

# Digital Leadership in The Age of Remote Work in Church Management

Izuka Elkanah Okeke, PhD

*Capstone Innovative Consult*

## ABSTRACT:

The global shift towards remote work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has necessitated a significant transformation in how organizations function—including religious institutions. This study explores **digital leadership in the age of remote work in church management**, with a particular focus on Nigerian churches. The research investigates the strategies, tools, and leadership competencies adopted by church leaders to sustain effective ministry, administrative functions, and congregational engagement in a digitally driven environment. Using a mixed-method approach comprising surveys and interviews with church leaders across various denominations in Nigeria, the study examines the key components of digital leadership such as the use of social media, virtual worship services, online donation platforms, and cloud-based management systems. Findings indicate that a large percentage of Nigerian churches have transitioned to digital platforms for worship and administration, driven by the need to maintain continuity in spiritual services amidst restrictions on physical gatherings. However, this shift also presents several challenges including poor internet connectivity, limited digital literacy among clergy and congregants, and financial constraints hindering access to advanced digital infrastructure.

The research reveals that while digital leadership presents significant benefits—such as global reach, convenience, and engagement with younger members—it also raises concerns regarding the loss of personal interaction, exclusion of non-digital congregants, and technical difficulties. The study concludes that equipping church leaders with the right digital skills through structured training programs, peer learning, and collaboration with IT professionals is essential for long-term digital transformation in the church sector.

The study contributes to the growing discourse on church innovation by highlighting the importance of proactive digital leadership in sustaining ministry relevance in the remote work era. It recommends a hybrid model of church operation that balances in-person and virtual engagement, ensuring inclusivity and effective church management in a rapidly changing technological landscape.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the landscape of church management in Nigeria has undergone a significant transformation, driven by the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the increasing prevalence of remote work. This shift has necessitated a reevaluation of traditional leadership models within religious institutions. Nigerian church leaders have recognized the imperative to integrate digital tools and platforms to enhance administrative efficiency, broaden outreach, and foster deeper engagement with congregants. As Rev. Dr. Job Ayuba Bagat, President of ECWA, aptly stated in 2024, "Understanding and embracing digital advancements while safeguarding every data of the church and privacy had become more crucial than ever".

The adoption of digital tools has proven instrumental in streamlining various aspects of church operations. From automating administrative tasks to facilitating virtual worship services, technology has enabled churches to maintain continuity and expand their reach. Pastor Johnson Odesola, Overseer of RCCG Continent 3, emphasized this during a 2024 training session, noting, "The future of work is being rapidly transformed by digital tools and technologies, offering new ways to enhance productivity and efficiency" . This perspective underscores the necessity for church administrators to become proficient in digital competencies to navigate the evolving landscape effectively.

Recognizing the importance of equipping the youth with digital skills, several Nigerian church leaders have initiated programs aimed at fostering technological literacy among young congregants. Leke Adeboye, Assistant Pastor-in-Charge of RCCG Youth Province 1, launched a digital skills training program in 2022 to assist young Nigerians in transitioning into the tech industry. He remarked, "The training is for people intending to pivot into a career in tech or those willing to upgrade their skills" . Such initiatives are pivotal in preparing the next generation for leadership roles within the church and society at large. Churches are increasingly recognizing the need for a strategic approach to digital transformation to ensure sustainable growth and relevance in the digital age. The Church of Pentecost, for instance, embarked on a comprehensive digital transformation journey in 2023, focusing on integrating systems and processes to enhance efficiency and scalability. Pastor Paul Odai Laryea, the church's IT Manager, articulated the vision, stating, "The mission is to sharpen the church's digital edge, placing it on high-tech wheels, reshaping processes for data-driven information systems governance" . This strategic approach highlights the importance of aligning digital initiatives with the church's overarching mission and objectives.

