



JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND MORAL ETHICS (JRME)

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 (2026)

J R M E

PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

Digital Religion and Communal Identity: Exploring Youth Online Faith Practices in Agbor

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Article Information

Received: October 11, 2025

Accepted: January 31, 2026

Published: May 03, 2026

Keywords

Agbor Metropolis, Digitalisation, Online Faith Practices, Religion, Youths

ABSTRACT

The study examines the digitalisation of religion and its community impact on online faith practices among youths in Agbor. The problem addressed is the increasing reliance on digital platforms for worship and spiritual interaction, which raises concerns about the transformation of traditional religious participation, communal bonding, and doctrinal depth. The scope of the study covers youths within Agbor who actively engage in online religious activities through social media, streaming services, and virtual worship spaces. The paper employed surveys, interviews, and observation of online platforms to capture patterns of participation, motivations, and challenges. Findings reveal that digitalisation has enhanced accessibility to religious teachings, broadened participation, and fostered peer-to-peer spiritual support, yet it has also weakened physical fellowship, created risks of shallow commitment, and exposed youths to diverse and sometimes conflicting doctrines. The study concludes that digitalisation has produced a hybrid religious culture where online and offline practices coexist, reshaping communal spirituality and identity among youths in Agbor. Recommendations include encouraging faith leaders to integrate digital tools responsibly, preserving traditional worship to balance online practices, promoting digital literacy among youths to navigate online faith spaces critically, and compiling digital resources to sustain community cohesion and theological clarity for future generations.

INTRODUCTION

Religion has historically been practiced within physical spaces such as churches, mosques, and shrines, where communal worship and fellowship reinforce shared values. However, the rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed how faith is expressed and experienced, particularly among youths. In Agbor Metropolis, social media platforms, livestreamed services, and mobile applications have become new avenues for religious participation. This digitalisation of religion has created hybrid spaces where traditional practices coexist with online expressions of faith. Youths, being the most digitally active demographic, are at the forefront of this transformation, shaping new forms of spirituality, community interaction, and religious identity.

Statement of the Problem

The shift from physical to digital worship raises critical questions about its impact on religious life and community cohesion. While digital platforms expand access to teachings and worship, they may also weaken traditional fellowship, reduce doctrinal depth, and expose youths to conflicting ideologies. The central research question is: How has the digitalisation of religion influenced online faith practices and community life among youths in Agbor?

Objectives of the Paper

The paper seeks to examine the extent of digital religious engagement among youths in Agbor, to identify the benefits and challenges of online faith practices, and to

evaluate their impact on communal spirituality. It also aims to highlight how digitalisation reshapes religious identity and propose strategies for balancing online and offline worship.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to understanding how technology is redefining religious practice in African urban contexts. It provides insights for faith leaders on integrating digital tools responsibly, offers guidance for youths on navigating online faith spaces critically, and enriches scholarship on religion and digital culture. By focusing on Agbor Metropolis, the research situates global debates on digital

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing Literature

The digitalisation of religion has attracted significant scholarly attention, particularly in contexts where technology intersects with communal spirituality. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) describe digital religion as a hybrid space where online and offline practices converge, reshaping traditional worship and theological imagination. In Nigeria, Adogame (2013) highlights how Pentecostal movements have embraced digital platforms to expand their reach, while Ukah (2016) notes that livestreamed services, WhatsApp prayer groups, and social media evangelism have become central to religious participation. Recent studies show that youth engagement is particularly strong, with online platforms offering immediacy, accessibility, and interactive worship

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experiences (Folarin, Otunla, & Atowoju, 2024). Globally, scholars have examined how digital media transforms religious authority and community life. Hutchings (2017) argues that online worship creates new forms of ritual and belonging, while Musa and Lando (2022) emphasize that African religious communities adapt digital tools to sustain identity while negotiating cultural values. In Southern Africa, Tsara and Mwapfaa (2023) demonstrate how Pentecostal churches integrate radio, television, and social media to enhance reach and foster connections. These studies collectively affirm that digitalisation is not merely a technological shift but a cultural transformation influencing how faith is practiced and experienced.

