




African Women, Covid-19, Grounded theology and the adoption of a religious virtual space in CITAM Ngong Church and Nomiya Luo Church in Kenya¹

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Abstract

The Republic of Kenya Ministry of Health update on Corona Virus on 13th February 2020 insisted that persons were to avoid close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections. A ban was imposed on public meetings. Later, lockdowns were introduced, and religious meetings were banned across the country. Religious actors during and after the Covid-19 lockdowns devised ways through which they could reach their members, given the absence of physical meetings. The adoption of religious virtual space has impacted African women's congregational life variously. Acknowledging the integral role of technology in our contemporary times, this article reflects on the creation and adoption of virtual space by African women in CITAM Ngong and Nomiya Church, Kenya, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. It will also highlight some aspects relating to mental health during the pandemic. Using grounded theology as a useful methodological approach, over a period of 6 months, data was collected that was in touch with the realities of the religious arena. Through grounded theology, data was generated deriving from research on religious virtual space. Methodologically, the study adopted grounded theology as a method for unearthing stories informing the everyday lives of African women in the religious virtual space from data collected over six months. The theoretical framework applied is Rogers' diffusion and adoption theory to explain the adoption of technology by women from these two churches. The key findings emerging from the study are that technology adoption is complex and inherently social. In addition, gendered experiences from the everyday lives of these African women considered broader and embedded structures, because it is in relation to these that the religious virtual space was made meaningful. Further, access to the right technology and resources that run technology influenced the use of the religious virtual space by the women.

Keywords: African Women, CITAM Ngong, Covid-19, diffusion and adoption theory, Grounded Theology, Nomiya Luo Church, Virtual space

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Introduction

This study focuses on African women in Kenya and their adoption of the virtual space during the Covid-19 pandemic in CITAM Ngong Church and the Nomiya Luo Church. The Covid-19 virus was first discovered in China, but spread across the world, forcing many governments to adopt strict health measures for its citizens (WHO 2020). In Kenya, the Ministry of Health issued guidelines, which included lockdowns, the closure of worship spaces and curfews. The experiences of African women in Kenya have been well documented by Kenyan scholars affiliated to the Circle of Concerned African women theologians. These include scholars such as Nasimiyu Wasike, (Wasike 1992; 1999; 2005), Teresia Mbari Hinga, (Hinga 1992; 1996), Mary Getui, (Getui 2003; 1996), Loreen Maseno-Ouma, (Maseno-Ouma 2014), Nyambura Njoroge, (Njoroge 1996), Esther Mombo, (Mombo 2021) who pointed to the culture of silence, exclusion from Church leadership, polygamy and its aftermath, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, effects of patriarchy, widowhood, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, oppressive cultures, poverty, fuel, and water scarcity as the main challenges that most African women in Kenya face. Some have given up, but a number have demonstrated the will to not only survive but live. Some of these challenges were exacerbated during the era of the Covid-19 pandemic because many more women lost their livelihoods, became nurturers for their sick relatives and in turn became sick themselves. The levels of domestic violence skyrocketed during the lockdown as attested by organisations such as Action Aid, Kenya (Annual Reports, 2021, 2022). The livelihoods of women were abruptly disrupted and several school- going children dropped out of school. Records indicate that during the Covid-19 lockdown, teenage pregnancies in Kenya shot up astronomically.

This study highlights grounded theological categories that were useful in examining the experiences of African women in Kenya during the pandemic. This includes the categories such as the centrality and ambience of the home, the bulk of care giving and unpaid work, domestic abuse, theological compass and adopting virtual religious space. Suffice these to be listed here, however, each of these categories are discussed in a section below.

From these categories and using the grounded theology methodology, the authors examined African women in Kenya and the adoption of virtual space in CITAM Ngong and Nomiya Luo Church for their spiritual nourishment and growth. It is against this background that our article highlights the intensified sense of moral obligation many African women in Kenya faced within the context of the pandemic, that made them to seek alternative routes to maintain interactions with others, contribute to matters of faith and family in their theological context. These African women in Kenya understood that although the virtual environment presented a unique religious environment of its own, its adoption was an innovative way to ensure that religious content was within access to them and their families. However, in view of Rogers' diffusion and adoption theoretical perspective, such innovation and adoption revealed how the adoption of technology can be complex. It also revealed how the use of technology is embedded in both the social networks as well as the gendered experiences from the everyday lives of these African women in Kenya.