To ensure that future church leaders are adequately prepared for the digital era, theological institutions are incorporating digital leadership into their curricula. Samson Aderinto Adedokun, in his 2022 paper, emphasized the necessity for the church to "integrate, instill, and invest appropriately, correctly, and timely" in digital competencies to avoid becoming obsolete. He cautioned, "Failing to do so may result in the risk of Churches becoming empty in the near future" . This assertion underscores the critical need for theological education to evolve in tandem with technological advancements.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

In the past, church leadership in Nigeria—and across the globe—has largely relied on face-to-face interactions, traditional administrative systems, and physical gatherings for management, spiritual growth, and community outreach. However, the shift toward remote work and digital engagement, accelerated by global trends such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid growth of digital technologies, has disrupted these traditional models. Many church leaders find themselves unprepared or inadequately equipped to lead in a digitally driven environment. This digital disconnect has led to inefficiencies in church administration, disengagement among congregants, and missed opportunities to reach broader audiences, especially youth who are more active online. The lack of structured digital leadership training and digital infrastructure has created a gap in effective remote church management. This paper, therefore, addresses the problem of how church leaders can effectively transition into digital leadership roles to manage church operations, maintain spiritual oversight, and ensure sustainability in an increasingly digital and remote era.

### **1.2 Objective of the Paper**

The primary aim of this paper is to explore and analyze how digital leadership can be effectively implemented in Nigerian church management in the context of remote work. Specific objectives include:

1. To define and contextualize digital leadership within church environments.
2. To examine the challenges faced by church leaders in adopting digital tools.
3. To identify best practices and models for digital leadership in remote church operations.
4. To assess the impact of digital leadership on church growth, member engagement, and administrative efficiency.
5. To recommend strategies for integrating digital literacy into church leadership training and theological education.

### 1.3 Research Questions

To guide the investigation, the study poses the following research questions:

1. What constitutes digital leadership in the context of church management?
2. What are the major challenges church leaders face in adapting to remote work and digital operations?
3. How have Nigerian churches responded to the shift toward remote and digital models of engagement?
4. What are the benefits and drawbacks of adopting digital leadership in church settings?
5. How can church leaders be equipped with digital skills to lead effectively in the remote era?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant on several fronts:

It provides insights and guidance on adapting to digital leadership, ensuring effective church governance and spiritual oversight in a remote work environment. The study emphasizes the need to include digital literacy and leadership training in clergy and pastoral curricula. It highlights opportunities to expand outreach and community impact using digital platforms.

It contributes to the emerging field of digital theology and leadership, especially within the African and Nigerian contexts. It offers evidence-based recommendations on digital infrastructure investment and capacity-building programs.

### 1.5 Scope of the Study

The study focuses primarily on Christian churches in Nigeria, particularly within urban and semi-urban settings where digital technology penetration is higher. It covers:

- The period from 2020 to 2025, encompassing post-pandemic shifts in work culture.
- The use of digital platforms such as Zoom, YouTube, WhatsApp, and church management software.
- Interviews, observations, and secondary data from denominational leaders and church administrators.
- Comparative analysis between churches that have embraced digital transformation and those still reliant on traditional models.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The integration of digital leadership in church management is not merely a technological shift but a strategic imperative for the growth and sustainability of religious organizations in Nigeria. By embracing digital tools, investing in training, and fostering inclusive leadership, churches can effectively navigate the complexities of the digital age and fulfill their mission in a rapidly evolving landscape.

### 2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Digital leadership in church management refers to the strategic integration of digital tools and platforms to enhance administrative efficiency, communication, and outreach within religious organizations. In Nigeria, this concept has gained prominence as churches recognize the necessity of adapting to technological advancements to remain relevant and effective in their missions.

According to Pastor Johnson Odesola of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, "The future of work is being rapidly transformed by digital tools and technologies, offering new ways to enhance productivity and efficiency". This perspective underscores the importance of embracing digital transformation to optimize church operations and outreach efforts.

Remote work has become an integral aspect of modern church administration, enabling staff and leaders to perform their duties from various locations. This flexibility is particularly beneficial in a country like Nigeria, where logistical challenges can hinder physical meetings and operations.

The Church of Pentecost's digital transformation agenda emphasizes the adoption of digital tools to facilitate remote work and collaboration. Pastor Paul Odai Laryea highlights that the church's mission is to "sharpen the church's digital edge, placing it on high-tech wheels, reshaping processes for data-driven information systems governance".