Key Debates and Perspectives

Debates in the literature revolve around whether digitalisation strengthens or weakens religious communities. Campbell (2012) contends that digital platforms democratize access to religious teachings and foster inclusivity, particularly among marginalized groups. Conversely, Hutchings (2017) cautions that digital religion risks reducing worship to consumerist experiences, weakening doctrinal depth, and eroding communal bonds. Within African scholarship, perspectives diverge: Ukah (2016) suggests digital Pentecostalism mirrors indigenous oral traditions by emphasizing repetition and participation, whereas Adogame (2013) warns of fragmentation due to competing online voices.

Other scholars highlight the role of digitalisation in youth ministry. Ojo, Adelaja, Adio, and Afolaranmi (2024) observe that technology enhances youth engagement in church services but raises challenges of authenticity and pastoral care. Similarly, Opade (2023) argues that digital evangelism expands outreach but requires theological guidance to avoid superficiality. These debates underscore tensions between accessibility, authenticity, and communal cohesion in digital faith practices.

Identification of Gaps the Paper Addresses

Despite increasing scholarship, localized studies of digital religion in smaller Nigerian urban centers remain limited. Most research focuses on megacities such as Lagos or Abuja, leaving communities like Agbor Metropolis underexplored. Furthermore, while existing studies emphasize access and participation, few examine the community impact of digitalisation on youth identity, moral formation, and social cohesion. There is also limited attention to how digitalisation interacts with indigenous cultural frameworks in shaping eschatological consciousness and communal spirituality.

This paper addresses these gaps by situating digitalisation within the lived experiences of youths in Agbor, exploring how online faith practices reshape communal spirituality, ethical consciousness, and theological imagination. By focusing on a mid sized urban context, the study contributes to broader debates on digital religion while offering insights into the specific challenges and

opportunities faced by Nigerian youths navigating online faith spaces.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Hermeneutical Approach

This study applies a hermeneutical lens to interpret the theological symbols, metaphors, and narratives that circulate in online worship spaces. Digital platforms often present sermons, hymns, and devotional materials in text and multimedia formats, and hermeneutics helps uncover how young people in Agbor reinterpret biblical ideas through these channels. By examining expressions such as “light,” “journey,” or “community,” the research situates digital faith practices within their cultural and theological context, showing how technology reshapes meaning while sustaining religious identity.

Historical Approach

A historical perspective is used to trace the evolution of religious communication in Nigeria, from oral traditions and print media to radio evangelism, televised services, and now digital platforms. This approach highlights both continuity and change in worship practices. In Agbor Metropolis, it reveals how churches and youth fellowships gradually adopted digital tools, situating current online practices within a broader trajectory of religious innovation. By doing so, the study contextualizes digitalisation as part of a longer history of adaptation and transformation in religious life.

Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of youths who participate in online faith practices. It emphasizes how individuals perceive and embody digital worship, treating online engagement as genuine spiritual encounters rather than simply technological activities. Through interviews and surveys, the study captures how digital platforms influence young people’s sense of community, moral responsibility, and spiritual growth. This approach ensures that the voices and experiences of participants remain central to the analysis.

Justification of Methods

Combining hermeneutical, historical, and phenomenological approaches provides a comprehensive framework for examining digital religion in Agbor. Hermeneutics is vital for interpreting theological meaning in online texts and rituals. Historical analysis situates digitalisation within Nigeria’s broader religious evolution, while phenomenology foregrounds the lived realities of youths. Methodologically, the study employs mixed methods: surveys to identify participation patterns, interviews to explore motivations and challenges, and content analysis of online platforms to examine theological messaging. This triangulated design ensures depth, reliability, and contextual relevance, allowing the research to evaluate both the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation for communal spirituality in Agbor Metropolis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Digitalisation of religion

Religion has historically been rooted in physical spaces such as temples, churches, and mosques, where rituals and fellowship reinforced communal identity. However, the rise of digital technologies has transformed these practices, creating new avenues for worship and spiritual engagement. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) describe digital religion as a hybrid environment where online and offline practices intersect, allowing believers to participate in faith communities through livestreams, podcasts, and social media. This shift demonstrates that digitalisation is not simply a technological innovation but a cultural transformation that redefines how faith is expressed.

The COVID 19 pandemic accelerated this trend, as congregations worldwide moved online to sustain worship and community life (Rodríguez, 2025). In Nigeria, Pentecostal and charismatic churches have embraced digital platforms to expand their reach, with livestreamed services and WhatsApp prayer groups becoming central to religious participation (Ukah, 2016). These practices have made worship more accessible, particularly for youths who are digitally active, while also fostering interactive forms of spirituality.

