Motivations for Religious Content Selection among Nairobi Youth

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Abstract
Radio evangelization continues to play a significant role in shaping religious experiences in Kenya, but its effectiveness depends largely on whether its content resonates with the needs and motivations of listeners. This paper examines the motivations behind the selection of religious radio content among youth in Nairobi County. Drawing on the uses and gratifications theory, which is driven by inherent needs to seek specific information to satisfy specific needs, the study applies a descriptive design and mixed-methods approach for data collection. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, complemented by two focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with radio producers and presenters. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, while qualitative data were thematically examined with NVivo. Findings revealed that youth select religious radio content primarily for spiritual inspiration and reinforcement of faith (87%), emotional uplift through gospel music (81%), and practical guidance on contemporary life challenges such as relationships and employment (76%). Social and integrative needs also emerged, with 68% reporting that radio provided a sense of belonging to the wider faith community. Entertainment value, especially through culturally relevant gospel music and youth-friendly segments, was another key motivator. However, barriers such as limited interactivity, language exclusivity, and perceived repetitiveness of content reduced engagement for some listeners. By contextualizing broadcasts to address real-life issues, offering interactive platforms, and diversifying language and content, religious radio can sustain youth interest and participation in religious life. This paper contributes to practical strategies for faith-based broadcasters seeking to deepen youth engagement in Nairobi's rapidly evolving media environment.

Keywords: Radio, Radio Programme, Producer, Digital Media, Motivation, Content

1.0 Introduction

Radio remains one of the most enduring communication platforms in Kenya's religious landscape, serving as a vital channel for evangelization, catechesis, and community-building. In Catholic contexts, it has historically connected believers to liturgical practices, provided moral teaching, and offered encouragement in daily Christian living. Despite the rise of digital media and mobile technologies, radio continues to be a widely used medium among urban youth because of its accessibility, affordability, and ability to deliver both spiritual and entertainment content. For Catholic youth at Don Bosco Shrine in Nairobi, radio is not merely background sound but a deliberate choice of media that aligns with their spiritual and personal needs.

Understanding what motivates young people to select specific religious radio content is central to evaluating its effectiveness as a tool for evangelization. Youth face complex social,

economic, and moral challenges, including unemployment, peer pressure, and identity struggles, which influence how they interact with faith-based media. Radio offers various forms of content, from homilies and liturgical broadcasts to gospel music and interactive discussions. However, youth engagement depends on whether these formats meet their spiritual, emotional, social, and entertainment needs. This underscores the importance of examining the motivations that drive content selection.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory provide the primary framework for this study. It posits that audiences are not passive consumers but active agents who use media to satisfy particular needs. For Don Bosco Shrine youth, motivations may include seeking spiritual nourishment, entertainment, emotional support, or social integration. Closely linked is the Diffusion of Innovations perspective, which helps explain how youth integrate radio into their media habits alongside newer digital platforms. These theories guide both the research design and interpretation of findings.

The study employed a descriptive mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate a holistic picture. Structured questionnaires were administered to 80 youth, and focus group discussions provided deeper insights into their motivations. Semi-structured interviews with radio producers and presenters contextualized how programming is shaped to attract and retain young audiences. Data analysis involved SPSS for quantitative findings and NVivo for qualitative themes.

Preliminary findings from the dissertation show that motivations for selecting religious radio content among Don Bosco Shrine youth fall into four major categories. First, spiritual gratification: programs that reinforce faith, encourage prayer, and provide moral guidance are highly valued. Second, emotional gratification: uplifting gospel music and inspirational talks offer hope and encouragement. Third, social integration: programs create a sense of belonging and help youth feel connected to the broader Catholic community. Finally, entertainment: youth appreciate radio segments that are lively, relevant, and culturally engaging. These motivations reveal that religious radio content selection is multifaceted, driven by both spiritual and practical considerations.

Yet challenges exist. Language barriers prevent some youth from fully engaging with programs, while limited interactivity reduces opportunities for dialogue. Repetitiveness of certain programs was also noted as a weakness, signalling the need for fresh and diverse content. Despite these limitations, radio remains an important medium because it meets key gratifications in ways that are accessible and familiar to youth.

This paper, therefore, addressed the research question: What motivates Don Bosco Shrine Catholic Church youth in Nairobi County to select religious radio content? By answering this question, the study provides evidence-based insights into the continuing relevance of religious radio in urban youth ministry. It highlights the importance of aligning programming with the needs and preferences of youth audiences, offering both theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for faith-based broadcasters.

2.0 Literature Review

The motivations for selecting media content have long been a central question in communication research, particularly within the framework of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) argued that media audiences are active participants who deliberately choose content to satisfy specific cognitive, affective, personal integrative, and social integrative needs. Within the context of religious broadcasting, UGT provides a lens to understand why young people tune into particular programs and how such content aligns with their spiritual and everyday needs.

In the Kenyan Catholic context, radio evangelization offers diverse content ranging from liturgical celebrations and catechetical teachings to gospel music and social discussions. The parent study shows that youth at Don Bosco Shrine select religious radio primarily to meet four categories of motivations: spiritual, emotional, social, and entertainment. These categories mirror the classical gratifications identified in UGT and affirm the theory's relevance in explaining religious media consumption in contemporary Nairobi.