Covid-19 in Kenya

Coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). This new virus and disease began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (WHO 2020). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), in the next several years in Africa, there would be many COVID-19 hospitalizations, of which some would be critical cases



requiring breathing support (WHO 2020). The Ministry of Health (MOH) Kenya first confirmed a Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) case in Nairobi on the 12th of March 2020, since the beginning of the outbreak in China in December 2019. The Government traced all the contacts of the patient since arrival in Kenya from the United States. The Republic of Kenya Ministry of Health further in an update on Corona Virus on the 13th of February 2020 press release insisted that persons were to avoid close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections (MOH Press Release 2020). In addition, anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as fever, coughing, difficulty in breathing and sneezing was to report to the nearest health facility for assessment (MOH Press release, 2020).

Over the years, religious activities and gatherings across the country were the norm and taken for granted. However, with the sudden closure of places of worship in Kenya, there was profound impact on the Church across the country (Maseno, 2021). For example, in a letter addressed to church leaders within a Ward in Kisii County, Nyaribari Chache Sub- County Public Health Officer, Ms Florence Tirimba, said that all places of worship will remain closed for a period of fourteen days beginning, Friday, 11th of June 2021 (Kenya News 2021). Even after the government relaxed the rule on the right to attend church and allowed a maximum of 100 people, it brought even more confusion. Who do you admit and who do you leave out? And just how many worship services can you hold on a Sunday? (Kahura, 2020).

Clearly, Covid-19 in Kenya had an impact on the religious experiences of many. It is noted that in times of uncertainty, pandemics and shifts, the phenomena of prophecy, eschatology and the miraculous tend to be emphasised (Maseno, 2021). Some Christians during this time sought after prophecies about the pandemic, its longevity, end times, survival options and the like.

Grounded Theology Methodology

Grounded theology uses qualitative data to investigate the process of believing and finding what is of ultimate meaning (Lukalo & Maseno, 2021). This employs a range of strategies to gather a variety of rich data, and it allows the emergence of conceptual categories through thorough analysis to produce descriptions and potentially new theories that prove relevant to theology (Stevens, 2017).

Grounded theology in this study denotes the active engagement with grounded theory in studies relevant to the theological enterprise. According to Strauss and Corbin, grounded theory develops theory based on data systematically collected and analysed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: pp. 273). A central feature of this approach is constant comparative analysis with results from earlier rounds of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which makes grounded theory analysis highly iterative. In grounded theory, constant comparison allows the analysis of data against other data to identify any similarities, differences and outlines in the data. This constant comparison advances the classification, and conceptualization of data (Timonen et al, 2018).

Grounded theologies focus on worldly concerns, whether by attempting to create consensus among different positions through dialogue or by imposing a political regime to eradicate religion altogether (Tse, 2014). African women in Kenya who worship in CITAM Ngong and Nomiya Luo Church (NC) revealed their networks as comprised of practices informed by understandings of the transcendent within virtual religious spaces.

In this study, grounded theology was considered a useful methodological approach in touch with the realities of the religious arena. The exploration of grounded theology in data generation derives from how women in NC and CITAM Ngong went on during and after the pandemic to



adopt and utilize a religious virtual space. This demanded a reliance on data systematically collected from the field and a sensitivity to the beliefs of these Church members. The adoption of a religious space was behind the need to use grounded theology as a method for seeking hidden patterns and meanings. Grounded theology thus adds to the theological reflection, which has been somewhat limited when traditionally using grounded theory (Stevens 2017: pp. 201-206).

An additional plus was the understanding that as a methodology, grounded theology is postmodern. It not only constructs and incorporates different perspectives, but it also listens. This latter component was very important for African women in Kenya whom as this study shall show in the later sections, have traditionally been muzzled in religious circles and arena of society. The opportunity to have their voices listened to, heard and documented served as an empowering ritual for these participants. Their reflection and contribution brought to the fore their understanding based on their actual life experiences within the realms of theology. Indeed, grounded theology applies grounded theory in studies relevant to theology.

In general, grounded theology as a type of research-grounded theology, considered carefully the virtual context in which African women in Kenya conducted their religious activities, thoughts, and practices. It was an inductive, rather than a deductive approach that begun by taking seriously the voices of the women involved, examining the data emerging from their lived pandemic situations and formulating useful categories afterwards, deriving from their experiences and further, how they adopt the religious virtual space.