Scholars highlight both opportunities and challenges in this transformation. Hutchings (2017) argues that online worship creates new forms of ritual and belonging, while Opade (2023) notes that digital evangelism enhances outreach but requires theological guidance to avoid superficiality. Musa and Lando (2022) further emphasize that African religious communities adapt digital tools to sustain identity while negotiating cultural values. Thus, digitalisation of religion expands participation and democratizes access to teachings, but it also raises concerns about authenticity, doctrinal depth, and communal cohesion.

Influence of Digitalisation of Religion

The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed how religion is practiced and experienced in Nigeria. With over 199 million active internet users in 2024, religious organizations increasingly rely on livestreams, podcasts, WhatsApp devotionals, and social media sermons to reach followers (Prime Progress NG, 2025). This shift has created hybrid spaces where traditional worship coexists with digital expressions of faith. For youths in Agbor Metropolis, digitalisation provides accessibility, immediacy, and interactive participation, allowing them to engage with religious content beyond the confines of physical church buildings.

Scholars argue that digital religion represents a new paradigm in religious communication. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) describe it as a hybrid environment where online and offline practices intersect, reshaping theological imagination. In Nigeria, Adogame (2013) highlights how Pentecostal movements have embraced digital platforms to expand their reach, while Ukah (2016) notes that livestreamed services and WhatsApp prayer groups have become central to religious participation.

These developments demonstrate that digitalisation is not merely a technological innovation but a cultural transformation influencing how faith is expressed and sustained.

One of the most visible impacts of digitalisation is the rise of online religious movements. For instance, Jerry Eze's New Season Prophetic Prayers and Declarations (NSPPD) has attracted millions of participants globally, showing how digital platforms can create large-scale communities of faith (Prime Progress NG, 2025). Similarly, studies reveal that social media enhances youth engagement in worship, offering opportunities for peer-to-peer support and spiritual growth (Okoh & Maijimre, 2025). However, scholars also caution that digitalisation may weaken physical fellowship, reduce doctrinal depth, and expose youths to conflicting ideologies (Hutchings, 2017).

The influence of digitalisation extends beyond worship to community life. Musa and Lando (2022) argue that African religious communities adapt digital tools to sustain identity while negotiating cultural values. In Agbor, youths use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to share testimonies, organize prayer meetings, and promote moral accountability. This digital engagement fosters communal spirituality but also raises challenges of authenticity, as online spaces can blur the boundaries between entertainment and worship.

Debates in scholarship highlight tensions between accessibility and authenticity. Campbell (2012) contends that digital platforms democratize access to religious teachings, making worship more inclusive. Conversely, Adogame (2013) warns that competing online voices may fragment religious authority. Ojo et al. (2024) further note that while technology enhances youth participation, it requires careful pastoral guidance to avoid superficiality. These perspectives underscore the dual nature of digitalisation: it expands opportunities for engagement but also demands critical reflection on its impact on community cohesion and theological clarity.

For youths in Agbor, digitalisation has created a hybrid religious culture where online and offline practices coexist. Online faith practices provide flexibility and broaden participation, yet they also challenge traditional notions of fellowship and doctrinal depth. The influence of digitalisation is therefore both transformative and complex, reshaping communal spirituality, moral consciousness, and religious identity.

Impact of Digitalisation of Religion on Online Members

The integration of digital technologies into religious practice has reshaped the way believers interact with faith communities. Traditionally, religion was practiced in physical spaces such as churches, mosques, and temples, where rituals and fellowship reinforced communal identity. However, the rise of digital platforms has created new avenues for worship, teaching, and fellowship, allowing members to participate in religious life from virtually anywhere. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) describe this

phenomenon as “digital religion,” a hybrid environment where online and offline practices intersect, reshaping theological imagination and communal spirituality.

One of the most significant impacts of digitalisation is accessibility. Online platforms such as livestreams, podcasts, and social media groups enable members to engage with sermons, prayers, and devotional materials without geographical or temporal constraints. This accessibility has been particularly beneficial for youths and diaspora communities, who can remain connected to their faith traditions despite physical distance. Rodríguez (2025) notes that the COVID 19 pandemic accelerated this trend, as congregations worldwide moved online to sustain worship and community life. For online members, digitalisation thus provides flexibility and inclusivity, broadening participation in religious activities.

