i>One Stream</i>	4 (3.8%)	20 (19.4%)	77 (74.7%)	2 (1.9%)
4.	<i>OpenLP</i>	2 (2.9%)	12 (11.6%)	83 (80.5%)	5 (4.8%)
5.	<i>Share Faith</i>	5 (4.8%)	13 (12.6%)	82 (79.6%)	3 (2.9%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4e shows the data on the usage of digital software in the context of worship and religious activities, revealing varying levels of adoption among the respondents. *Easy Worship* sees usage by 16 (15.5%), with 50 (48.5%) never using it, while *VmixPro* has limited usage, with 73 (70.8%) never using it. "One Stream" demonstrates a similar trend, with a significant portion 77 (74.7%) never using it. *OpenLP* is used occasionally by 12 (11.6%), with the majority 83 (80.5%) never using it. *Share Faith* has a balanced distribution, with 82 (79.6%) never using it, and a smaller portion frequently 5 (4.8%) and occasionally 13 (12.6%) using it. These findings suggest a range of adoption levels for different digital software, with some being infrequently used or never used among the surveyed youth in The Redeemed Christian Church of God Youth Province-12. Understanding these patterns is crucial for assessing the technological landscape within the church community and informing decisions regarding the integration of digital tools in worship practices.

Discussion of Findings

Findings concerning research question one provides an insight into the availability and accessibility of Digital Technology Tools for Worship



Experience in RCCG Youth Province-12. The study revealed that all surveyed churches 100% operate an active Church *WhatsApp* account, indicating the widespread utilization of this platform for church communication¹. Additionally, the majority of churches 87.5% maintain an active *Facebook* account, suggesting its prevalence as a platform for church outreach. *YouTube* emerges as the most commonly utilized video platform, with 62.5% of churches having an active account, while the adoption rate for *TikTok* remains relatively low, with only 31.3% of churches having an active account. Furthermore, the utilization of *Mixlr* (Online Radio) is observed in only 25% of churches.

These findings underscore the diverse levels of online presence among RCCG Churches in Osun Youth Province-12, with *WhatsApp* groups exhibiting the highest adoption rate and church websites showing the lowest adoption rate. The presence of social media platforms such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Telegram*, *YouTube*, *TikTok*, and *Mixlr* varies across the surveyed churches, reflecting a mix of availability and non-availability. Findings on research question two reveals the extent of social media engagement among youths in RCCG Youth Province-12. It was observed that *WhatsApp* chat serves as a prevalent tool for circulating church information, with 93.8% of churches extensively utilizing it for communication purposes. However, the adoption of online streaming for church services/programs is moderate, with only 43.8% of surveyed churches offering this feature, suggesting a cautious approach towards virtual attendance. Furthermore, a moderate utilization for sharing audio content was noted, with 62.5% of churches engaging in *WhatsApp* audio broadcast of sermons/church programs.

Conversely, platforms such as *Instagram* Live and *YouTube* Live are sparingly used, indicating minimal engagement for streaming church services/programs, with only 6.25% and 18.75% of churches employing them, respectively. On the other hand, multimedia tools like Easy Worship software and Smart/Led TV/Multimedia Projectors are more widely adopted, with 68.8% and 62.5% of churches utilizing them, respectively, suggesting a preference for multimedia presentations and visual aids during church services². These findings underscore varied levels of engagement across different social media platforms and multimedia tools among RCCG Churches in the province, reflecting a diverse approach to social media interaction and multimedia utilization within the surveyed churches.



Research question three discusses the digital technology tools utilized by youths in RCCG Youth Province-12 for their worship engagement. Among mobile apps designed for religious content, "YouVersion" emerges as the most frequently used, with 59.2% of respondents reporting frequent usage, indicating its popularity within the demographic.

Invariably, *OH Prime* TV shows limited adoption, with 68.9% of respondents reporting never using it. These findings underscore a significant preference for *YouVersion* among the respondents, emphasizing its role as a primary mobile app for accessing religious content. Furthermore, diverse engagement patterns were observed across various social media platforms, with *WhatsApp* and *Facebook* being the most commonly used platforms for communication and outreach. Mainstream platforms like *YouTube* and *Facebook Live* are prevalent for live streaming of worship services, while the utilization of special websites and online forums varies among respondents. Additionally, the adoption of digital software for worship activities exhibits diverse usage patterns, with some tools experiencing limited utilization or being entirely unused among the surveyed youth. Understanding these preferences and usage patterns is essential for assessing the technological landscape within the church community and guiding decisions regarding the integration of digital tools into worship practices.

Summary of Findings

Findings revealed very high social media presence of churches within RCCG Youth Province-12 on *WhatsApp*, *Facebook*, and *Youtube*; while extent of social media engagement among youths in RCCG Youth Province-12 recorded very high prevalence on *WhatsApp* and somewhat minimal on live streaming of church worship service on *Instagram* live and *Youtube* live. In addition, the study shows diverse adoption rates of multimedia tools among RCCG churches in the province, with Easy Worship software and Smart/LED TV/Multimedia Projectors being widely used. This indicates a preference for multimedia presentations and visual aids during church services, highlighting varied levels of engagement across different social media platforms and multimedia tools among surveyed youth churches. In addition, *YouVersion* emerges as the most frequently used mobile app designed for religious content.



Conclusion

Based on the findings presented, it's evident that churches within RCCG Youth Province-12 have established a significant presence on various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube. This heightened presence suggests a proactive approach by these churches in utilizing digital platforms to reach and engage with their members and the wider community.

However, despite the extensive social media presence, the study indicates that the level of engagement among youths in RCCG Youth Province-12 varies across different platforms. While WhatsApp emerges as a highly engaged platform, live streaming of church worship services on platforms like Instagram Live and YouTube Live shows relatively minimal engagement. This suggests that while youths are active on social media, there may be specific preferences or barriers to engagement with certain types of content or platforms.

Moreover, the diverse adoption rates of multimedia tools among RCCG churches in the province, such as Easy Worship software and Smart/LED TV/Multimedia Projectors, underscore a preference for multimedia presentations and visual aids during church services. This highlights the importance of incorporating technology and multimedia elements to enhance the worship experience and facilitate better engagement with the youth demographic. Overall, these findings emphasize the need for churches to tailor their digital strategies and content to effectively reach and engage with youths across various social media platforms and multimedia tools.

Recommendations

1. Implement digital literacy programs within the church community to enhance access and proficiency with digital technology among youths. This can empower them to fully leverage the benefits of available digital tools.
2. Provide specialized training for Church Media Teams to enhance their skills in managing digital technology tools effectively. This ensures that these teams can contribute optimally to the integration of technology in worship services.
3. Involve youths in decision-making processes related to the integration of digital technology tools. Their active participation



ensures that the chosen tools and approaches resonate with their expectations and contribute to a more inclusive worship experience.

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