

Dimensions of Innovation and Worship Experience among Congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference, South- Western, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the dimensions of innovation and their impact on the worship experience among congregations within the Lagos West Baptist Conference in South-Western, Nigeria. The research highlights how churches in this region practice innovation in proclaiming the gospel, worship experiences, process, people, and community engagement. The study draws on a diverse population of pastors, church leaders, and congregants. The findings reveal a dynamic and innovative approach to worship, with church leaders employing various creative methods to address the physical and spiritual needs of their members with a notable level of acceptable character and conduct within the church community, driven by innovative programs aimed at enhancing worship experiences for both attendees and their immediate communities. The study concluded that churches in the Lagos West Baptist Conference embrace open, process and organization innovation, demonstrating strong adaptability as the technological world evolved. The churches utilized information and communication technologies to enhance the worship experiences and meet the physical and spiritual needs of their attendees. The study recommends that churches in Lagos West Baptist Conference should therefore continue to invest in technological tools to further enhance the worship experience and reach a broader audience of youth who are more digitally inclined, offer ongoing training for church leaders on the latest technological advancements, explore diverse worship formats and encourage partner with other churches and organization on resources sharing. The study contributes to the understanding of how innovation can profoundly influence religious practices, offering insights into the evolving landscape of worship in contemporary Nigerian churches.

Keywords: Church Leadership; Innovation; Worship Experience; Church Innovation

Introduction

As the world rapidly changes, organizations face an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine their mission, methods and impacts. In today's fast-paced, globally interconnected landscape, innovation is becoming a requirement to be successful in the networked environment. Whatever would appeal to this generation must be quick, enjoyable, fun-filled, engaging and entertaining rather than mere repetition of the same weekly routine, rigidity of belief, and regimen of personal faith development. They truly desire a new notion of Christianity, which is nouveau and embraces diversity in spiritual conversations and relationships. These changes have had a significant impact on the church, especially on mainline evangelical churches. To this effect, church leaders are struggling to successfully meet up with the challenges of technological changes of this 21st Century generation; who is fast-paced, impatient, never-a-dull-moment people. Hence, they are increasingly dissatisfied with the church because of several unanswered questions and endless rigidity. "The Church is boring", they claimed; and "is the Church still relevant", they asked? The result is a decline in Church attendance and a pool of believers who do not belong to a local Church (Krejcir 2007, Conner 2011, Rainer 2013).

Pope John Paul II once commented on the effect and changes in social conditions that affect the church's mission and counselled on the need to find innovative solutions to the new realities. He urged the church to adopt a new posture with new strategies and approaches against its traditional modes of witnessing and renew its evangelism in at least three senses; "in its ardor, methods and expression" (Rymarz, 2000). Similarly, Gaiya (2002), Ukpong (2006), Conner (2011), and White (2013) argued that if and when the church comes to the mood for a change, it has to innovate and reform its system, methods, and practices to continue to offer pragmatic hope for a new order among the people.

Innovations facilitated relationship development and relationship maintenance, and this has the greatest impact on congregations' worship experiences and congregants' commitment during the pandemic. The experience by churches during the pandemic period was unprecedented and created a more urgent need for ministry innovation than churches has ever previously imagined. Rainer (2020) and (Whitesel, 2020) established that the aftermath of the pandemic is not yet fully understood; some churches are likely to withstand the effect of the pandemic more successfully than others. Changes made by the church during the pandemic via innovations such as moving small groups and youth ministries online will likely be a major factor contributing to the long-term outcomes that the church will experience. It was a concern to virtually all churches whether members will continue to be committed to their pre-pandemic church, leave the church for another perceived better church, or will they return to church at all. However, it is observed that the choice of local church of the people has been greatly affected by the pandemic (Covarrubias, et. al., 2021).

In the 21st century, the most profound factor in the worship experiences of churches is innovation. In the United States, the National Church Life Survey outlined some evidence for indicators of widespread forces of social change and concluded that there was a need for regeneration and innovation in church life, particularly in many mainstream denominations (NCLS, 2010). Drake (2009), in his study on the use of innovation in ministry as strategies for the local church, investigated the use and application of innovation for ministry strategies in the local church through a case study approach. The author concluded that innovation is an effective outreach strategy for reaching out to the community. Again, Hunter et al (2012) investigated the process of innovation in church congregations by using a collective case study

within four congregations. The research showed a multi-faceted nature of church innovation with themes of leadership, organizational structure, culture, and resources assuming serious significance while trust, organizational fit and timing slightly moderated the innovation process. The study largely described the process of innovation without dwelling on its impacts on church vitality.

