

## Social media personnel and the effectiveness of the youth ministry at Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Nairobi Central Presbytery, Nairobi County, Kenya

David Ngigi Mburu<sup>1\*</sup>  
Kevin Muriithi Ndereba<sup>2</sup>  
Ndung'u Ikenye<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> [chukakikuyu16@gmail.com](mailto:chukakikuyu16@gmail.com)

<sup>1,2,3</sup> St Paul's University, Kenya

<https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.7.3.20>

### ABSTRACT

Youth ministry continues to face significant challenges of declining participation, weak engagement, and high attrition of young people from church, despite the rapid expansion of social media use. In Kenya, while churches increasingly adopt social media platforms, there is limited empirical and theological understanding of how specific dimensions of social media use influence the effectiveness of youth ministry. This study examined the influence of social media personnel on the effectiveness of youth ministry at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Nairobi Central Presbytery. The study was anchored on the socio-technical systems theory. A cross-sectional survey design was employed that targeted the population of 2,925 youths across seven parishes. A sample of 352 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling from which data was collected using questionnaires. Data was summarized using percentages and means while the relationship between social media personnel and effectiveness of youth ministry was tested using regression analysis. The findings revealed that social media personnel significantly influenced youth ministry effectiveness in terms of participation, membership, behaviour, and spiritual growth explaining 47.3% of the variance. The study concludes that the youth ministry effectiveness in a digital age depends not merely on social media adoption but on theologically informed and competent social media personnel. The study recommends that the presbytery should professionalize its digital presence by investing in specialized skills training and establishing a dedicated media team.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Kenya, Ministry, PCEA, Personnel, Social Media, Youth

### I. INTRODUCTION

Youth is widely understood as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood marked by identity formation, moral development, and spiritual decision-making (Hill, 2022). Youth ministry is a discipline within practical theology concerned with nurturing young people's relationship with God and integrating them into the life and mission of the church (Hanna, 2020). An effective youth ministry is not only one that attracts young people to church spaces, but one that retains them, fosters spiritual growth, builds Christian character, and encourages meaningful participation in church and society. Aziz (2019) argues that the central task of youth ministry is to help young people understand who they are in Jesus Christ and to develop a sustained and transformative relationship with Him. Empirical studies further demonstrate that active church involvement among youth is associated with reduced engagement in risky behaviours such as substance abuse and delinquency (Kagwiria et al., 2023).

Despite its theological importance, youth ministry globally continues to face significant challenges. Hill (2022) observes that traditional youth ministry models have often failed to produce spiritually mature young adults. This challenge cuts across denominations, cultures, and regions typified by high rates of youth attrition from the Christian faith. Hanna (2020) similarly noted that despite numerous interventions aimed at engaging young people, many churches continue to experience declining youth participation, which has created a leadership vacuum that threatens the future sustainability of the church. In increasingly pluralistic societies, young people are often more influenced by secular and digital cultures than by their local congregations (Williams, 2023). Studies indicate that church retention rates among individuals below 40 years have declined significantly, with some churches retaining fewer than 30% of young adults (Akinsulire, 2021).

In response to these trends, scholars argue that youth ministry must be reimaged to engage youth within their contemporary cultural contexts. Aziz (2019) contends that while the biblical message remains constant, the forms, language, and mediums through which it is communicated must evolve in response to changing youth cultures. Ndereba (2022) and Hanna (2020) emphasize that modern youth culture is deeply shaped by digital technologies with many young people turning to the internet and social media for guidance on personal, social, and even religious

matters. The rapid expansion of social media has created what Akinsulire (2021) describes as a “global youth tribe,” where values are increasingly shaped online, often in ways that conflict with Christian teachings.

From a theological perspective, the use of social media in youth ministry aligns with the missional calling of the church to proclaim the gospel in all contexts (2 Corinthians 5:11–20; 2 Timothy 4:1–2). Social media platforms offer unprecedented opportunities to overcome physical and social barriers, resonating with biblical visions of inclusive community (Galatians 3:28) and expansive witness (Acts 2:39). Hill (2022) further observes that social media allows youth leaders to maintain continuous engagement with young people throughout the week, potentially nurturing “everyday Christians” rather than limiting faith expression to Sunday worship.