Religious Virtual space and Roger's diffusion and adoption Theory

The definition of religion has undergone broad changes among scholars over the last generation. This shall not be belabored in this essay but taken to be understood as embodied practices that cultivate relations among people, non-human forces—nature, spirits, ancestors, saints, gods—resulting in communities, places and feelings that shape those who take part (Hoover, 2006: pp. 45-83; Lynch, 2012).

A religious virtual space in this study is operationalised as a space which reflects immanent processes of cultural place-making. It is a space which includes the practice of specific narratives regarding divine action, transcendent presence, or supernatural reality in the immanent world with the help of technology. In our view, restrictions to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically the social distancing requirement meant that socializing in the religious sphere had to move to a religious virtual space as prompted by people's desire to deconstruct, construct and reorganize their religious experiences. Most dimensions of human engagement, including church services embraced virtual modes of streaming live church services. In general, a religious virtual space therefore is an electronic environment that visually mimics complex physical spaces with virtual objects where people can interact with each other (Saunders et al, 2011). It presents a unique religious environment of its own, an environment in which individuals and religious communities are continuously producing, consuming and internalizing information.

According to Rogers (1995), there are five stages in the diffusion and adoption theory. These stages are as follows; first, is the knowledge stage, where the religious community and group will begin to learn and know about the new innovations and technologies that are available as well as assessing whether these can be applicable in their setting or not. Here the main idea is that the religious community is aware and knowledgeable about technology. Second, is the persuasion stage. The religious community and its leadership will have, through interaction with others, formed an attitude about that technology. Third is the decision stage, where there is a drive by



the congregation and religious community together with its leadership to seek additional information on the technology so that a decision is made on the same.

Fourth, is the implementation stage. Here the religious community and its leadership, in view of having obtained additional information on the technology, it proceeds to attempt regular use of the same. Through the regular use of this specific technology, more information of the same is sought regarding its reliability and effectiveness. The last stage is the stage of confirmation. Here the religious community and its leadership continue to use the specific technology over time. In this way, they either reject or justify the same based on evidence around the technology's benefits or its limitations (Straub, 2009). Thus, successfully facilitating technology adoption must address cognitive, emotional, and contextual concerns.

CITAM Ngong Church and Nomiya Church in Kenya

CITAM originated from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). The PAOC was a result of revival witnessed in Canada during the early 1900s and spread to Kenya as the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) in 1918 (Interview with Senior Pastor. Ngong, Kenya, 8 November 2021.) The very first known missionaries of PAOC in Kenya were Rev and Mrs. Otto Keller who reached Nyangori in western Kenya and were able to establish the Nyangori mission to serve as headquarters (CITAM Church Website).

CITAM churches that are located within an urban setting are found in Nairobi, Kakamega, Eldoret, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nyeri, Embu, Kisii and Nakuru. Others in smaller towns include Kikuyu, Kiserian and Ngong. CITAM church Ngong was started in July 2003 within the precincts of Ngong town. This Assembly started with a tent as the house of meeting with Rev. Mutua being the pioneer senior pastor. CITAM congregations comprise the middle class, urban population who are mostly young and fluent in English. All services are conducted in English.

CITAM Ngong was sampled as the church to carry out this research due to its very close connection to the head Church CITAM Valley Road, which is well known for its use of the online Church facility and whose virtual footprint is one of the greatest across the CITAM Pentecostal churches. Also, it was because CITAM Ngong embraced a virtual presence even before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nomiya Luo church was founded by Johana Owalo. When he died in 1920, a leadership wrangle ensued (Sudhe 2018). Some of his followers wanted a successor from the Owalo family while others were opposed to this. The differing groups were unable to reach consensus and so Gideon Owalo, the son of Johana Owalo, formed the Nomiya Luo Mission, while the splinter group formed Nomiya Luo Sabbath (*Sabato*). Nomiya Luo Mission was then registered as Nomiya Luo Church, and later as Nomiya Church (NC) in 1979 (Ndeda 2005). Nomiya Church is the oldest African Independent Church in Kenya. It has three dioceses in Nairobi, which include Nairobi Diocese, Kibera Diocese, and the Diocese of Nairobi. The specific NC Church in focus is the Nomiya Church Eastleigh parish, which was sampled purposively since it was the only one which has a consistent online presence.