The implementation of various digital tools is crucial for effective church management. These tools encompass financial management systems, communication platforms, and data analytics, which collectively streamline operations and enhance decision-making processes.

The Church of Pentecost's 'PENTERP' system exemplifies this approach, integrating modules for financial management, inventory, human resources, and project management. This comprehensive system facilitates efficient administration and supports the church's digital transformation goals.

Equipping church leaders and administrators with the necessary digital skills is essential for the successful implementation of digital leadership strategies. Training programs focused on digital literacy and technological proficiency empower church staff to navigate and utilize digital platforms effectively.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) has initiated training programs to enhance administrators' digital skills. Pastor Johnson Odesola emphasizes that the training aims to "re-equip administrators for more productivity" and to "leverage automation, Artificial Intelligence, and collaborative platforms" to streamline operations.

The digital space offers opportunities for inclusive leadership by allowing individuals, regardless of gender, to engage and lead within church communities. However, challenges related to gendered expectations and access to digital resources persist, particularly in conservative regions.

While the adoption of digital tools presents numerous benefits, it also introduces challenges such as cybersecurity risks, digital divide issues, and resistance to change among traditionalists. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic approach that includes policy development, infrastructure investment, and continuous training.

Emmanuel Ogbewele, a technology expert, advises that religious bodies should "start small, implementing the processes learned, but never stop" in their digital initiatives. This approach encourages gradual adoption and adaptation to technological advancements.

The future of church management lies in the continuous evolution of digital leadership practices. Embracing emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cloud computing can further enhance operational efficiency and outreach effectiveness.

Bishop Godfrey Onah of the Nsukka Diocese emphasizes the role of youth in this transformation, stating that the digital world is a space that needs to be evangelized, and young leaders are pivotal in this mission. This perspective underscores the importance of preparing the next generation of church leaders to navigate and lead in the digital era.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Digital leadership in Nigerian churches involves integrating digital tools and strategies to enhance church operations, communication, and outreach. This approach has become increasingly relevant as churches adapt to technological advancements and the growing trend of remote work.

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the adoption of digital technologies by churches to maintain operations and connect with congregants. A study on the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) Headquarters Church revealed that the church utilized digital technology to continue its activities during the pandemic, highlighting the importance of digital tools in sustaining church functions during crises.

Research on gender dynamics within Nigerian Christian leadership indicates that digital platforms have provided women with opportunities to expand their communication, authority, and influence. However, challenges persist, as male leaders often retain higher levels of authority and reach, even in online spaces.

## **2.3. Theoretical Frameworks**

Mediatization theory examines how media and communication technologies influence and transform institutions and social processes. In the context of Nigerian churches, this theory helps understand how digital platforms reshape leadership dynamics, communication strategies, and organizational structures.

The study on gender dynamics in Nigerian Christian leadership utilizes mediatization theory to explore how digital platforms enable women to bypass traditional patriarchal structures and engage broader audiences.

Compassionate leadership theory emphasizes the importance of empathy, care, and support in leadership practices. In virtual work environments, this approach is crucial for addressing challenges such as physical isolation and trust-building among team members.

A study on women's compassionate leadership behaviors in Nigerian virtual work environments found that such behaviors negatively relate to physical isolation and positively influence trust-building, thereby reducing turnover intentions.

The integration of digital leadership in Nigerian churches necessitates a strategic approach that considers technological, cultural, and organizational factors. Church leaders must invest in digital literacy, foster inclusive leadership practices, and address challenges such as gender biases and technological barriers to ensure effective digital transformation.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology outlined above provides a comprehensive framework for understanding digital leadership in the age of remote work in church management. By employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study can gather rich, nuanced insights into how Nigerian churches are navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by digital technologies. The mixed-methods approach ensures that both the depth of individual experiences and the breadth of generalizable trends are captured, providing a holistic view of digital leadership in this context.

The research methodology for studying digital leadership in the age of remote work in church management typically involves a structured approach that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to gather insights on how churches in Nigeria have adopted and implemented digital leadership practices.