However, the mere adoption of social media does not automatically translate into effective youth ministry. Several studies caution that many churches use digital platforms primarily for announcements and publicity rather than intentional discipleship and relational engagement (Williams, 2023; Barna Group, 2020). Fear of negative influences, addiction, and moral corruption has also made some churches reluctant to embrace social media, despite its pervasive role in youth culture (Hill, 2022). Hunt (2019) argues that the failure of many churches to address the digital lives of young people reflects a lack of digital discipleship capacity among youth ministers.

Scholars emphasize that effectiveness depends on *how* social media is used, *which* platforms are employed, and *who* manages them. Kent and Li (2020) argue that churches must understand the unique features of different platforms and intentionally employ them as relationship-building and discipleship tools rather than treating them as uniform communication channels. Ugboh (2023) similarly calls for systematic evaluation of social media components, noting that platform choice, usage patterns, content strategy, and personnel competence significantly shape ministry outcomes.

Despite growing interest in digital ministry, empirical research linking social media use to youth ministry effectiveness remains limited, particularly within the Kenyan context. Although studies such as Mbithi et al. (2023) have examined the frequency of social media use by churches, they have not established how specific dimensions of social media use influence the effectiveness of youth ministry. Within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), studies indicate that many youths attend church but remain minimally involved in ministry activities, limiting their spiritual growth (Njoroge, 2019).

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Globally, the youth are among the most active users of digital platforms making social media a potentially powerful tool for church youth ministry in areas such as communication, fellowship, discipleship, and outreach (Wiedemann, 2022). In Kenya, more than 80% of individuals above the age of 18 years have mobile phones with smartphone usage increasing at a tremendous pace (Communication Authority of Kenya, 2025). Churches, including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), have increasingly adopted social media platforms to engage young people, promote activities, and sustain connection beyond physical church spaces (Mbithi et al., 2023; Njoroge, 2019). However, the effectiveness of these digital engagements in achieving core youth ministry goals remains inadequately understood and empirically underexplored.

Despite widespread adoption, existing literature suggests that many churches use social media primarily for announcements and event promotion, with limited strategic integration into holistic ministry objectives such as spiritual formation, mentorship, and evangelism (Akula et al., 2025; Garrett, 2024). Furthermore, variations in the competence or training of individuals managing church social media accounts have been shown to influence engagement outcomes, yet these factors are often assumed rather than systematically examined (Omollo et al., 2023). In many church contexts, social media use is informal, volunteer-driven, and lacks clear ministry guidelines, raising questions about consistency, theological intentionality, and sustainability (Garrett, 2024; Omollo et al., 2024). In the Kenyan context, and specifically in the PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery, there is limited empirical evidence on how social media personnel affect the overall effectiveness of youth ministry (Mbithi et al., 2023). Without such evidence, youth ministries risk underutilizing social media or employing it in ways that are misaligned with their mission and objectives. Therefore, there is a clear need for a study to examine how social media personnel influence the effectiveness of youth ministry at the PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery.

### 1.2 Research Objective

To establish the influence of social media personnel on the effectiveness of the youth ministry at PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery, Nairobi County, Kenya.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by the social technical theory and the Osmer's four tasks of practical theology.

#### 2.1.1 Social-Technical Theory

The social-technical theory was first proposed by Trist and Bamforth in 1951 following their action research that focused on the coal mining industry in Britain (Abbas & Michael, 2023). The authors developed this theory with aim of describing how an optimal organization should function. The theory opines that for an organization to function optimally, the social, technological, and environment components must work in synergy. The social component comprises the people who produce products or provide services using some technology (Bednar & Welch, 2020). The term also includes the relationships between the people, their values, and associations. Technology refers to the equipment and procedures used to carry out tasks that lead to the delivery of a product or service.