Nomiya church maintains a unique tradition which entails following the word of God, the teachings of the prophets, and those of his servant Owalo. NC emphasizes traditions which are upheld and applied to the latter in the church. Adherents of Nomiya Church are guided by five pillars of the church. These include baptism, the obligation to remove shoes while in the church building during worship, to kneel during prayers, to wear church attire, and to participate in communal tithing. Shoes are removed while in church as an act of worship in recognition that this space is one that



is set apart, at the time when the worship service is ongoing. However, on other occasions, members may enter the church building wearing their shoes.

Purification is emphasized within the community of Nomiya Church. Purification rites specific to women and men are upheld and the members endeavor to adhere to them accordingly. Prayers are also a key part of the worshipping community at Nomiya Church. Specific prayers which are said responsively are said each Sunday when they gather for worship.

Experiences of African women

Traditionally, African women's lives and experiences have been absent from theological reflection and consequently rendered invisible. Therefore, as far as efforts towards theology in Africa are concerned, African women's experiences were traditionally considered either insignificant on its own or subsumed under the males' category of human experience. As earlier noted, several Kenyan women scholars have documented the way women in East Africa experience triple oppression: sexual, racial, or ethnocentric, and socio-economic oppressions (Nasimiyu, 2001: p. 50).

These scholars show the way Kenyan women struggle for bare necessities. They work hard, carrying heavy burdens such as fetching firewood, fetching water from far away rivers and wells, planting, weeding, caring for children, grinding corn and preparing food. Most women in the rural sectors, especially those who take on the status of rural educators, tend to work for long hours. Besides fulfilling the duties expected of them as women, they also do eight hours of work in their professional fields (nursing or teaching). The main concerns of Kenyan women are physical needs: food, water, clothing, shelter and medicine for themselves and for their children (Nasimiyu 1989: pp. 123-124).

These Kenyan scholars have isolated what they consider as oppressive to their fellow women. These include the burdens borne by petty traders, house maids and women in polygamous unions. In a poignant way, Nasimiyu holds that polygamy reflects the brokenness of our humanity and is not to be accommodated. It came about as a human response to social, economic, religious and personal needs and was based on distorted relationships between women and men (Nasimiyu, 1989: p. 132; Nasimiyu, 1992: pp. 111-115). Kanyoro (2002), Wamue and Getui (1996) and Maseno-Ouma (2014) note cultural hardships that African women experience. Traditionally, violence in the family has been ignored and even accepted as a way of keeping women disciplined. According to Hinga (1996), many women have been muzzled. She laments how years of forced silence may have led African women in Kenya to become indifferent to the various oppressions. She sees feminist theology in Africa as an objection against the forced silence and at the same time a challenge to African women to rise against the forces of injustice that besiege them (Hinga, 1996: p. 28).

Maseno-Ouma (2014) has explained how in some ethnic groups in Western Kenya, the death of a husband usually renders the woman vulnerable. The widow is forced into accepting the in-laws' demands, such as widow inheritance (Maseno-Ouma, 2014). In general, it is noted that many women in Kenya are oppressed, marginalised and given a lesser status despite their fostering, maintaining and serving life for the survival of human communities. These experiences predispose many women to low self-esteem and dependence. At the same time, these played a role in how women would adopt and engage in the virtual space. These experiences for both urban and rural women have an impact on their mental health, and this is discussed in the subsequent section.



African women in Kenya, the Covid-19 Pandemic and Mental health

For many African women in Kenya, religion and theology continue to form a big part of the fabric of their lives. This is crucial for understanding, responding, confronting and overcoming Covid-19 and its aftermath. From our fieldwork conducted among African women in Kenya during and after the pandemic and through grounded theology, we noted four main elements of their lives in relation to the lockdown and their religiosity. Employing a range of strategies to gather rich data helped us to identify the emerging conceptual categories and through careful analysis, we managed to produce explanations that prove relevant to theology (Stevens, 2017).

Mental health for many African women in Kenya was tested even as they responded and confronted the effects of the pandemic. Mental health in general, entails subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, efficient perception of reality, self-knowledge, self-esteem and acceptance, self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential. Scholars show that the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, behaviors and interactions with others, but also social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors such as national policies, social protection, living standards, working conditions, community social supports etc., form determinants of mental health (Scheid & Brown 2010; Atkinson et al. 1975).