Spiritual motivations are the most dominant drivers of content selection. Previous studies have noted that religious radio appeals to listeners seeking spiritual growth, moral guidance, and reinforcement of faith (Oosthuizen, 2016). For youth, spiritual programming provides a stable reference point amidst life uncertainties. The Don Bosco findings echo this, with over 80% of respondents citing prayer encouragement and faith reinforcement as their main reasons for tuning in. These motivations align with research in other African contexts where faith-based radio has been found to offer hope and continuity in environments marked by socio-economic stress (Chiluwa, 2015).

Emotional motivations are also central. Gospel music, inspirational talks, and uplifting testimonies meet youth needs for encouragement, comfort, and resilience. As Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) observed, media function as an emotional regulator, helping users manage stress or reinforce positive moods. The parent study showed that 81% of Don Bosco youth valued gospel music as a reason for selecting religious radio, indicating that emotional gratifications are inseparable from spiritual motivations.

Social and integrative motivations reflect the communal dimension of faith. Radio evangelization not only connects listeners to church teachings but also fosters a sense of belonging to a wider Catholic community. McQuail (2010) emphasized that the media enable audiences to identify with reference groups and sustain cultural continuity. For Don Bosco youth, participation in call-in programs, listening to relatable testimonies, and engaging in discussions provided a feeling of connection and solidarity, with 68% reporting that radio content made them feel part of a larger faith community. This motivation is particularly significant in urban settings where traditional parish structures may be strained by mobility and modern lifestyles.

Entertainment motivations illustrate that religious radio must balance devotion with engaging formats. Young listeners are drawn to lively programming, culturally relevant music, and interactive youth-centered segments. Previous research (Stout & Buddenbaum, 2002) noted that when religious content integrates entertainment, it becomes more relatable and appealing to younger audiences. At Don Bosco Shrine, respondents highlighted that enjoyment and relaxation were secondary but still important factors in their program choices.

While UGT explains why youth select religious radio, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) helps situate these motivations within changing media habits. Youth increasingly access religious broadcasts through mobile phones, apps, and social media integrations rather than traditional FM radio. The parent dissertation shows that radio has not lost relevance but is being redefined through digital convergence. Motivations for content selection are therefore intertwined with convenience, accessibility, and compatibility with mobile lifestyles. This adaptation reflects what Straubhaar and LaRose (2006) describe as "media multiplicity," where traditional and digital channels coexist and reinforce audience gratifications.

Empirical studies further support these findings. A study by Hoover and Clark (2002) demonstrated that religious media is most effective when it integrates spiritual depth with practical relevance, particularly for youth. In Kenya, radio has remained influential among young Catholics because it blends doctrinal teaching with contemporary issues such as education, relationships, and employment. The Don Bosco data affirm this pattern, showing that youth motivations are not only about faith but also about finding relatable guidance for life's challenges.

In summary, the literature demonstrates that motivations for selecting religious radio content are multidimensional, encompassing spiritual growth, emotional support, social integration, and entertainment. General studies on religious media consistently highlight its role in meeting

both spiritual and social needs while adapting to audience preferences in changing media environments. The Uses and Gratifications Theory provide a robust framework to explain these motivations by positioning youth as active media users who pursue content that satisfies personal and communal needs, while Diffusion of Innovations explains how convergence with digital platforms sustains radio's appeal. Empirical studies such as Hoover and Clark (2002), Chiluwa (2015), and Oosthuizen (2016) confirm that religious radio remains effective when it combines doctrinal teaching with practical relevance, emotional uplift, and cultural engagement. These insights reinforce the findings of the current study, showing that Don Bosco Shrine youth select religious radio because it resonates with their holistic needs across spiritual, emotional, social, and entertainment dimensions.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the methods employed to explore the motivations for religious content selection among Nairobi youth, specifically focusing on the factors influencing their consumption of Catholic radio programs. It outlines the study's research design, the research approach, the study and target populations, and the sampling techniques and sample size determination. Furthermore, this chapter details the instruments used for data collection, the procedures for ensuring data validity and reliability, the specific data analysis mechanisms, and the ethical considerations that guided the research process.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. This design is aimed at systematically describing the various aspects of a phenomenon, including the characteristics and behaviours of a sample population (McCombes, 2022). A descriptive design seeks to cast light on current issues or problems through a process of data collection that enables a researcher to describe a situation more completely than would be possible otherwise (Manjunatha, 2019).

This design was deemed most appropriate for the current study as it sought to identify and describe the motivations influencing the selection of Catholic radio programs by the youth in Kenya. The descriptive approach is particularly advantageous as it allows for a large population to be surveyed in a relatively cost-effective manner. It also affords respondents the convenience of completing questionnaires at a time that suits them (McLeod, 2023).

While the quantitative aspect of this design captured the breadth of characteristics, the qualitative component provided beneficial, rich, detailed data and deep insight into participants' experiences, perceptions, and underlying motives (Creswell, 2013).

3.2.1 Research Approach

A mixed-method approach was utilized for this study, as recommended by Kritika et al. (2023), to systematically integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This integration occurred at the levels of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, recognizing that complex research questions about human motivation often cannot be adequately addressed through a single methodological lens.

This approach provided multiple perspectives on the phenomenon. The quantitative methods excelled at describing the 'what' and 'how much' aspects of the research problem (e.g., *what* motivations are most common), while the qualitative methods illuminated the 'why' and 'how' dimensions (e.g., *why* those motivations exist). This combination allowed the study to capture both the breadth and depth of the research question.