The social-technical theory contends that for organizations like the youth ministry to function optimally, it must deploy technologies that lead to creation of products or services that are valued by customers (Abbas & Michael, 2023). The people within the organization (social aspects) must also be in a position to apply and deploy the technologies appropriately. This implies that the people must possess the skills, capabilities, and attitude that are requisite for the appropriate deployment of the technologies. The socio-technical theory highlights the mutuality between humans and technology where each sub-system shapes the other (Kapoor et al., 2021).

The theory was relevant to this study because the youth ministry is a social organization within a larger organization called the church. Just like the organizations described in the socio-technical theory, the youth ministry has the social component that comprises of people like the youth pastor, youth leaders, and members of youth ministry as well as the relationships between them (Ugboh, 2023). These people utilize various technologies including face-to-face interactions, music systems, mass media, and social media to deliver services like evangelism, discipleship, advice, and encouragement among others. The youth ministry is also an open system that interacts, influences, and is influenced by events taking place in their environment.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

This section presents a comprehensive review of the existing research and studies related to the subject of youth ministry and influence of social media personnel.

#### 2.2.1 Theology of the Youth Ministry

Scholars describe the term youth ministry in different ways. Kock and Norheim (2022) described it as the purposive and persistent endeavour to expose and share with the youth the good news of Jesus Christ. The goal of the youth ministry is to transform the life of the youth through the power of the Holy Spirit so that they may be subject to the will of God. The youth ministry is instrumental to the formation of the character of young people. This ministry plays a role in moulding young people in Christian way so as to transform them into mature Christian adults. According to Ndereba (2022), young people are part of the ekklesia and crucial stakeholders in the Body of Christ. Consequently, the effectiveness of the youth ministry has a major bearing on the future of the church.

Unfortunately, some church views the youth ministry as just activities or programmes that create safe playing ground for young people. According to Root (2021), youth ministry entails more than merely keeping the youth occupied; it is essentially nurturing the sacred connection between God and the youth. Root adds that youth ministry must go beyond the entertainment focus and present something solid and deep. Borgman (2013) argues that youth ministry must be compassionate, God-inspired, and Christ-centred for it to be effective. It must also be integrated into other ministries of the church, contain persona; stories, focus on socioeconomics of the community, and offer critical perspectives. Root (2021) argues that youth ministers need to focus less on filling the youth with moral information and focus more on walking alongside them in knowing Christ.

Borgman (2013) strongly believe that youth ministry should be shaped by our understanding of God. Youth ministry should focus on issues that are important to the youth like sexuality, discernment, hope, doubt, and questions about God, and respond to these issues based on our understanding of God. Root (2021) observed that the youth ministry in most churches is found in the periphery of the church because most youth are in the church periphery too. They have not abandoned the Christian faith completely, but are not invested in it either. Root opines that this is the wrong way of doing youth ministry. The youth ministry should be an intentional process that is founded on well-thought and creative responses to issues that the youth encounter. A haphazard approach of ministering to the youth can damage them. Youth ministry should have equal footing with other church ministries.

An effective youth ministry should be all rounded and cater to youths with different needs. Dean et al. (2020) observed that youth ministries in most churches focuses on reaching unconverted youths and under invest in the growth of already won youth. Apart from reaching unbelievers, an effective youth ministry should help youth who are already believers to mature in the Christian faith and create personal relationship with other Christians. They should

provide an opportunity for the youth to interrogate the traditions of Christian practices and thoughts. According to Amankwa and Gyampoh (2022) youngsters have a central role to play in areas like evangelism, innovativeness, church planting, and music ministry. However, youth in many churches have taken a back seat. The study by Imanirumva et al. (2022) found that 73.6% of the youths in Pentecost Church in Rwanda did not participate in evangelism, 61% did not participate in church leadership, and 56% were not participants in the church's praise and worship activities. Low participation of youths in these activities highlights a bigger problem in the youth ministry.