In Nigeria, several empirical studies have focused on innovation in church congregations. Ossai-Ugbah (2011) investigated the information and communication technology in use in Baptist churches. The study adopted a descriptive survey method to explore how Nigeria Baptist congregations using computer technologies to innovate had enhanced traditional ministries in worship, fellowship, pastoral care, education, evangelism, mission and community outreach. The study showed that the educational background of pastors affected the adoption of technology as a tool for innovation in their churches and those who adopted technology did so to enhance their sermon preparation, worship and running of teaching materials during service. Bolu, (2012), conducted a study, where he sought to understand the conception of church leaders on the use of technology for church growth programs. He inquired about the adoption of electronic communication platforms such as emails, telephone and virtual learning environments, message streaming and dedicated software for church administration and human capital development. The study established that in the Nigerian churches, adoption of information and communication technology has brought about an organizational shift in church growth and communication strategy of the church.

However, it is evident that most of the studies primarily concentrated on the use and types of innovation in the church. A few had focused on process and technology issues without establishing any correlation or link between the nature of innovation in church congregations and the impact they have on church worship experiences as it affects attendance and their influence on the spiritual involvement and growth of members in the church and their respective communities. Obviously, the study on church innovation has been reduced to the use of information and communication technology in the church. This is a significant gap in research, particularly in Nigeria, where more than 65% of the population is below the age of 35 years. This age group is the people the church needs to reach with attractive innovations and creativities toward their personal spiritual growth and church vitality. Therefore, this study will investigate the leadership practices for innovations, nature, and types of innovations and establish its relationship with church vitality in Lagos West Nigeria Baptist Congregations.

Innovation remains a key driver in the performance equation of any church organization (Schilling, 2010; Tidd & Bessant, 2011; Horth & Vehar 2014). Consequently, innovation has become a key part of church strategy with the aim of turning ideas into value, leading to improved goods and services, renewed methods and processes in the quest to sustain growth.

Innovation has been variously defined over the decades by different authors. Howard and Sheth (1969) defined innovation as any new element brought to the buyer, whether or not new to the organization. Kenneth (1986) viewed it as new ideas that consist of: new products and services, new use of existing products, new markets for existing products or new marketing methods. Evans (1991) stated that innovation is the ability to discover new relationships, of seeing things from new perspectives and to form new combinations from existing concepts. Furthermore, Covin and Slevin (1991), Lumpkin and Dess (1996), and Knowx (2002) defined innovation as a process that provides added value and a degree of novelty to the organization, suppliers and customers, developing new procedures, solutions, products and services and new ways of marketing. Garcia & Calantone (2002) viewed innovation as the quest for finding new ways of doing things not limited to technological

change or new products. Selman (2002), established that innovation is the act of intentionally bringing into existence something new that can be sustained and repeated, and which has some value or utility. According to Du Plessis (2007), innovation refers to the creation of new thoughts, knowledge, and ideas to make organizational outcomes possible. Horth and Vehar (2014) further described innovation is creating and implementing something new that adds value.

Varis and Littunen (2010) stretched this thought by concluding that innovation has an inherent advantage because it can transform both the individual engaged in the process and the organization that sponsors it by accelerating change and creating better opportunities for them. Thus, it is for a good reason that innovation has become one of the hottest disciplines in the business world and in other organizations today (Anthony, 2012). This reality must have prompted the innovation scholar, Davila et al (2006) to observe that superior innovation provides an organization the opportunities to grow faster, better, and smarter than their competitors and ultimately to influence the direction of their industry. Davila and his colleagues concluded that in the long run, the sure guarantee for survival is the ability to innovate better and longer than competitors.

Similarly, Tidd et al (2005) came up with an innovation classification into product, process, position and paradigm innovations. They explained that position innovation includes changes in the context in which the products are introduced while paradigm innovation encompasses the changes in the underlying mental models that reflect the work of the organization. And recently, Keeley, et al (2013) argued in favor of a new discipline of innovation because companies need new discoveries and strategies to drive growth and survival. In their opinion, the speed of change requires greater flexibility and innovation effectiveness. In response, they came up with ten basic types of innovation organized within three categories.