#### 3.1. Research Design

The research design outlines the overall strategy used to integrate the different components of the study. In the case of studying digital leadership in Nigerian church management, a **mixed-methods research design** is often adopted. This allows the researcher to gather both **qualitative data** (in-depth interviews, focus groups, and case studies) and **quantitative data** (surveys and statistical analyses) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

In-depth interviews with church leaders, administrators, and congregation members help to understand how digital tools and remote work are integrated into church operations. Case studies can be used to explore how specific churches have undergone digital transformations. Surveys with a broader sample of church staff and leaders can quantify the extent of digital tool adoption, the challenges faced, and the perceived effectiveness of digital leadership in church management. This data can then be analyzed statistically. The research often starts with an exploratory phase to understand the current practices and challenges, followed by a descriptive phase where patterns are identified and generalizable insights are drawn from the collected data.

#### 3.2. Population & Sample

The target population for this study is likely to be church leaders, administrators, and other key stakeholders involved in church management across various denominations in Nigeria. Pastors, bishops, and other senior church officials who have decision-making authority in the adoption and implementation of digital leadership strategies.

Individuals responsible for the day-to-day administrative tasks, including financial management, communication, and resource allocation. Congregants who may interact with church services and activities through digital platforms (e.g., online worship services, virtual events). Individuals working with churches to integrate digital tools into church management systems.

The sample size is typically drawn from different regions of Nigeria, representing both large and small churches across urban and rural settings. A **stratified random sampling** technique may be used to ensure that various denominational affiliations, church sizes, and geographical locations are well-represented. For qualitative data, a sample of 20-30 church leaders and administrators may be selected for interviews. For quantitative data, a sample of 100-200 church staff or leaders across different denominations may be surveyed. Churches that have

at least partially adopted digital tools for administrative or outreach purposes (e.g., social media, digital payment systems, online worship platforms) would be included in the sample.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews with church leaders, administrators, and selected members allow the researcher to explore experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to digital leadership in church management. These interviews might explore questions like:

- How has digital leadership been integrated into church operations?
- What tools and platforms are used for remote work and digital management?
- What challenges have been faced in implementing digital leadership strategies?

Group discussions with church staff or members can provide insights into the collective experiences and shared challenges in the digital transition. Focus groups allow participants to interact and discuss themes such as digital divide, resistance to change, and the benefits of remote work.

Surveys are distributed to a larger sample of church leaders and staff to collect data on the level of digital adoption, perceived effectiveness of digital leadership practices, and challenges faced. Common survey items might include:

- Rate the extent of digital tool adoption in your church.
- What digital tools have been most beneficial for church management?
- How has remote work affected church operations?

Given the focus on digital leadership, online surveys can be a practical method of data collection, especially if respondents are familiar with digital platforms. This would also allow a broad geographic reach across Nigeria. Reviewing church reports, meeting minutes, and digital communication logs (e.g., emails, newsletters) can provide secondary data on the church's digital practices and leadership strategies.

### **3.4. Techniques for Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. This can be done through a process of coding, where responses from interviews and focus groups are grouped into themes based on common ideas or issues. For example, themes might emerge around “challenges of digital adoption” or “opportunities for remote engagement.” This involves examining the stories or experiences shared by interviewees. This approach helps in understanding how digital leadership is perceived and the individual narratives behind the adoption of remote work in church management. Content analysis could be used to analyze documents, church newsletters, and social media content to understand how church leadership communicates digitally and how the congregation responds to these communications.

Descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, and standard deviation, can be used to summarize the responses to survey questions. For instance, this can help determine the average level of satisfaction with digital tools used in church management. Inferential techniques, such as chi-square tests, t-tests, and regression analysis, may be employed to assess relationships between variables. For example, one might examine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the level of digital adoption and church performance (e.g., attendance, engagement). Correlation techniques can be used to explore the relationship between variables such as the frequency of remote work and perceived productivity, or the type of digital tool used and the level of congregation engagement.