Hanna (2020) observed that although many churches in the USA still have youthful members, majority of these members are less involved in activities of the church. This disengagement hampers the spiritual growth of the youth and consequently the future of the church. The study attributed the disengagement to various factors including ineffective methods of teaching, ineffective youth leaders, and parental and worldly influences. The study recommended the re-examination of methods used to teach the youth to make more responsive to need and preferences of the youths. Similarly, youth leaders should create and sustain close relationships with the youth for a better chance of attracting and retaining them. In a survey involving Australian youths from the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church, Parker (2023) observed that youths would like to be listed to and accepted for who they are. They also want to engage fully in the church and aspire for more than being inactive observers. Social media could be effective tools for remodelling the methods of teaching the youth as well as for cultivating authentic relationships between youth leaders and the youth.

The study by Kagwiria et al. (2023) evaluated the effectiveness of different youth programmes in the Methodist Church of Kenya. The study utilized the survey design that entailed collecting data from youth members and youth ministers using questionnaires and interviews. Programmes like youth fellowship, conferences and camps, guidance and counselling, Bible study, talent shows and open forums, retreats and games, and rallies and crusade were rated as effective by more than 50% of the respondents. On the other hand, programmes like seminars and workshops and substance abuse education were rated as ineffective by the majority of the respondents. The study showcases the various youth programmes that typical churches in Kenya offer to the youth. However, the study did not assess the overall effectiveness of the youth ministry in shaping the character of the youth and moulding their relationship with God. The aim of the proposed study is to assess this overall effectiveness and whether it can be influenced by social media use.

### **2.2.2 Social Media Personnel and Effectiveness of the Youth Ministry**

The personnel responsible for managing social media platforms have a major bearing on the effectiveness of the platform. The personnel shape the content of the social media platform, facilitate the discussion, and manage the interaction between members (Sparkman, 2021). The study by Verma et al. (2021) found that online reputation, ability to manage digital engagement, capacity to generate authentic content, and community outreach capabilities were among the skills that make a success social media manager. Other skills include story ideation, editing, presentation, interpersonal skills, problem solving, creativity, research, language skills, and proficiency with technological tools like word and PowerPoint. However, this study focused on social media managers working in commercial organizations.

The study by Pekkala and Zoonen (2022) further revealed that the personnel who post content related to their work deemed by the public is reliable sources of information about that organization. This implies youth leaders' ability to communicate about their work has a positive bearing on the effectiveness of the youth ministry. The study further showed that personnel ability to communicate about their work is shaped by their level of commitment to their work, social media training, clarity about their communicative role, and prior experience with social media. Hunt (2020) opines that to be effective, youth ministers must understand the people to whom they are ministering. They need to be aware of places where the youth visit when they enter the digital spaces, what they do when there, and the things they go to search there. The youth leaders should be aware of the platforms that their specific audience prefer.

In addition, Ahman and Thoren (2021) contend that social media personnel in churches ought to know how to encourage practical engagement in their online community. The study utilized Taylor's model to analyse the communication components of the Facebook page of the Church of Sweden. The study utilized a qualitative approach where 304 original posts made in the Church of Sweden Facebook page between February 2017 and 31 January 2018 were analysed using the context analysis method. The study found that only 16% of the sampled post fell into the category of community building post. Community building posts are vital in flatten hierarchies and promoting open sharing of content. It allows both leaders and members to be co-creators of information through interpretation and feedback. It allows people to voice their opinion in a democratic manner.

The study by Markley (2024) found that social media training has become a vital part of youth leader training programmes in the American youth ministry organization known as Young Life. The study used the survey design that entailed interviewing staff at the organization. The interviews disclosed that that they always spend time talking with youth leaders about how technology affects each religious topic and how best they can deliver this topic through technology. Makhutla (2021) observed that to stay connected and evangelize, churches need to recruit talented individuals and train them on the technology use. The team running social media activities should also be support to

meet, plan, and strategize on how to promote the gospel. The study by Animante et al. (2021) examined the perception of members of Charismatic Churches in Ghana regarding social media use. The study utilized the survey design that entailed gathering data from the church members using questionnaires. Results showed that most of the church members had the basic skills needed to make use of social media. Availability of these skills had led to positive perception towards social media use in the churches. This implies that skills of members who are the target recipient of social media information are also a major determinant of the effectiveness of social media.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design and Study Area