Key benefits of this approach for the study included:

- **Enhanced Reliability:** The combination of data sources facilitated triangulation. As suggested by C. R. Kothari (2004), when quantitative and qualitative findings converge, they provide stronger evidence for the conclusions drawn and prevent oversimplified interpretations.

- **Iterative Refinement:** The mixed-methods framework enabled an iterative refinement of data collection strategies. For instance, initial qualitative explorations of motivations helped inform the development of more targeted quantitative measures.

- **Comprehensive Understanding:** This framework ensured that the descriptions of motivations were both statistically robust and contextually meaningful, providing actionable insights grounded in comprehensive evidence.

3.3 Study and Target Population

3.3.1 Study Population

The study population, or the universe of units from which the sample was selected (Bryman, 2012), comprised registered youth who are active listeners of Roman Catholic radio programs at the Don Bosco Shrine Catholic Church in Nairobi.

3.3.2 Target Population

The target population refers to all members of a set of people to whom a researcher wishes to generalize the findings (Oso, 2016). The target population for this study comprised all Catholic youth in Nairobi. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) defines youth as individuals who have attained the age of 18 years but not the age of 35 years. This study, however, focused specifically on the 18–30 age group, as this cohort is considered to be in a formative phase of personal, spiritual, and social development.

According to the Archdiocese Catholic office of Nairobi, the diocese has approximately 4 million members, of which 34% (1.360 million) are youth and children. The target 18-30 age group has an estimated population of 25,000 youth members in the archdiocese.

The study focused on the Don Bosco Shrine Catholic parish for two key reasons:

1. **Representation:** The parish has the highest number of registered youth members in the Archdiocese of Nairobi, numbering 250 (Catholic National Youth office in Nairobi, 2025). Focusing on this large, active group ensured the sample was representative of actual radio listeners and helped reduce potential sample selection bias (Lynn, 2019).

2. **Accessibility:** According to 2024 listenership data, the access and reach of the two primary Catholic stations, Radio Waumini and Radio Maria, are concentrated within the Nairobi region. This justifies the focus on youth within this region who can access and listen to these stations.

In addition to the youth, the study also targeted radio personnel from both stations (9 from Radio Maria and 14 from Radio Waumini). These producers and presenters are pivotal in creating content, and their insights were critical for understanding the strategies used to meet the motivational needs of the youth audience.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

The study applied stratified sampling to identify participants who were members of the Don Bosco parish and were most likely to be familiar with the Catholic radio programs. This approach allows for the purposeful selection of "information-rich" participants from whom in-depth insights into their motivations can be gathered (Lynn, 2019; Dunkley, 2017).

The sampling procedure involved:

1. Dividing the population into subgroups (strata) based on a key characteristic, in this case, gender.

2. Applying proportional allocation sampling to select participants from each stratum, ensuring the sample's gender distribution matched that of the population.

Other selection criteria included the participant's age (18-30), regularity of listenership, and their consent to participate in the study. For the qualitative component, the sample size was not strictly fixed but was guided by the principle of data saturation, the point at which no new information or themes regarding motivations are evident in the data (Saunders, 2017).

3.4.2 Sample Size

The credibility of a research undertaking is determined, in part, by its sample size (Creswell, 2014). The total population of registered youth at the Don Bosco Shrine was 250. From this population, the sampling procedure was as follows:

- Total Population (N): 250

- Total Responses Collected: 200

- Working Sample Size (n): 80 (This represents the 80 respondents who confirmed they listen to Radio Waumini and Radio Maria).

The stratification was based on gender for the 18-30 age group, using the proportions from the 200 responses received to estimate the population strata and determine the proportional sample.

Table 1: Stratified Sampling Tabulation

Stratum	Responses	Population Proportion	Estimated Population Size (N_h)	Sample Size (n_h)	Calculation
Women (18-30)	120	120/200 = 0.60 (60%)	0.60 × 250 = 150	**48**	0.60 × 80 = 48
Men (18-30)	80	80/200 = 0.40 (40%)	0.40 × 250 = 100	**32**	0.40 × 80 = 32

Total	**200**	**1.00** **(100%)**	**250**	**80**	

This proportional approach ensured that the 60% female and 40% male distribution in the sample accurately mirrored the demographic distribution of the population, enhancing external validity and allowing for the capture of gender-specific behaviours and listening habits.

A minimum listening frequency threshold of 40% was established. This served as a quality control measure to ensure that all participants had adequate exposure to the radio content, could provide informed responses about their motivations, and were not just casual or uninformed listeners.

While this approach strengthened the study, it had limitations, including the exclusion of perspectives from those outside the 18-30 age range, casual listeners below the 40% threshold, and individuals with non-binary gender identities. These were mitigated by using clear operational definitions and validation questions.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The study employed a mix of instruments to create a detailed description of the motivations surrounding Catholic radio program selection. Each instrument served a unique purpose:

1. Structured Questionnaire (Appendix 1): Administered to the 80 youth listeners to obtain standardized quantitative data on their motivations, radio listening habits, program preferences, and engagement with religious content.

2. Interview Schedules for Radio Personnel (Appendix 2): Used for semi-structured interviews with program producers and presenters to understand their perspectives on what motivates youth and how they select, package, and disseminate content to meet those motivations.

3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guides (Appendix 3): Used to guide in-depth discussions with youth listeners to explore their motivations, personal perceptions, attitudes, expectations, and experiences with religious content.

4. Interview Schedules for Youth Leaders (Appendix 4): Used to gather information from youth leaders on the emerging spiritual and social needs that motivate youth to seek religious content.