Grounded theological categories and Mental Health

These grounded theological categories intertwined with mental health determinants and included first; the centrality and ambience of the home. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was surely very devastating, and people are continuing to face the multi-faceted effects. In an attempt to curb and control the spread of the disease, the lock down method was adopted in many parts of Kenya. This partial lockdown affected many lives since the home became a place for all the following activities, resting, workplace, worship space, schooling, and recreational space. But when the space at home is limited and designed in a manner that it has limited space, this becomes a breeding ground for conflict and a lot of conflict resolution was needed among teenage children, among parents, and among the extended family hosted in the homes, etc. Often the tension was eased when people left home for various destinations each morning. But now that this was all conducted in small, shrunken spaces, Kenyan women needed to immediately become mediators and resolve the simmering tensions in such spaces and to ensure that all these seamlessly happen within one space. This inevitably impacted on their mental health and emotional well-being.

Second: The bulk of care giving, and unpaid work was heaped on the women's shoulders. Many households had to release their paid workers not knowing when the situation would get resolved. Many daytime workers at the time posed a risk to the family as they had to travel in and out of the homes. While this was a logical step to take, the challenge which followed was that caregiving for the elderly, the children and the household fell squarely on the mother of the house. It is particularly important to note that all this is in the context of unpaid work. From our fieldwork, several women were overworked and overstretched in an attempt to hold things together. Many working women would still need to juggle their work and to ensure that the household is running smoothly. Such a status quo exerted immense pressure on them, resultantly impacting negatively on their mental health.

Third; more women suffered increased domestic abuse. In view of the two points above, such stressful moments were recipes for abuse in the home. Many women who lost their informal jobs



were at the mercy of their spouses, some of whom were alcoholics after losing their own jobs. These Kenyan women and girls who lost access to education and continued to carry the bulk of care giving and home schooling were likely victims of domestic abuse. One type of abuse toward females who were no longer receiving education was being forced into early marriages. All these multi-faceted oppressions took a huge toll on their physical and mental health.

Fourth; theological compass and adopting a religious virtual space. It was clear during our fieldwork that women who had the obligation to ensure the home was a worship space, felt a moral obligation to channel their effort for theological and spiritual nourishment in the home. Many women in Kenya asked themselves how their children would still get teachings from Sunday school, how the teenagers would be nourished in faith and how their homes would be a beacon for many. These women ended up providing a theological compass in their homes. They developed an increased moral obligation to meet and care for the familial, spiritual, and psychosocial needs of their families. To meet all these needs, many found solace in the virtual religious spaces during and after Covid-19. They made use of digital platforms, televisions, phones, and computers to join multiple worship services, but also for communication and to stay connected. Hence, leaning on virtual worship via various technological outlets helped them to find an escape route from the numerous physically and emotionally stressful experiences which they were susceptible to.

African women in Kenya and the adoption of Virtual space in CITAM Ngong and Nomiya Church

According to Morgan (2013), technologies mediate the body and the world around us, and that religions, like every other cultural activity, are and always have been mediated in some way. This recognition brings to sharp focus that technologies of sensation structure the felt life of a religion, telling us much about how people build and maintain their worlds, and what roles religions play in the ongoing work of cultural construction (Morgan, 2013).

The place of African women in propagating beliefs during the pandemic was behind the need to use grounded theology as a method for seeking hidden patterns and meanings. Grounded theology enabled us to reflect further on the theological implications of Kenyan women's experiences. Through grounded theology, it was possible to construct what African women felt and reflected upon during the pandemic and how they adopted the virtual space for their use. We drew insights from the strategies adopted by African women in Kenya and the two churches to analyze and understand what they provided to us as their understanding based on their actual life experiences. Through the use of grounded theology, among these women in CITAM Ngong and Nomiya, it was possible to investigate the process of believing and finding what is of ultimate meaning to them during the pandemic.

At the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic when the only available mode of gathering for worship and other engagements among the NC was the virtual space, the worship community faced numerous disruptions. Most worship and community expressions among adherents of Nomiya Church Eastleigh are best manifested in physical spaces. Due to the dynamics of the membership of the church, access to technology to facilitate virtual congregating was limited. Women in NC used WhatsApp, Facebook, online radio and TV. These women pointed out that they were in the church WhatsApp groups where they kept interaction ongoing. WhatsApp was used mainly to mobilize women in their respective groups to attend to the business of the church, to create comfort spaces for the bereaved, to share encouragements across board and to share images of those who were



able to gather for various ceremonies as a witness to others. Clearly, with partial lockdowns and mobility restrictions, online platforms had to be adopted.