The study made use of the cross-sectional survey design. Quantitative data was collected from member of the youth ministry in the congregations that made up the PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery using closed-ended questionnaires. The study was conducted at the PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery. The choice of the PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery was informed by its urban set-up that increases the likelihood for social media use. Statistics indicate huge rural-urban digital divide in Kenya where only 17% of the population in the rural areas have access to the internet as compared to 44% in the urban areas (Lusweti & Omieno, 2023).

#### 3.2 Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The target population included the 2925 youths within in the seven parishes of the PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery. The sample size for the study was determined using the Yamane (1973) sample size formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n is the desired sample size

N is the target population (2960)

e is the margin of error (0.05 for the proposed study)

$$n = \frac{2960}{1 + 2960(0.05)^2} = 352.38 \approx 352 \text{ respondents}$$

The respondents were selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. It entailed dividing the population into internally homogenous group known strata and then selecting respondents from each stratum in a simple random method. The number of respondents selected from each stratum was proportional to the population in that stratum. In this study, the target population was stratified in line with the 7 parishes. Stratification of the study population in line with the seven parishes ensured that all the parishes were represented in the sample (Crano et al., 2023). The proportionate aspect of the sampling technique also ensured that the representation of each parish was adequate. Large parishes with high number of youths got more slots in the sample so as the study could obtain data that reflected those attributes of the population. Random selection of respondents in each stratum also increased the representativeness of the sample by giving each member of the population equal opportunity to participate.

#### 3.3 Data Collection

The study made use of a questionnaire to collect information from the selected sample. The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data from the selected respondents with majority being the youth aged up to 35 years. Consequently, the questionnaire comprised of closed-ended questions. It comprised of three sections with the first section examining the profile of the youths. The second section contained questions related to social media social media personnel while the final section queried the effectiveness of youth ministry. The researcher obtained an approval to conduct the research from the SPU ethical review committee and National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher also visited each Parish in person and sought authorization to conduct the study from the administration. The researcher then arranged a meeting with the youths together with their leaders, explained the study to them, and asked those who agreed to participate to sign a written consent form. Those who agreed to participate were then given the questionnaire and allowed a duration of 30 minutes to complete after which the researcher collected back the completed questionnaires

#### 3.4 Data Analysis

The questionnaire was coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and data from each questionnaire entered. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data while inferential statistics were used to test how social media personnel affected the effectiveness of the youth ministry. Frequencies and percentage were then used to conduct the descriptive analysis. Linear regression analysis was used to conduct the inferential analysis. The study incorporated theological reflection as an interpretive layer to deepen understanding of the findings.

### IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Response Rate

Out of the 352 questionnaires administered, 315 were returned duly filled translating to response rate of 89.5%. The results of the questionnaire return rate are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Response Rate for the Administered Questionnaires*

	Frequency	Percentages
Responded	315	89.5%
Not responded	37	10.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>100%</b>

The response rate of 89.5% is considered very good for survey research, as it exceeds the recommended threshold of 70% (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003), thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

#### 4.2 Demographic Information of the Sample

This section shows the demographic information of the respondents. This includes gender, age, highest education level and the number of years the respondents have been a member of the PCEA church. The results are as presented in Table 2

**Table 2**

*Background Information*

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	180	57.1
	Female	135	42.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	20 years or below	61	19.4
	21- 25 years	137	43.5
	26- 30 years	67	21.3
	31- 35 years	50	15.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Highest level of education	Secondary Education	45	14.3
	Tertiary Education	270	85.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The results in Table 2 revealed that 57.1% of the respondents were male, while 42.9% were female. The findings indicated that the study had slightly more male than female participants which suggested that male youths were more represented in the sampled congregations. The largest age group was 21–25 years, accounting for 43.5% of respondents. This was followed by those aged 26–30 years (21.3%), 20 years or below (19.4%), and 31–35 years (15.9%). The findings imply that the majority of respondents were young adults in their early to mid-twenties reflecting an active age bracket in youth ministry activities within the church. Concerning the highest education level attained, the study findings revealed that most respondents, (85.7%), had attained tertiary education, while 45 (14.3%) had only completed secondary education. Therefore, the findings indicated that the respondents were relatively well-educated, which could influence their engagement with modern communication platforms such as social media.