Digitalisation also fosters interactive and personalized worship experiences. Online members can comment on livestreams, share testimonies, and participate in virtual prayer groups, creating a sense of belonging and peer to peer support. Hutchings (2017) argues that online worship generates new forms of ritual and community, as digital platforms allow members to co create religious experiences rather than passively consume them. This interactivity strengthens engagement and encourages members to take ownership of their spiritual journeys.

At the same time, digitalisation presents challenges. Scholars caution that online worship may weaken physical fellowship and reduce doctrinal depth. Adogame (2013) observes that while digital platforms expand access, they also expose members to competing voices and conflicting ideologies, which can fragment religious authority. For online members, this means navigating a complex digital environment where authenticity and theological clarity are not always guaranteed. Moreover, the consumerist nature of digital media may encourage shallow commitment, as members can easily switch between religious content without sustained engagement.

Another impact is the reshaping of communal identity. Musa and Lando (2022) emphasize that African religious communities adapt digital tools to sustain identity while negotiating cultural values. Online members often use platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube to share testimonies, organize prayer meetings, and promote moral accountability. This digital engagement fosters communal spirituality but also raises questions about how traditional practices are preserved in virtual spaces. For youths in contexts like Agbor Metropolis, digitalisation has created hybrid religious cultures where online and offline practices coexist, reshaping both personal faith and collective consciousness.

Digitalisation of Religion and Personal Commitment of Members

The digitalisation of religion has reshaped how members express and sustain personal commitment to their faith communities. Online platforms such as livestreamed services, WhatsApp prayer groups, and social media

devotionals provide believers with constant access to religious content, enabling them to practice faith beyond the boundaries of physical worship spaces. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) argue that digital religion creates hybrid environments where online and offline practices intersect, allowing members to reaffirm their devotion through continuous engagement. This accessibility strengthens personal commitment by offering flexibility and immediacy, particularly for youths who are digitally active.

At the same time, scholars caution that digitalisation may alter the depth of commitment. Hutchings (2017) notes that online worship can foster new forms of ritual and belonging, but it also risks reducing faith to consumerist experiences, where members engage superficially without sustained fellowship. In African contexts, Ukah (2016) observes that digital Pentecostalism mirrors oral traditions by encouraging repetition and participation, yet the absence of physical community may weaken accountability. Thus, while digitalisation expands opportunities for devotion, it requires careful pastoral guidance to ensure that personal commitment remains authentic and grounded in communal spirituality.

Challenges of Digitalisation and Corporate Responsibilities

The digitalisation of religion and wider social institutions presents both opportunities and challenges. One major challenge is the risk of fragmentation of community life, as online platforms may weaken traditional fellowship and reduce accountability among members. Scholars caution that digital religion can foster consumerist tendencies, where individuals engage superficially with faith content without sustained commitment (Hutchings, 2017). Another challenge is exposure to conflicting ideologies, since digital spaces allow multiple voices to compete for authority, sometimes leading to doctrinal confusion (Adogame, 2013). Issues of privacy and data security also arise, as religious organizations increasingly rely on digital tools that collect and store sensitive information about members (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021).

Corporate responsibility in this context involves ensuring that digital platforms are used ethically and inclusively. Faith organizations and technology providers must safeguard user data, promote digital literacy, and provide theological guidance to prevent misuse of online spaces. Musa and Lando (2022) emphasize that African religious communities adapt digital tools responsibly to sustain identity while negotiating cultural values. Thus, corporate responsibility requires balancing innovation with accountability, ensuring that digitalisation enhances rather than undermines communal cohesion and spiritual growth.

Discipleship Concerns in Religious Digitalisation

The digitalisation of religion has created new opportunities for discipleship but also raised significant concerns about its depth, authenticity, and communal

accountability. Traditionally, discipleship involved face to face mentoring, communal worship, and embodied practices that reinforced spiritual growth. With the rise of digital platforms, discipleship increasingly takes place through livestreamed sermons, online Bible studies, and social media devotionals. While these tools expand access and allow youths to engage with religious teachings beyond physical boundaries, scholars caution that digital discipleship may lack the relational depth necessary for sustained spiritual formation. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) argue that digital religion creates hybrid spaces where online and offline practices intersect, but they note that the absence of embodied fellowship can weaken accountability structures essential to discipleship.