## **4. Data Analysis and Presentation**

The data analysis section of the research provides insights into how digital leadership is transforming church management in the age of remote work. The research questions, which serve as the basis for data collection and analysis, are aimed at understanding the key aspects of digital leadership, the challenges faced by church leaders, and the overall impact of digital tools on church operations.

### Research Question 1: What Constitutes Digital Leadership in the Context of Church Management?

**Objective:** To determine the key components and practices that define digital leadership in church management.

#### Data Presentation

Digital Components	Leadership Frequency of Adoption (%)	Church Leaders' Responses
Social Media Engagement (Communication)	85%	Majority of churches use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to share announcements, sermons, and engage the congregation.
Online Donations	70%	Digital platforms such as Paystack and GoFundMe are used for online giving, allowing church members to contribute remotely.
Virtual Worship Services (Live Streaming)	90%	Almost all churches have embraced live streaming platforms (e.g., Zoom, YouTube) to conduct worship services.
Cloud-Based Church Management Systems	60%	Many churches use tools like ChurchSuite and Planning Center to manage membership, services, and events.
Digital Leadership Training Programs	50%	Some churches have begun offering online training to equip leaders with digital skills for effective management.

#### Interpretation

**Social media engagement** is identified as the most prevalent form of digital leadership, with **85% of churches** utilizing social media platforms for outreach and communication. This demonstrates the central role of social media in modern church management. **Online donations** (70%) and **live streaming of worship services** (90%) are widely adopted, emphasizing the shift toward virtual platforms for both spiritual engagement and financial contributions. **Cloud-based church management systems** are used by **60% of churches**, indicating that while some churches are embracing digital tools for administration, this is not yet universal. Training programs for **digital leadership** are being implemented by **50%** of churches, showing a proactive effort to equip church leaders with the skills necessary for leading in the digital era, though there is room for improvement.

### Research Question 2: What Are the Major Challenges Church Leaders Face in Adapting to Remote Work and Digital Operations?

**Objective:** To explore the primary challenges that church leaders face when implementing remote work and digital tools.

#### Data Presentation

Challenges	Percentage of Church Leaders Reporting (%)	Church Leaders' Responses
Poor Internet Connectivity	40%	Many churches, particularly in rural areas, face poor internet service that affects streaming quality and online engagement.
Lack of Digital Literacy	55%	Church leaders and staff report struggling with the technical aspects of digital tools, hindering effective use.
Resistance from Congregants (Older Members)	30%	Some congregants, especially the elderly, are reluctant to embrace digital methods of engagement, preferring in-person interactions.
Financial Constraints	35%	Limited financial resources prevent some churches from investing in advanced technology or hiring experts for support.



Challenges	Percentage of Church Leaders Reporting (%)	Church Leaders' Responses
Technical Support and Maintenance Issues	45%	Churches face challenges in maintaining digital systems due to a lack of dedicated technical staff or external support.

### Interpretation

**Lack of digital literacy** (55%) and **technical support issues** (45%) were the most commonly reported challenges. This indicates that while church leaders understand the importance of digital tools, there is a gap in the technical skills required to manage them effectively. **Poor internet connectivity** (40%) remains a significant obstacle, particularly for churches in rural areas, affecting the ability to conduct smooth online services. **Resistance from older congregants** (30%) and **financial constraints** (35%) are also critical factors that affect the successful adoption of digital leadership, as some church members are not comfortable with digital methods and some churches cannot afford necessary tools and upgrades.

### Research Question 3: How Have Nigerian Churches Responded to the Shift Toward Remote and Digital Models of Engagement?

**Objective:** To assess how Nigerian churches have adapted to remote and digital models in response to external challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift towards digital communication.

#### Data Presentation

Response Strategy	Percentage of Churches Adopting (%)	Church Leaders' Responses
Transition to Online Worship Services	95%	The vast majority of churches have transitioned worship services to online platforms such as YouTube, Zoom, and Facebook Live.
Digital Giving Platforms	70%	Digital platforms like Paystack, Bank Transfers, and GoFundMe have been widely adopted for tithes and offerings.
Digital Bible Studies and Fellowship Groups	80%	Many churches have shifted Bible study and fellowship groups to platforms like Zoom and WhatsApp to maintain spiritual engagement.
Leadership Training on Digital Tools	65%	Many churches provide online leadership training to equip leaders with the digital skills needed for effective ministry.
Feedback Mechanisms (Surveys, Polls, etc.)	50%	Approximately half of the churches use online surveys or polls to gather feedback from their members regarding the digital services.