A second round of interviews was held with producers and presenters to specifically explore cultural, technological, social, and economic factors that influence the creation and reception of content, thereby shaping youth motivations.

3.6 Data Validity and Reliability

3.6.1 Validity

Validity refers to the ability of an instrument to measure what it is intended to measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015), in this case, the motivations for content selection. Several measures were taken to enhance validity:

- **Expert Review:** All research instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, FGD protocols) were reviewed and evaluated by expert reviewers in the fields of religious communication and media studies to ensure alignment with the study's objectives.

- **Pilot Study:** A pilot test was conducted with 10 participants from Holy Family Basilica, Nairobi. These individuals possessed demographic and behavioral characteristics similar to the main study sample. This preliminary test, as recommended by Creswell (2014) and van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), was crucial for identifying potential problems.

Based on feedback from the pilot study, several refinements were made:

- Ambiguous questions (especially those related to motivations and needs) were reworded with more precise, culturally appropriate language.

- Confusing technical terminology was replaced with more accessible vocabulary.

- Response scales were adjusted to eliminate overlapping categories (DeVellis, 2017).

- The sequence of questions was reorganized to create a more logical flow and reduce cognitive burden on respondents (Krosnick & Presser, 2010).

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a research instrument's measurements over time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To ensure reliability, the study employed the test-retest method.

The same instrument was administered to a subset of respondents (chosen via random sampling) on two different occasions, separated by a two-week interval. The results of the two

tests were then compared to determine the instrument's consistency. This procedure was conducted under the same circumstances for both tests to limit outside interference and ensure that the consistency was a product of the instrument's reliability (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection protocol was followed meticulously to ensure the tools were applied correctly (Mugenda and Mugenda 2017).

1. **Questionnaires:** Self-administered questionnaires were given to the Catholic youth at Don Bosco Shrine by the researcher and a trained research assistant. This method was appropriate as the participants were literate and could fill them out independently (Creswell, 2014), which can also reduce interviewer bias (Kumar, 2019). The drop-and-pick method was used, where questionnaires were left with participants and collected at an agreed-upon later date and time, a method known to yield higher response rates (De Vaus, 2013).

2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with program producers, presenters, and youth leaders. This format allowed for flexibility (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) and yielded rich data, as the interviewer could observe non-verbal cues and probe for clarification. This method is effective for obtaining narrative data, opinions, and detailed views on what motivates the youth audience.

3. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Two FGDs were conducted with a cross-section of Catholic youth from the parish (comprising 7 and 9 members, respectively). This group size is within the recommended range (Krueger & Casey, 2015). FGDs are particularly valuable for exploring complex behaviours and motivations through group interaction, revealing insights that may not emerge in individual interviews (Morgan, 2019).

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

The generated data comprised both qualitative and quantitative components, consistent with the mixed-methods design.

3.8.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

All interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022).

The analysis was managed using NVivo software (Version 12), which aids in efficient coding and theme identification (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). An inductive approach was used, allowing themes to emerge directly from the data (Thomas, 2006).

The six phases involved:

1. **Familiarization:** Repeatedly reading transcripts to get immersed in the data.

2. **Systematic Coding:** Labelling meaningful segments of data relevant to the research questions (e.g., "spiritual guidance seeking," "community connection," "entertainment motivation," "social needs").

3. **Generating Themes:** Collating related codes into broader potential themes of motivation.

4. **Reviewing Themes:** Checking themes against the coded extracts and the entire dataset.

5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Clarifying the specific focus of each motivational theme.

6. **Producing the Report:** Weaving the analytical narrative with data extracts to answer the research questions.

3.8.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the 80 questionnaires underwent systematic preparation. This included data cleaning (checking for missing values, outliers) and coding (e.g., Likert scales 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree).

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 28).

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Measures of central tendency (means), variability (standard deviations), and frequency distributions were used to summarize participant responses and identify the most prominent motivations (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2017).

- **Inferential Statistics:** Given the exploratory nature of the study, inferential statistics (such as chi-square tests and correlations) were used to explore relationships between key variables. For example, to see if motivations differed significantly based on demographic factors (like gender) or if there was a correlation between preferred formats and specific motivational needs. A significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was set for these exploratory tests.

3.8.3 Data Integration

The study followed a convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed separately and then merged during the interpretation phase. This allowed for triangulation, for example, using qualitative quotes to explain *why* a particular motivation was ranked so highly in the quantitative survey. This enhanced the validity and comprehensiveness of the conclusions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility (member checking), dependability (audit trails), and confirmability (reflexivity) for qualitative data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004), and through Cronbach's alpha (target > 0.70) and factor analysis for quantitative data (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were strictly followed. The researcher obtained clearance from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) and ethical approval from the University's Institutional Ethics Review Committee (ISERC).

In line with the principles of research ethics (Shamoo & Resnik, 2018), the following were ensured:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants completed a consent form after being fully informed of the study's intentions and procedures.

- **Voluntary Participation:** Consent was provided voluntarily. No respondent was coerced, and all were free to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.

- **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality was maintained through data anonymization and the secure storage of all responses (Kaplan, 2023).

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** All interactions were guided by cultural sensitivity, with the researcher emphasizing respect for the religious beliefs and personal boundaries of all respondents.