Another concern is the risk of superficial engagement. Hutchings (2017) observes that online worship often fosters consumerist tendencies, where members select religious content based on preference rather than commitment, potentially reducing discipleship to passive consumption. This undermines the traditional model of discipleship, which emphasizes discipline, mentorship, and communal responsibility. In African contexts, Ukah (2016) highlights that while digital Pentecostalism mirrors oral traditions by encouraging repetition and participation, the virtual environment may fragment authority and expose youths to conflicting doctrines, complicating the process of spiritual guidance.

Despite these challenges, digitalisation also offers opportunities for creative discipleship. Online platforms enable peer to peer mentoring, global access to theological resources, and interactive learning environments. However, the concern remains that without intentional pastoral oversight, digital discipleship may prioritize convenience over transformation. For communities such as Agbor Metropolis, the challenge is to balance digital tools with traditional practices, ensuring that discipleship remains rooted in authentic relationships, doctrinal clarity, and communal accountability.

Influence of digitalisation religious on youths

Expanded Access and Participation

Digitalisation has made religious content more accessible to youths, allowing them to engage with sermons, prayers, and devotional materials through livestreams, podcasts, and social media. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) describe digital religion as a hybrid space where online and offline practices intersect, enabling young people to participate in worship beyond physical boundaries. This accessibility fosters inclusivity, particularly for youths who may be distant from traditional worship centers.

Identity Formation and Cultural Expression

Digital platforms also play a role in shaping youth identity. Japheth and Opara (2025) argue that social media has revolutionized how Nigerian youths form and express religious and cultural identities, creating spaces for self expression and peer interaction. Online faith practices allow youths to negotiate their spirituality in ways

that align with contemporary digital culture, blending traditional values with modern communication styles.

Peer-to-Peer Support and Community Building

Online religious communities provide opportunities for youths to connect with peers, share testimonies, and participate in virtual prayer groups. Kanu et al. (2024) note that media fosters religio cultural development by connecting youths across boundaries, promoting communal spirituality and cultural preservation. These digital interactions strengthen belonging and moral accountability, offering new forms of discipleship and mentorship.

Challenges and Risks

Despite these benefits, digitalisation also presents challenges. Hutchings (2017) cautions that online worship may encourage consumerist tendencies, where youths engage superficially with religious content without sustained commitment. Similarly, Adogame (2013) warns that exposure to multiple online voices can fragment religious authority, leaving youths vulnerable to conflicting doctrines. These risks highlight the need for pastoral guidance and digital literacy to ensure that online faith practices contribute positively to spiritual growth.

Local Implications for Agbor Metropolis

In contexts such as Agbor, digitalisation has created hybrid religious cultures where youths combine online worship with traditional practices. Social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are used to organize prayer meetings, share devotionals, and promote moral accountability. This dual engagement reshapes communal spirituality, offering flexibility while challenging traditional notions of fellowship and doctrinal depth.

Benefits of Digitalisation of Religion among Youths in Agbor

The digitalisation of religion has introduced significant benefits for youths in Agbor Metropolis, reshaping how they access, practice, and sustain their faith. One major benefit is enhanced accessibility. Online platforms such as livestreams, podcasts, and WhatsApp devotionals allow young people to engage with sermons and prayers beyond the confines of physical worship spaces. Campbell and Tsuria (2021) describe digital religion as a hybrid environment where online and offline practices intersect, enabling youths to participate in worship regardless of location or time. This accessibility fosters inclusivity, particularly for those constrained by academic schedules or mobility challenges.

Another benefit is **increased participation and engagement**. Digital platforms encourage interactive worship, where youths can comment on livestreams, share testimonies, and join virtual prayer groups. Hutchings (2017) notes that online worship generates new forms of ritual and belonging, strengthening youth involvement in religious communities. In Agbor, this interactivity has created spaces for peer to peer support, enhancing

communal spirituality and moral accountability.

Digitalisation also contributes to **identity formation and cultural continuity**. Japheth and Opara (2025) argue that social media has revolutionized how Nigerian youths form and express religious identities, blending traditional values with modern digital culture. For youths in Agbor, online faith practices provide opportunities to negotiate their spirituality in ways that resonate with contemporary lifestyles while preserving communal values.