### Interpretation

The **rapid transition to online worship** (95%) is a major trend, with nearly all churches embracing digital platforms for services. **Digital giving** (70%) and **Bible studies/fellowship groups** (80%) are also major adaptations, showing that churches are not only shifting their services online but are also ensuring ongoing spiritual engagement through various digital platforms. **Leadership training** (65%) and **feedback mechanisms** (50%) indicate a growing focus on ensuring that church leaders are adequately equipped to manage digital tools and that congregational feedback is being incorporated into future strategies.

### Research Question 4: What Are the Benefits and Drawbacks of Adopting Digital Leadership in Church Settings?

**Objective:** To explore the positive and negative impacts of adopting digital leadership in church management.



### Data Presentation

Benefits and Drawbacks	Percentage Agreeing with Benefit/Drawback (%)	Church Leaders' Responses
Wider Reach (Global Engagement)	85%	Digital platforms enable churches to engage with global audiences, particularly diaspora communities.
Convenience (Remote Participation)	90%	Digital services allow members to participate in worship from anywhere, increasing convenience and accessibility.
Enhanced Engagement with Younger Generations	70%	Digital platforms help engage younger, more tech-savvy members who are increasingly using digital tools for church-related activities.
Loss of Personal Interaction	60%	The lack of face-to-face interaction in digital services can negatively affect the sense of community.
Technical Failures (Connectivity Issues)	50%	Poor connectivity or technical glitches are a common issue, disrupting services and causing frustration among members.
Exclusion of Non-Digital Congregants	45%	Older members or those without internet access may feel excluded from digital church activities.

### Interpretation

**Benefits** such as **wider reach** (85%) and **convenience** (90%) are clear, with churches able to engage a global audience and allow members to participate remotely. However, **drawbacks** like **loss of personal interaction** (60%) and **technical failures** (50%) are significant. These issues highlight the need for a balanced approach that maintains personal connections and ensures reliable digital services. The **exclusion of non-digital congregants** (45%) remains a major concern, particularly for older members who may not be comfortable or capable of using digital platforms.

### Research Question 5: How Can Church Leaders Be Equipped with Digital Skills to Lead Effectively in the Remote Era?

**Objective:** To explore how churches are providing training and support to church leaders to enhance their digital leadership capabilities.

### Data Presentation

Skill Development Strategy	Percentage of Churches (%)	Offering Church Leaders' Responses
Online Training Programs for Church Leaders	65%	Many churches offer online courses or webinars to equip leaders with digital skills.
Workshops and Seminars on Digital Tools	55%	Churches organize workshops or seminars to provide hands-on training with digital tools.
Peer Learning and Mentorship	40%	Some churches facilitate peer learning groups where experienced leaders help others improve digital skills.
Collaboration with IT Professionals	50%	Churches collaborate with IT experts or organizations to provide technical support and advice.
Access to Free Digital Resources (Tutorials, Software)	60%	Churches rely on free or low-cost online resources such as YouTube tutorials and open-source software to train leaders.

Skill Development Strategy	Percentage of Churches (%)	Offering Church Leaders' Responses
----------------------------	----------------------------	------------------------------------

### Interpretation

**Online training programs** (65%) and **workshops/seminars** (55%) are the most common strategies employed to enhance church leaders' digital skills. **Peer learning** (40%) and **collaboration with IT professionals** (50%) are growing but still less common strategies. **Access to free resources** (60%) shows that churches are leveraging available online resources to reduce costs and enhance their digital capabilities.

### 4.1 Research Findings

The research gathered comprehensive data on the status of digital leadership in Nigerian churches, examining key components, challenges, responses to remote engagement, benefits, drawbacks, and strategies for equipping leaders with necessary digital skills.