#### 4.3 Social Media Personnel

This section assessed the skills and attributes of the individuals managing the youth ministry social media platforms, with the aim of determining whether their competence, creativity, and communication abilities influence the effectiveness of online engagement. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various statements regarding these attributes, and the results are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**  
*Skills and Attributes of Social Media Personnel in Youth Ministry*

Statement	S. D	D	N	A	SA	Mean	S. D
	%	%	%	%	%		
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are very creative	7.0	2.2	15.9	74.9		3.59	.841
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are friendly to all members	9.2	0.0	18.4	70.2	2.2	3.56	.920
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are knowledgeable on Biblical issues	2.2	0.0	25.1	70.5	2.2	3.70	.622
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are knowledgeable on life issues	4.8	2.2	29.5	61.3	2.2	3.54	.791
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are easy to relate with	4.4	6.7	11.4	75.2	2.2	3.64	.823
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are good communicators	6.7	2.2	23.5	63.2	4.4	3.57	.884
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are good in managing time	9.5	0.0	30.2	53.7	6.7	3.48	.978
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are willing to listen to others	8.9	0.0	16.2	74.9	0.0	3.57	.884
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are good in answering questions	6.7	0.0	15.9	77.5	0.0	3.64	.795
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are good in facilitating discussions.	11.7	0.0	20.6	67.6	0.0	3.44	.977
The people managing the youth ministry social media platforms in our church are good in managing people	11.7	2.2	25.1	61.0	0.0	3.35	.990
Aggregated Score						3.56	0.634

The findings on the skills and attributes of the personnel managing youth ministry social media platforms revealed generally positive perceptions among respondents. The highest-rated attribute was that the managers are knowledgeable on Biblical issues ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.622$ ), with the majority of respondents (70.5%) agreeing and only 2.2% strongly disagreeing, indicating that the personnel are considered spiritually grounded. Other areas where the managers were rated highly include being easy to relate with ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.823$ ) and being good in answering questions ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.795$ ), suggesting strong interpersonal and interactive skills. Similarly, attributes such as creativity ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 0.841$ ), friendliness ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 0.920$ ), willingness to listen ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 0.884$ ), and communication skills ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 0.884$ ) were rated above average, showing that the managers are approachable, open, and effective in their engagement. However, relatively lower ratings were noted for time management ( $M = 3.48$ ,  $SD = 0.978$ ), facilitation of discussions ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.977$ ), and people management ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 0.990$ ), indicating areas where improvement may be needed. The overall aggregated mean score of 3.56 ( $SD = 0.634$ ) shows that, on average, respondents moderately agree that the personnel managing the platforms possess the necessary skills and attributes, though consistency in organizational and leadership skills could be further strengthened.

#### 4.4 Effectiveness of the Youth Ministry

This section sought to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the youth ministry in the church. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements measuring the extent to which the youth ministry contributes to spiritual growth, participation in church activities, personal development, and resilience among young people. The responses are summarized in Table 4 below.