It promotes **religio cultural development**. Kanu et al. (2024) emphasize that media fosters cultural preservation and spiritual growth by connecting youths across boundaries. Online platforms enable young people to access diverse theological resources, strengthening their knowledge and broadening their worldview. This exposure enhances discipleship and equips youths with tools for critical engagement in faith matters.

It provides and supports **community expansion and outreach**. Adogame (2013) highlights that African Pentecostal movements use digital platforms to extend their reach, creating transnational networks of believers. In Agbor, youths benefit from this global connectivity, participating in online services and prayer movements that link them to wider Christian communities. This global exposure enriches their spiritual experiences while reinforcing local communal bonds.

In has the capacity to enhance accessibility, participation, identity formation, cultural development, and global connectivity. These benefits demonstrate that digitalisation is not merely technological but a transformative force shaping youth spirituality and communal life.

Egwuanikwu and Okoh (2024) highlight how the Dunamis International Gospel Centre within Agbor, has leveraged digital innovations such as livestreaming and social media to extend the reach of evangelism. These technologies allow religious institutions to connect with audiences outside the immediate community while also resonating strongly with digitally savvy youths. The development underscores the growing importance of technological platforms as essential channels for maintaining religious interaction, fostering participation, and sustaining spiritual engagement among younger generations in Agbor Metropolis.

Cultural, Akporherhe and Banwune (personal communication, October, 2025) affirm that that digitalisation interacts directly with Agbor's communal traditions, where evangelism has historically depended on face to face fellowship and collective worship. The shift to digital platforms redefines these cultural expressions, creating hybrid forms of outreach that blend traditional practices with modern technological innovations. Consequently, digitalisation not only extends the reach of religious activities but also reshapes the cultural fabric of worship and community life in Agbor.

The study revealed that digital tools such as livestreams and social media have significantly expanded evangelism beyond Agbor, enabling religious messages to reach distant audiences while simultaneously engaging local

youths in new forms of spiritual participation (Adja, personal communication, October, 2025). These platforms foster interactive worship experiences, broaden access to teachings, and create opportunities for peer to peer support. However, they also reshape traditional practices by emphasizing immediacy and connectivity over physical fellowship, reflecting broader trends in digital religion and online faith communities (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Hutchings, 2017; Ngonso, 2019).

Digitalisation has begun to reshape Agbor's communal religious culture, which historically emphasized face to face fellowship as the foundation of evangelism. According to Egede (personal communication, October, 2025), the adoption of online platforms redefines worship and outreach, transforming cultural expressions of spirituality while introducing new modes of participation and interaction among youths.

Digitalisation of Religion and Its Cultural Influence

Recent studies emphasize that religious beliefs play a significant role in how communities adopt technology, shaping both values and everyday behavior. In the Agbor context, research shows that churches have embraced digital tools such as livestreams and social media to extend evangelism beyond local boundaries. These platforms not only connect distant audiences but also actively engage young people within the city, making worship more accessible and interactive.

At the same time, scholars observe that technology is transforming the way sermons are delivered, teachings are shared, and religious texts are interpreted. This shift has generated excitement among members who appreciate the convenience and reach of digital platforms. However, it has also raised concerns, as some worry that online practices may dilute traditional fellowship or alter the depth of spiritual guidance. Thus, digitalisation brings both enthusiasm and caution, highlighting the need for balance between innovation and the preservation of communal religious values.

Findings

Religious Ideologies and Technology Adoption

The paper reveals that religious ideologies play a central role in shaping how technology is adopted within faith communities. In Agbor Metropolis, churches and youth fellowships do not simply embrace digital tools for convenience; rather, their use of technology is guided by theological values and cultural expectations. Religious leaders interpret digitalisation as both a means of spreading the gospel and a way of sustaining communal spirituality in a rapidly changing society. This ideological framing influences how members perceive digital platforms, encouraging them to view livestreams, podcasts, and social media devotionals not merely as technological innovations but as legitimate spaces for worship and discipleship.

The findings suggest that technology adoption in Agbor is not neutral. Instead, it is mediated by religious beliefs that

shape values and behaviors. For example, the emphasis on evangelism and outreach within Pentecostal traditions has motivated churches to use digital platforms to extend their influence beyond local boundaries. At the same time, cultural values of communal accountability and moral responsibility guide how youths engage with these platforms, ensuring that digitalisation is integrated into their spiritual lives in ways that align with local traditions.