A significant number of churches (85%) have integrated social media platforms for communication, outreach, and engagement with congregants. These platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, where churches share updates, sermons, and announcements. : About 70% of churches have adopted online donation systems, using platforms such as Paystack, GoFundMe, or bank transfer for digital tithes and offerings, ensuring a continued flow of financial support even when in-person services are not held. Approximately 90% of churches have transitioned their services to virtual platforms such as Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook Live. This allows members to join services remotely, enhancing accessibility and inclusivity. Around 60% of churches use cloud-based systems to manage member data, events, and church activities, helping streamline administration and communication. While half of the churches provide digital training to their leaders, it remains an area for growth to ensure that church leaders are fully equipped to navigate the complexities of digital leadership.

Poor internet infrastructure, especially in rural areas, is a major challenge, affecting the quality of virtual services and communication. About 40% of church leaders reported frequent connectivity issues.

A significant 55% of church leaders and staff reported a lack of digital skills, which hampers their ability to effectively utilize digital tools for church management. Some church members, particularly the older demographic, are resistant to embracing digital platforms, with 30% of church leaders citing this as a challenge. Limited financial resources (35%) hinder the adoption of advanced digital tools, restricting the scope and quality of digital operations. Around 45% of churches face technical difficulties due to the lack of internal IT support, which complicates the maintenance of digital platforms.

Over 95% of churches quickly transitioned to online worship services, ensuring that members could still participate in worship during lockdowns and restrictions. Approximately 65% of churches have implemented training programs to improve the digital skills of their leaders and staff. More than 70% of churches introduced digital giving platforms to maintain financial contributions, ensuring continued funding for church activities. About 80% of churches shifted Bible studies, prayer meetings, and fellowship groups to online platforms to keep congregants engaged in spiritual growth during physical distancing measures. Around 50% of churches have adopted feedback mechanisms (e.g., online surveys) to assess congregants' satisfaction with digital services and identify areas for improvement.

The adoption of digital leadership offers churches a **wider reach**, allowing them to engage with a global audience and diaspora members. Additionally, it provides **convenience**, enabling members to participate in services and activities remotely. Digital tools also facilitate **enhanced engagement** with younger generations, who are more tech-savvy. The main drawbacks include the **loss of personal interaction**, which can diminish the sense of community and fellowship, and **technical failures** (e.g., poor internet connectivity or platform issues), which disrupt services. Furthermore, **exclusion of non-digital congregants** (especially the elderly) remains a significant challenge, as not all members have access to or are proficient in using digital tools.

About 65% of churches provide online training programs for church leaders to improve their digital leadership capabilities. These programs include webinars, e-learning courses, and workshops. Approximately 55% of

churches organize in-person or virtual workshops and seminars to train leaders on how to use digital tools effectively. Some churches have initiated mentorship programs where tech-savvy leaders help others improve their digital skills. However, only 40% of churches have implemented such initiatives. About 50% of churches have partnered with IT professionals or organizations to provide technical support and advice on integrating digital tools into church management. Churches also rely on free or low-cost digital resources (e.g., YouTube tutorials, free software) to help their leaders enhance their skills.

## 5. Conclusion

The data analysis provides a comprehensive view of how digital leadership is evolving in Nigerian churches. While many churches have embraced digital tools, there are notable challenges such as lack of digital skills, infrastructure issues, and resistance from certain congregants. However, the benefits of digital leadership, such as wider reach and increased convenience, are undeniable. For churches to maximize the potential of digital tools, more training programs for leaders and technical support for church staff are necessary. Additionally, churches should adopt hybrid models that balance both digital and physical engagement to cater to a broader demographic.

The data analysis reveals that **digital leadership** in Nigerian churches has become an essential aspect of church management, particularly in the wake of remote work and digital transformation. **Digital leadership components** like online worship, social media communication, and digital donations have been widely adopted, although cloud-based church management and digital leadership training still need more attention. **Challenges** include internet connectivity issues, lack of digital literacy, and resistance to change, particularly among older members. Nigerian churches have **responded positively** to the shift, rapidly adopting digital tools for worship, giving, and fellowship. **Benefits** such as wider reach and increased convenience are clear, but issues like loss of personal interaction and technical failures pose significant drawbacks. To **equip leaders with digital skills**, churches are utilizing online training, workshops, and partnerships with tech professionals, but there is a need for more structured mentoring and resources.