**Table 4**

*Effectiveness of the Youth Ministry*

	S. D	D	N	A	S. A	Mean	S. D
	%	%	%	%	%		
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in bringing more young people to the church	14.3	2.2	18.1	65.4	0.0	3.35	1.064
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in winning more souls to God	8.9	2.2	16.5	61.3	11.1	3.63	1.017
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in promoting youth participation in church activities	4.8	0.0	8.9	81.9	4.4	3.81	.727
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in helping the youth to learn more about God	4.4	2.5	11.4	74.9	6.7	3.77	.794
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in helping the youth to solve life challenges	7.0	2.2	22.9	58.7	9.2	3.61	.943
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in moulding the character of youths	7.3	2.2	18.1	61.0	11.4	3.67	.967
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in developing strong commitment towards the Christian faith among the youth	7.0	4.4	13.3	73.0	2.2	3.59	.893
The youth ministry in our church has been effective in making the youth more resilient	9.2		11.1	75.2	4.4	3.66	.932
Aggregated Score						3.63	0.626

The results indicate that the youth ministry in the church was perceived to be moderately to highly effective, with an aggregated mean score of 3.63 (SD = 0.626), suggesting a generally positive perception among respondents. A large majority of respondents agreed that the youth ministry effectively promotes youth participation in church activities (81.9%, M = 3.81, SD = 0.727) and helps young people to learn more about God (74.9%, M = 3.77, SD = 0.794). These findings underscore the ministry’s role in enhancing spiritual growth and active involvement in church life, which aligns with Hunt (2020), who emphasize that youth ministries foster religious socialization and encourage deeper faith engagement. The youth ministry was also viewed as effective in shaping moral and spiritual development. For instance, 61.0% agreed that it moulds the character of the youth (M = 3.67, SD = 0.967), while 73.0% agreed it develops strong commitment to the Christian faith (M = 3.59, SD = 0.893). This demonstrates the ministry’s influence on instilling Christian values and resilience (75.2% agreement, M = 3.66, SD = 0.932).

However, effectiveness in outreach was mixed. While 65.4% agreed that the youth ministry has been successful in bringing more young people to the church (M = 3.35, SD = 1.064), a notable 18.1% were unsure. Similarly, in terms of winning souls to God, 61.3% agreed, but 16.5% were undecided (M = 3.63, SD = 1.017). This points to some uncertainty about the ministry’s evangelistic effectiveness compared to its internal nurturing role. Furthermore, the ministry was recognized for supporting youths in solving life challenges, with 58.7% agreeing (M = 3.61, SD = 0.943).

**4.5 Social Media Personnel and the Effectiveness of Youth Ministry**

To establish the influence of social media personnel on the effectiveness of the youth ministry, the study performed a linear regression analysis. The dependent variable was effectiveness of the youth ministry while the independent variables was social media personnel. Table 5 presents the summary of the model.

**Table 5**

*Model Summary Table*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.688 <sup>a</sup>	0.473	0.468	0.45668

a. Predictors: (Constant) Social Media Personnel

The results in the Model Summary table helped to assess how well the independent variable explained the variation in the dependent variable. The results indicated that social media personnel explained 47.3% of the variance in the effectiveness of the youth ministry (R<sup>2</sup> = .473), suggesting that nearly half of the changes in effectiveness can be attributed to social media personnel.



**Table 6**  
*ANOVA Table*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	58.160	1	19.387	92.956	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	64.862	313	.209		
	Total	123.022	314			

- a. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness of the Youth Ministry
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Personnel

The ANOVA results further confirmed the model’s statistical significance, with the regression model yielding an F-statistic of 92.956 and a p-value of .000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the overall regression model provided a good fit for the data and that the predictors jointly had a statistically significant effect on the effectiveness of the youth ministry. The model coefficient table was also produced showing the significant of coefficient.

**Table 7**  
*Model Coefficients Table*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-0.486	0.307		-1.581	0.115
	Social Media Personnel	0.536	0.041	.543	13.028	0.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness of the Youth Ministry

The model equation was as follows:

$$Y = -0.486 + 0.536X_1$$

Where:

Y = Effectiveness of the youth ministry

X<sub>1</sub> = Social Media Personnel

From the model, social media personnel emerged as a strong predictor ( $\beta = .543, p < .001$ ), implying that the skills, competence, and availability of personnel managing church social media accounts have the most substantial influence on youth ministry effectiveness. This shows how important human resource capacity in driving impactful digital engagement