Some women in NC turned to Facebook. But this was mainly limited to younger women who were tech savvy and able to navigate the terrain. Online streaming of services had to happen so that members could have a feel of Church. This was especially during the time the Government had limited the numbers of people who could be present in a church building.

Another platform adopted was the Mpesa platform to send money in Church related circles. This does not necessarily mean that use of Mpesa started during the pandemic, but rather its usage and application in NC was more prominent to allow for resource mobilization during bereavement or a need in the Church. Online TV and radio access was also important to some of the women, who went beyond their local congregation to listen to some messages in vernacular stations that were broadcast using the mother-tongue.

Granted the target membership of CITAM Churches, the middle class, educated and professional persons, it follows that women in Ngong CITAM had an edge over their counterparts in the NC. The scope of this section is not to engage in an outright comparison, rather to highlight the adoption of the virtual space in both churches. Women in CITAM Ngong were beneficiaries of planning for technology in the congregation before the CITAM leadership implemented new innovation. In CITAM, it was noted that the technology and applications currently in use included whatsapp, Mpesa, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Zoom, Google meet, Telegram, FaceTime, Instagram, Hope TV and Online Radio Stations. Many women, young and old were comfortable with most of these applications.

These women participated in Wednesday 5am morning prayers which were held over zoom during the lockdown and after the lockdown. They were actively participating in leading the prayers together with other male leaders. They were able to share their prayer items on the chat and navigate this space from the comfort of their homes. This initiative was critical for their spirituality.

Women in CITAM Ngong also conducted online bible studies on google meet and zoom. These bible studies were held on Sunday evenings, some fortnightly and others weekly across the small groups known as safari groups. The Mpesa application went a long way for CITAM Ngong women who could pay their tithes and give their offerings even when out of town.

Women in CITAM Ngong also tuned to Facebook livestream to watch church services. Before the lockdown, CITAM had already adopted live streaming of their church services. During the Covid 19 initiated lockdown, the traffic grew in volumes and has maintained a large following. This is because many women serve in the children's ministry, ushering ministry and hospitality ministry and they often miss the main service as they minister. Resultantly, they have become accustomed to tuning in to Facebook to re-play the entire worship service they missed.

Twitter, Telegram, and Instagram are mainly used by the younger women and youth. According to the youth pastor, during our fieldwork, female youth are tech savvy and ready to try out new applications as they appeared because those were the platforms their age mates were active on. The online Hope CBS service and Hope Radio were also adopted by women at CITAM Ngong. These were streamed from the studio and during lockdown, served as the main sources for spiritual nurture to these women.



In all these applications that were adopted by women in NC and CITAM Ngong for religious and spiritual purposes, their practices were informed by understandings of the transcendent, and as such exhibited grounded theology.

Conclusion

Although electronic applications and technology adoption are a complex and inherently social processes, this article has shown through the grounded theology methodology, the classifications of women's experiences during the pandemic. These experiences took into account embedded and broader societal structures and served as a stepping stone for how women in NC and CITAM Ngong during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, adopted relevant practices to sustain their religious inclinations. It is clear that their religious disposition could not allow them to ignore the ramifications of the pandemic. Rogers' diffusion and adoption theory was used to expound the adoption of technology by women from these two churches. Therefore, these women constructed unique yet malleable perceptions of technology that influenced their adoption decisions, in terms of which applications they would use and when.

Women in NC and CITAM Ngong during and after Covid-19 adopted an electronic environment in order to visually mimic complex religious physical spaces with virtual objects. This allowed them in their heightened sense of moral obligation under the context of the pandemic to interact with others, be of help in matters of faith, family and work within their theological and spiritual contexts. African women in Kenya understood that although the virtual environment presents a unique religious environment of its own, there were opportunities for families to engage with the continuously produced information. In the face of apparent spiritual needs, it was important, in our view that women in NC and CITAM Ngong reinvent themselves and use media as new channels for the manifestation of the spiritual. They have brought to sharp focus that in the face of pandemics, they will innovate, and adopt forms that shall allow them not only to survive but flourish in their quest to serve their families and humanity at large. Embracing the virtual worship environment has also helped them to cope with the various physical and mental challenges wrought by the COVID-19 induced lockdown restrictions.

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