Nigerian churches have largely embraced digital leadership, especially in the areas of social media engagement, virtual worship services, and online giving. These tools have become essential in maintaining church activities during the age of remote work and post-pandemic times. While many church leaders are utilizing digital platforms, there is a significant gap in the digital literacy of church staff, which hampers effective digital leadership. This gap needs to be addressed through targeted training programs and mentorship initiatives. Many churches, especially in rural areas, face infrastructural challenges such as poor internet connectivity and lack of technical support. Financial limitations further restrict the ability to adopt high-quality digital tools and platforms.

Some segments of the church population, particularly older members, resist digital engagement, highlighting the importance of providing inclusive solutions that cater to both digital and non-digital members. The benefits of digital leadership—such as increased reach, engagement, and convenience—generally outweigh the drawbacks. However, it is important to address the challenges of reduced personal interaction and digital exclusion to ensure a balanced approach to church leadership.

### 5.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided to help churches improve their digital leadership and adapt more effectively to the age of remote work:

1. Churches should allocate resources for continuous training programs in digital tools, including social media management, virtual event hosting, and cloud-based church management software. Empower church leaders to effectively use digital platforms, enhancing their ability to manage church operations and engage members remotely.
2. Churches should invest in reliable internet connections and explore partnerships with internet service providers to ensure stable connectivity, particularly in rural areas. Minimize technical disruptions during virtual services and enhance the quality of online engagement.

3. Churches should provide alternative options for members who are not digitally proficient or lack access to technology. This could include offering physical meeting options, distributing printed materials, or setting up community-based digital hubs for group access. Ensure that all congregants, regardless of their technical capabilities, can participate in church activities.
4. Establish peer learning and mentorship programs where experienced leaders can guide others in adopting digital tools and strategies. Additionally, collaborate with tech professionals to provide ongoing support. Facilitate the sharing of digital expertise and foster a collaborative learning environment within the church community.
5. Churches should adopt hybrid models, combining physical and digital services, to cater to the diverse needs of their congregation. This approach allows for both in-person fellowship and virtual participation. Provide flexibility in church engagement, ensuring that members can choose the mode of participation that best suits their circumstances.

## 6. REFERENCE

1. Agugo, A. O., & Amodu, A. A. (2022). Digitalizing the Church for E-Transformation: Study of Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan. *International Journal of Formal Sciences: Current and Future Research Trends*, 15(1), 140–149.
2. Aduloju, E. T. (2024). Investigating the Future of Digital Worship Within the Catholic Church in Nigeria. *JORAS - Nigerian Journal of Religion and Society*, 13, Article 5906.
3. Dyikuk, J. J. (2017). Christianity and the Digital Age: Sustaining the Online Church. *International Journal of Journalism and Mass Communication*, 3(1), 43–49.
4. Essien, E. E., Ebitu, E. T., Offong, E. O., & Amadi, C. (2020). The Influence of E-Marketing Promotional Tools On Church Membership Growth during the Covid-19 Lockdown in Calabar Municipality. *Nigerian Academy of Management Journal*.
5. Oloba, B. L., & Blankenship, A. M. (2025). Gender Dynamics in Online Religious Leadership in Nigeria: Investigating How Digital Platforms Shape Communication, Authority, and Influence. *Religions*, 16(1), Article 5
6. Agu, G., & Margaça, C. (2024). Digital transformation and religious entrepreneurship in Nigeria: Integrating artificial intelligence toward competitive advantage. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJEMS-06-2024-0349>.

## INFO

**Corresponding Author:** Izuka Elkanah Okeke, PhD, Capstone Innovative Consult.

**How to cite/reference this article:** Izuka Elkanah Okeke, PhD, Digital Leadership in The Age of Remote Work in Church Management, *Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech.* 2025; 7(3): 72-83.