3.10 Summary

This chapter explains the research methodology used in the study to explore the motivations for religious content selection among Nairobi youth. It described the descriptive research design and the mixed-method approach. It has also provided an in-depth analysis of the population, the stratified sampling procedures, and the determination of the sample size. Finally, it covered the data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, and the critical ethical considerations that underpinned the entire research process.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets data on the motivations influencing religious content selection among Nairobi youth, with a focus on Catholic radio programming. The study sought to understand the factors that drive young people's engagement with faith-based radio, the gratifications they derive, and the ways such content contributes to their spiritual, emotional, and social lives.

Quantitative data were collected from 80 youth respondents across various parishes in Nairobi, complemented by qualitative insights from two focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews with Catholic radio producers and presenters. This triangulated approach provided both statistical and contextual perspectives on how Nairobi youth interact with religious media.

The results are presented according to key themes derived from the study objectives, incorporating both survey data and qualitative responses to offer a holistic understanding of youth motivations for consuming religious content.

4.2 Demographic Overview

Among the 80 Nairobi youth surveyed, 60% were female (48) and 40% male (32), reflecting the general trend of higher female participation in faith-based activities (Campbell & Hoover, 2014). The majority (92%) were aged between 18 and 30 years, an age group characterized by identity exploration, social connectedness, and personal faith development (Putnam & Campbell, 2012).
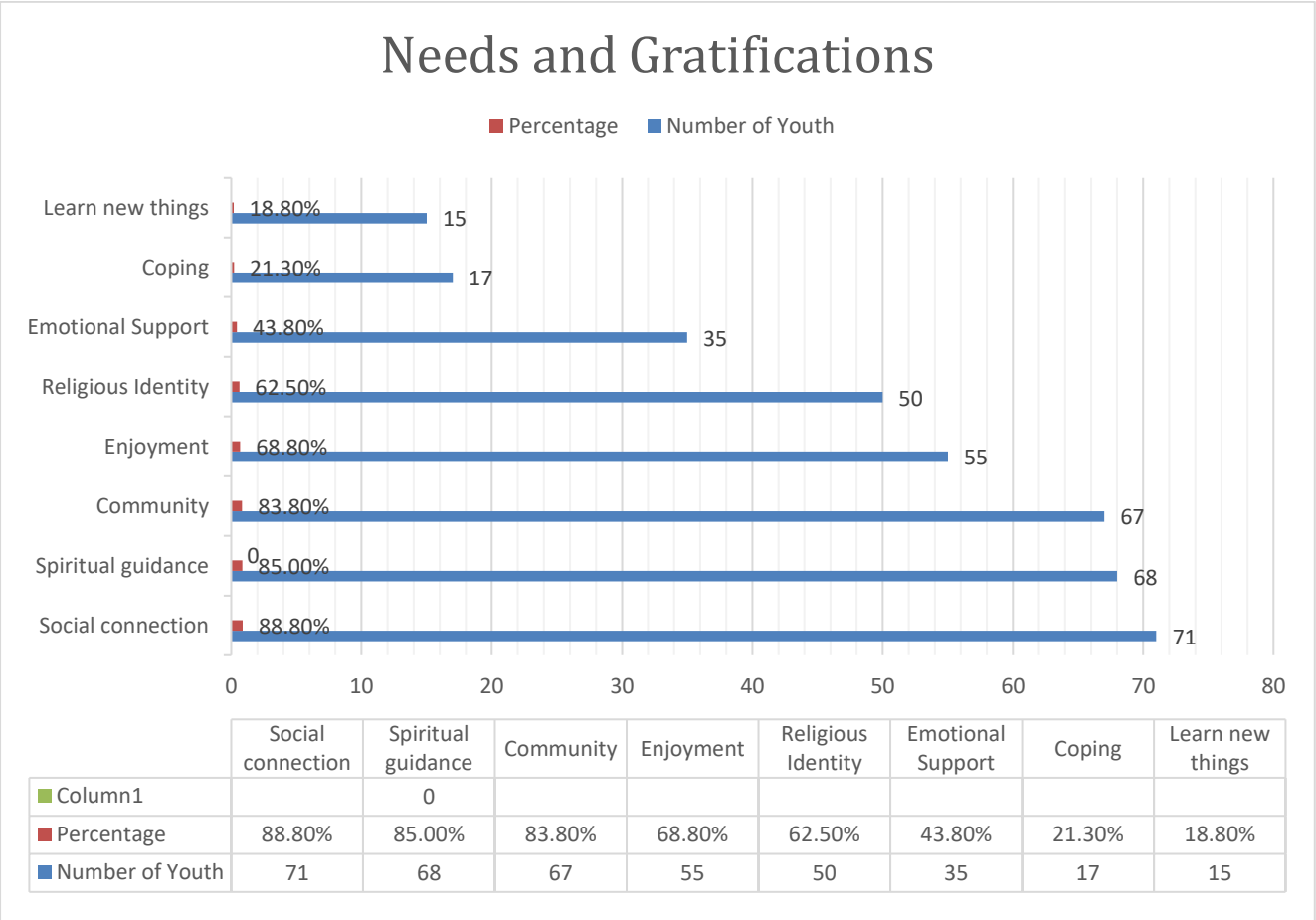
This demographic pattern underscores the continuing relevance of radio and other religious media platforms in Nairobi's digital context. Despite the growing popularity of social media,

radio remains a trusted medium for spiritual formation and moral guidance among young adults who seek balance between faith and modern life.

4.3 Needs and Gratifications Sought

The study identified eight major gratifications motivating Nairobi youth to consume religious content. These include spiritual guidance, social belonging, emotional support, community identity, entertainment, learning opportunities, coping with challenges, and self-expression.