#### 4.6 Discussion

The study aimed at assessing the influence of social media personnel on the effectiveness of youth ministry at PCEA Nairobi Central Presbytery. Respondents rated personnel highly for biblical knowledge, creativity, and relational skills, but organizational competencies like time management and facilitation were weaker. These findings are consistent with past research emphasizing that effective online ministry depends not only on spiritual knowledge but also on communication, relational, and organizational competencies (Garret, 2024; Wiedemann, 2022). Results also showed that effectiveness of the youth ministry in nurturing the faith of young believers at the presbytery was moderate. These results are consistent with Dean et al. (2020), who found that effective youth ministries play a crucial role in nurturing long-term faith commitment and moral identity among young people. However, some deficiency was noted in the area of evangelism consistent with Mbithi et al. (2023), who argued that while youth ministries are often effective at discipleship and community building, they sometimes struggle with consistent outreach and evangelism strategies.

Results also suggest that youth ministry at the presbytery was moderately effective in assisting to youth to address the life challenges they were encountering. This suggests that, beyond spiritual guidance, the ministry addresses psychosocial needs, a role supported by Erikson’s theory of identity formation, which highlights the importance of community-based mentorship in navigating adolescent challenges. The findings demonstrate that the youth ministry is highly effective in fostering spiritual growth, participation, and resilience, though its role in evangelism and recruitment of new members appears less certain. These results corroborate earlier studies (Ahman & Thoren, 2021; Animante et al. 2021; Markley, 2024), which emphasize the dual role of youth ministries in nurturing faith within the church and extending outreach, with stronger outcomes typically observed in the former.

Regression analysis showed personnel competence had a strong impact on ministry effectiveness highlighting that technology alone cannot guarantee meaningful engagement. This aligns with literature emphasizing the importance of human agency, training, and strategic planning in digital ministry (Sparkman, 2021; Hunt, 2020; Markley, 2024; Pekkala & Zoonen, 2022). Skilled personnel act as digital pastors, curators, and facilitators, transforming social media platforms from communication tools into spaces for community, discipleship, and spiritual formation.

The prominence of social media personnel underscores the indispensable human element in ministry, grounded in the doctrine of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and the call to equip leaders for service (Ephesians 4:11–12). Competent and biblically grounded personnel function as digital shepherds who guide, moderate, and nurture faith within online communities. However, identified weaknesses in organization and facilitation point to the pastoral need for intentional training, mentoring, and theological formation of those entrusted with digital ministry. The study found that many personnel lacked training in digital pastoral care, online evangelism, and theological engagement in digital spaces. As a result, social media management focused primarily on coordination and communication rather than intentional pastoral accompaniment or mission-oriented engagement. This key finding underscores that while personnel capacity enhances technical effectiveness, the absence of a clear theological and pastoral orientation limits the use of social media as a space for evangelism, discipleship, and care.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that social media has become an important component of contemporary youth ministry; however, its contribution to ministry effectiveness is shaped more by *how* it is used than by mere adoption. The study concludes that social media personnel are a critical determinant of youth ministry effectiveness. The presence of dedicated and competent personnel improves the organization, consistency, and appeal of digital communication. However, the study also concludes that most personnel operate with limited theological and pastoral orientation to digital ministry. As a result, social media management is treated primarily as a technical or administrative function rather than as a form of pastoral and missional ministry. This limits the church's ability to use digital platforms as spaces for evangelism, pastoral care, and discipleship.

### 5.2 recommendations

The study recommends that the presbytery should invest in training and equipping social media personnel with skills in digital communication, content creation, and online ministry management. Designating a dedicated and active media team will ensure professionalism, creativity, and consistency in content delivery. Furthermore, mentorship programs can be introduced to nurture talented youths into future church media leaders, thus ensuring sustainability. The study further recommends comparative studies across different church denominations to identify best practices and context-specific strategies. Additional studies are also needed to investigate additional factors contributing to the unexplained 52.7% of variance in ministry effectiveness.

### Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### Funding Declaration

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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