Expansion of Evangelism through Digital Tools

Another significant finding is the role of digital tools in expanding evangelism. Livestreamed services, WhatsApp prayer groups, and Facebook evangelism campaigns have allowed churches in Agbor to reach audiences far beyond the city. This expansion has created translocal communities of faith, connecting local youths with diaspora members and global Christian networks. The study highlights that digitalisation has transformed evangelism from a primarily face to face activity into a hybrid practice that combines physical fellowship with virtual outreach.

For youths in Agbor, this expansion has been particularly impactful. Digital platforms provide them with opportunities to participate actively in evangelism, whether by sharing links to sermons, posting testimonies, or organizing online prayer meetings. These practices not only strengthen their personal commitment but also enhance their sense of belonging to a wider faith community. The findings show that digitalisation has democratized evangelism, enabling youths to become active agents of religious communication rather than passive recipients.

Reshaping of Sermons, Teaching, and Interpretation

The study also reveals that technology is reshaping the way sermons are delivered, teachings are shared, and religious texts are interpreted. Online platforms allow pastors to reach larger audiences, but they also require adjustments in style and content. Sermons are often shortened, made more interactive, and tailored to digital audiences who expect immediacy and clarity. Teaching materials are increasingly distributed through WhatsApp groups, YouTube channels, and online study platforms, making them accessible to youths who are accustomed to digital learning environments.

This reshaping extends to interpretation as well. Digitalisation has introduced new ways of engaging with scripture, including multimedia presentations, interactive Bible studies, and online theological debates. While these innovations generate enthusiasm among youths, they also raise concerns about doctrinal depth and authenticity. The findings indicate that while technology enhances accessibility and engagement, it may also risk oversimplifying complex theological concepts, leading to superficial understanding.

Enthusiasm and Caution in Digital Religion

Finally, the study highlights a dual response to digitalisation:

enthusiasm and caution. On one hand, youths in Agbor express excitement about the opportunities digital platforms provide for worship, fellowship, and evangelism. They appreciate the flexibility, accessibility, and global connectivity that digitalisation offers. On the other hand, both leaders and members voice caution about potential risks, including reduced physical fellowship, weakened accountability, and exposure to conflicting ideologies.

This tension reflects broader debates in scholarship about digital religion. While digitalisation expands participation and democratizes access, it also challenges traditional structures of authority and communal cohesion. The findings suggest that in Agbor, the enthusiasm for digitalisation is tempered by a recognition of its limitations, leading to calls for balanced integration of online and offline practices.

These findings underscore the transformative impact of digitalisation on religious life in Agbor Metropolis, particularly among youths, while also highlighting the need for responsible integration of technology into communal spirituality.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that digitalisation has become a transformative force in the religious life of youths in Agbor. Findings reveal that religious ideologies strongly influence how technology is adopted, shaping values, behaviors, and communal expectations. Digital tools such as livestreams, WhatsApp groups, and social media have expanded evangelism beyond local boundaries, connecting Agbor's youths to wider national and global faith networks. At the same time, technology has reshaped sermons, teaching methods, and scriptural interpretation, creating hybrid spaces where online and offline practices coexist. While digitalisation has generated enthusiasm by enhancing accessibility, participation, and identity formation, it has also raised caution regarding weakened fellowship, doctrinal fragmentation, and superficial engagement. The dual response of excitement and concern underscores the need for balanced integration of digital platforms into religious practice. For Agbor youths, digitalisation offers both opportunities for spiritual growth and challenges that require pastoral guidance and cultural sensitivity. Ultimately, the research concludes that digitalisation is not merely a technological shift but a cultural and spiritual transformation, one that must be managed responsibly to preserve authenticity, strengthen discipleship, and sustain.

It recommends that faith leaders should adopt digital tools with responsibility, ensuring that technology enhances rather than replaces spiritual depth. Traditional worship practices should be preserved and integrated alongside online platforms to maintain communal bonding and cultural continuity. Youths must be equipped with digital literacy skills to critically evaluate online faith spaces, avoiding shallow engagement and doctrinal confusion. Furthermore, the creation and curation of reliable digital resources will help sustain theological clarity, strengthen

community cohesion, and provide future generations with balanced pathways for spiritual growth and participation.

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