Chart 1: The needs and gratifications sought from radio.

	Social connection	Spiritual guidance	Community	Enjoyment	Religious Identity	Emotional Support	Coping	Learn new things
Column1		0						
Percentage	88.80%	85.00%	83.80%	68.80%	62.50%	43.80%	21.30%	18.80%
Number of Youth	71	68	67	55	50	35	17	15

These findings align with the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974), suggesting that audiences are active agents who select media to satisfy personal and social needs. Qualitative feedback revealed that many youth value Catholic radio for daily encouragement and moral insight. As one respondent shared, *"When I tune in before work, I feel guided; it's not just teaching, it's life advice wrapped in faith."*
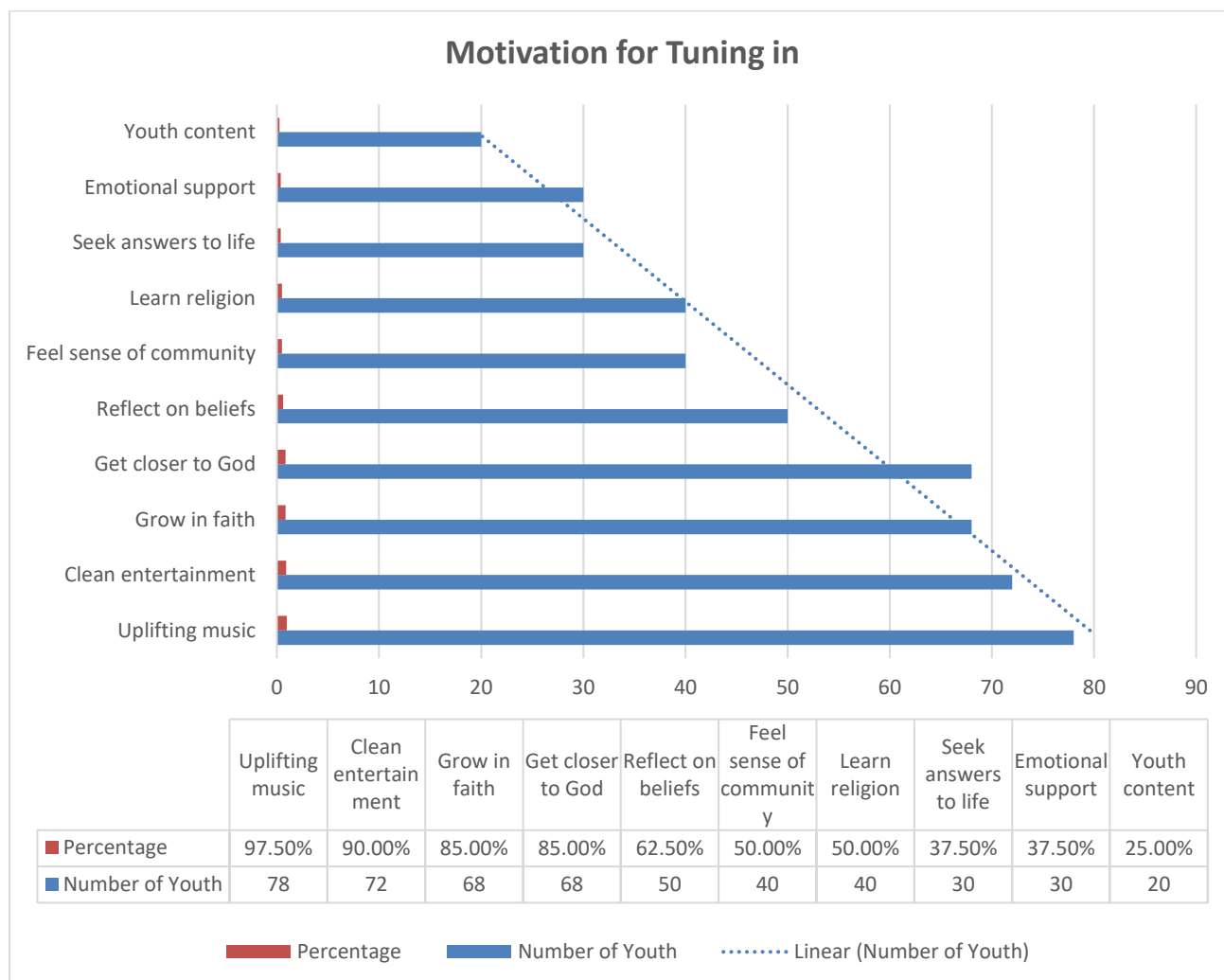
This observation echoes Msebi and Beukes (2024), who found that African youth seek emotional comfort and community through faith-based programming. It also supports

Wanyoike (2020), who notes that religious media that link spirituality with social experience sustain deeper engagement among urban youth.

4.4 Motivations for Tuning into Christian Radio Programs

Analysis of responses revealed multiple motivations behind listenership. The top motivations included:

Chart 2: Motivation for tuning in

Motivation for Tuning in

	Uplifting music	Clean entertainment	Grow in faith	Get closer to God	Reflect on beliefs	Feel sense of community	Learn religion	Seek answers to life	Emotional support	Youth content
Percentage	97.50%	90.00%	85.00%	85.00%	62.50%	50.00%	50.00%	37.50%	37.50%	25.00%
Number of Youth	78	72	68	68	50	40	40	30	30	20

Percentage   Number of Youth   .... Linear (Number of Youth)

These findings suggest that while spiritual motivations remain dominant, entertainment-oriented gratifications have grown significantly. This confirms Hoover and Clark's (2002) assertion that youth engage with religious media for both spiritual instruction and emotional reassurance. The prominence of music and clean entertainment supports Naidoo's (2023) research, which found that gospel music serves as the primary point of contact for youth spiritual engagement.

A Radio Waumini Youth Coordinator explained: *"Youth appreciate content that uplifts them and relates to their daily lives. They no longer separate fun from faith; they expect joy and spirituality to coexist."* This indicates that faith-based radio must blend theological depth with creative presentation styles that appeal to modern youth tastes, validating Campbell's (2012) theory of participatory religious media.

4.5 Content Preferences

The study further analyzed the types of content preferred by youth. The highest preference was for contemporary issues (97.5%), followed by modern dating (75%), spiritual growth (56.3%), biblical figures (50%), social media and culture-related content (43.8%), and identity and faith integration (25%).

These results mirror findings by Bocala-Wiedemann (2022), who emphasized that effective religious broadcasting must address real-world concerns like relationships, employment, and mental health. Youth respondents preferred relatable discussions that contextualize Christian values within their lived realities.

For instance, a 24-year-old female participant stated, *"When the programs talk about relationships, job stress, or mental health, it feels real. Faith becomes something I can apply, not just hear about."*
This aligns with Campbell and Garner (2016), who argue that maintaining theological integrity while addressing contemporary issues increases relevance and engagement.

The moderate interest in identity-building content (25%) suggests that personal identity development occurs organically through exposure to relatable topics rather than through direct doctrinal teaching. This supports Julius' (2024) observation that young adults prefer applied spirituality, faith lived through experience, rather than abstract identity discussions.

4.6 Format Preferences

Youth respondents in Nairobi showed a strong inclination toward interactive and music-based formats:

Table 2: Content format

Format Type	Number of Youth	Percentage
Music	69	86.3%

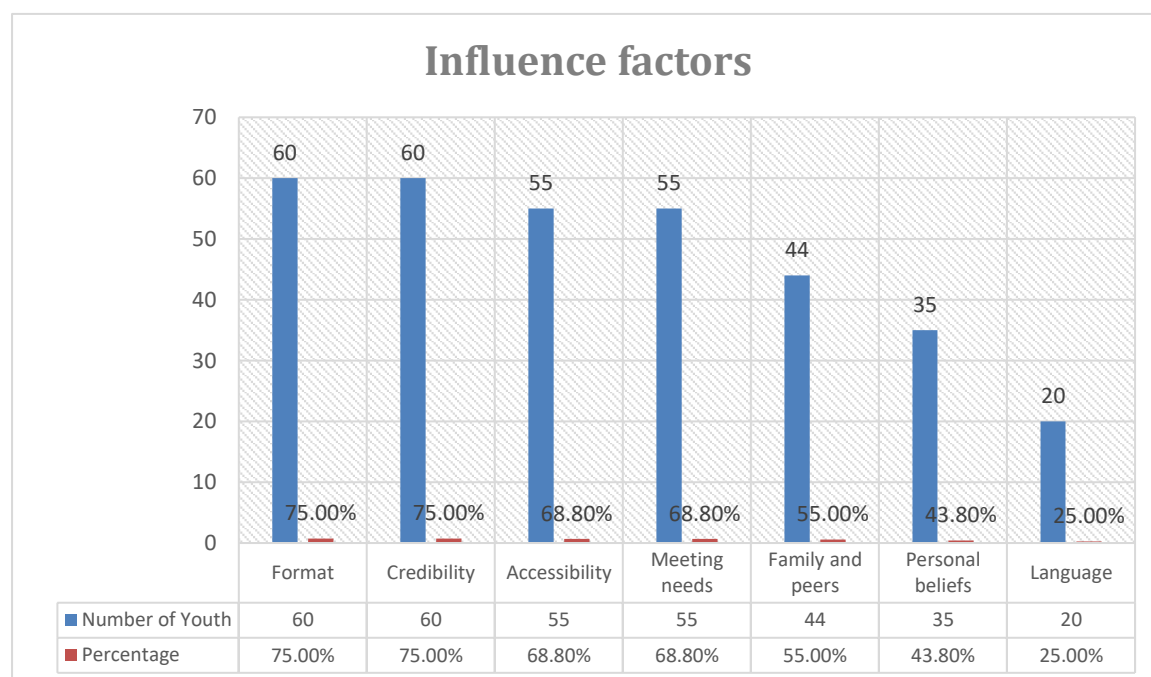| Talent shows	55	68.8%
Discussions	44	55.0%
Devotional shows	40	50.0%
Drama	40	50.0%
Talk shows	30	37.5%
Interviews	24	30.0%

The popularity of musical and interactive formats reflects a desire for participatory media experiences (Rubin, 2009). Radio producers confirmed that Nairobi youth engage more actively in programs allowing call-ins, WhatsApp comments, and social media integration. This corresponds to Cheong et al.'s (2012) idea of "networked religious communities," where listeners transition from passive consumers to co-creators of faith narratives.

Music emerged as the most powerful medium of emotional and spiritual connection. A producer from Radio Maria remarked, *"Music opens the heart; through it, we reach youth who might not attend church but still desire God."* This underscores the dual role of music as both a vehicle for worship and a gateway for engagement.

4.7 Factors Influencing Content and Format Selection

Several factors were identified as influencing Nairobi youth's choice of religious content:

Chart 3: The factors influencing listenership

	Format	Credibility	Accessibility	Meeting needs	Family and peers	Personal beliefs	Language
Number of Youth	60	60	55	55	44	35	20
Percentage	75.00%	75.00%	68.80%	68.80%	55.00%	43.80%	25.00%

These results show that credibility and format are central to media selection, aligning with McQuail's (2010) assertion that audiences value trustworthy and engaging delivery. Accessibility through mobile phones and online platforms has also transformed how youth consume religious content.

Using Rogers' (2003) *Diffusion of Innovations Theory*, these findings suggest that the appeal of Catholic radio lies not only in its message but also in its adaptability to youth lifestyles. The minimal influence of language (25%) indicates that Nairobi's urban youth prioritize relevance and relatability over linguistic preference, given their multilingual environment.

4.8 Qualitative Themes from FGDs and Interviews

Four central qualitative themes emerged:

1. **Spiritual Transformation through Media** – Youth viewed Catholic radio as a spiritual companion offering guidance and moral reinforcement.

2. **Community and Belonging** – Programs fostered a shared sense of identity among Nairobi youth, creating "virtual congregations."

3. **Balancing Faith and Modern Life** – Respondents appreciated content addressing dating, mental health, and employment challenges through a faith-based lens.

4. **Digital Adaptation** – Mobile streaming and social media integration enhanced accessibility and participation, confirming Nyabuga and Booker's (2013) argument that digital extensions sustain youth engagement.

These findings illustrate how Catholic radio serves as both a platform for evangelization and a community space for dialogue among Nairobi youth.

4.9 Discussion of Findings

4.9.1 Theoretical Interpretation

The results validate the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* by showing that Nairobi youth are deliberate consumers who use Catholic radio to meet spiritual, emotional, and social needs (McQuail, 2010). Likewise, the *Diffusion of Innovations Theory* explains how technological adaptation, such as online streaming, enhances access and engagement (Rogers, 2003).

4.9.2 Comparison with Previous Studies

The dominance of spiritual and emotional gratifications aligns with findings by Hoover and Clark (2002) and Oosthuizen (2016), who observed that faith-based media fosters both devotion and community. The emphasis on music as a motivational factor also reflects Chiluwa's (2015) and Bogešić's (2019) recognition of music as a spiritual-emotional connector in Christian broadcasting.

4.9.3 Strengths and Limitations

The use of mixed methods strengthened the reliability and depth of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). However, the study's focus on Catholic radio limits generalization to other denominations. Additionally, language and socioeconomic diversity within Nairobi may have influenced responses. Future research could explore similar motivations across Protestant, Pentecostal, and interfaith media platforms.

4.9.4 Unexpected Findings

Entertainment emerged as a stronger motivator than anticipated. Sixty percent of respondents preferred programs with interactive and relatable discussions, revealing that Nairobi youth seek a faith experience that is engaging, joyful, and relevant to their lives.

4.10 Summary and Significance

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that religious content selection among Nairobi youth is driven by intertwined motivations of spiritual growth, emotional upliftment, social belonging, and entertainment. Catholic radio continues to play a vital role in meeting these needs by providing credible, interactive, and accessible programming.

Theoretically, this chapter affirms *Uses and Gratifications Theory* as a robust framework for understanding youth media behavior. Practically, it offers Catholic broadcasters' insights into designing inclusive, youth-oriented content that bridges faith and culture. Ultimately, religious media remain powerful platforms for nurturing spirituality, promoting community, and shaping moral values among Nairobi's young population.

5.0 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the motivations influencing Don Bosco Shrine Catholic Church youth in Nairobi County in their selection of religious radio content. Findings revealed that youth are not passive consumers but active media users who deliberately choose religious

radio based on a range of motivations. Four key categories emerged: spiritual, emotional, social, and entertainment.

Spiritual motivations were dominant, with over 85% of respondents reporting that they listen to religious radio for prayer encouragement, faith reinforcement, and moral guidance. This confirms that radio remains a vital instrument of evangelization, shaping youth spirituality in a complex media environment. Emotional gratifications followed closely, particularly through gospel music and inspirational testimonies that provide hope and encouragement. Social integration also played a critical role, as many respondents reported feeling connected to the wider Catholic community through radio programs. Finally, entertainment motivations were significant, highlighting the importance of lively, culturally relevant, and interactive content in sustaining youth engagement.

The significance of these findings lies in their contribution to theory, practice, and policy. Theoretically, the study reaffirms the value of the Uses and Gratifications framework in explaining religious media use. Practically, it provides Catholic broadcasters with evidence-based insights into designing programming that meets youth needs holistically. For policy, it underscores the importance of supporting faith-based media as vehicles for moral development and social cohesion in urban Kenya.

However, the study also identified gaps. Limited interactivity, language exclusivity, and content repetitiveness reduce engagement. Addressing these gaps requires integrating more youth-led segments, offering multilingual content, and diversifying formats through digital convergence.

Future research should explore comparative motivations across different parishes or denominations and investigate how digital platforms complement or compete with radio in influencing youth media choices.

In conclusion, the study affirms that youth select religious radio content because it nourishes their spirituality while also meeting emotional, social, and entertainment needs. Catholic broadcasters must therefore innovate and contextualize programming to ensure continued relevance in an era of rapid media change.

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