Dimensions of Innovation

Innovation can happen at different points in the process of exchange. Sawhney, Wolcott, and Arroniz (2006) claimed that innovation comes in many flavors and argued that organizations should take a holistic view of their entire operations when thinking about innovation. They went on to develop a 12 elements framework for understanding innovation along business dimensions which they called “the innovation radar”. The innovation radar shows all aspects of a business where innovation can happen. However, Hertle (2007) correctly argued that organizations do not innovate on all 12 dimensions all the time. The coverage and intensity of innovation at any particular time is driven by the pattern of approaches and solutions that follow defined sequence and phase, and these may be limited by capacity to generate innovative ideas, the time required to turn ideas into innovation and financial resources required to set about them. Nevertheless, the framework developed by Sawhney et al (2006, p.75-81) is very helpful because it identified four principal areas namely, offerings, customers, processes and presence; and each of this principal area has two other points where innovation could take place. This is shown below:

Fig. 1: Dimensions of Innovation

Dimensions	Description
Offerings (WHAT)	Develop innovative products or services
Customers (WHO)	Discover unmet customer needs or identify underserved customer segments
Processes (HOW)	Redesign core operating processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness
Presence (WHERE)	Create new distribution channels or Innovative points of presence
Solutions	Create integrated and customized offerings that solve end-to-end customer problems
Customer experience	Redesign customer interactions across all touchpoints and all moments of contact
Value Capture	Redefine how company gets paid or create innovative new revenue streams
Organization	Change form, function or activity scope of the firm
Supply Chain	Think differently about sourcing and fulfillment
Networking	Create network-centric intelligent and integrated
Offerings	Create derivate offerings
Brand	Leverage a brand into new domains

The beauty of the above classification is that it provides an organizing framework to also arrange the various points at which innovation can happen in the church. Since the church does not produce any physical product and has no customers, the idea of Sawhney et al (2006) as advanced in the innovation radar could be modified based on the perceived innovation points as follows:

- **WHAT?** – Proclamation: Innovation in the areas of gospel proclamation, biblical teaching and technology. New values are created through different methods of getting biblical message across to church attendees. Technology is engaged to enhance experience in worship services.
- **WHO?** – People: Innovate with church attendees experience, members experience and the unchurched. How is the church meeting their needs, providing solutions to their problems and encouraging their growth? Innovation in how they are mobilized, in follow-up and how they are preserved in the church.
- **HOW?** – Process: Innovation in ministry platforms, ministry processes and church organization. This has to do with innovation in the areas of structure of church ministry, inclusion of youths and lay leadership, methods and techniques for ministry expressions, traditions and church practices in manners that facilitate and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of church ministry.
- **WHERE?** – Presence: Innovation with lifestyle, Christian virtues, congregational identity and reputation and positive projection of the whole body of Christ, physically and online.

Biblical and Theological Reflections on Innovation

Innovation is the creation and implementation of something new that adds value in the context in which it is introduced (Horth & Vehar, 2014). According to Clatworthy (2011),

innovations has the capacity to influence how the customer connects, serves and engages with the enterprise and its offerings. Innovation is transforming because it provides solutions to challenges and advances new methods, new approaches or new products. As the Genesis account opened, God was clearly in the driver's seat as the creator but also as the innovator. From a world that was chaotic, void and formless, the Spirit of God brooded over the earth to bring light, freshness and newness. God had just created the light and night, water and land, plants and trees, sky and heavenly bodies, sun and the moon and birds and animals. And finally, He made man in his own image. Suddenly, the hitherto formless void was now brimming with life and living! God himself concluded after looking through all he had made that they were all very good (Genesis 1:1-31).

All through the Old and New Testaments, the picture of God as the innovator per excellence is unmistakable. Isaiah proclaimed these same messages from the Lord, *See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland* (Isaiah 43:19), and at the end of the Bible in Revelation 21:5, John the Beloved echoed God's word: *He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new! Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.* These accounts clearly portray God as the innovator. Proverbs 18:15 (NLT) affirms, *Intelligent people are always open to new ideas; in fact, they look for them.* This implies that God the innovator, who has made man in his own image also expects man to search for new ideas in order to be innovative.

Following the idea of innovation at touch-points, where were God's touch-points and how did God and man innovate at those touch points from the account of scriptures? This study adopts the five distinct touchpoints identified by Voss & Zomerdijk, (2007) to understand the kind of innovation that took place at those touch-points and how it directly and indirectly impacted the people. Perhaps it should be stated that the goal of the innovation process is for man to have unbroken fellowship with God throughout life and eternity.

Elements of Church Innovation

The revelation of the Spirit to Peter in Matthew 16:18 which was echoed by Christ was simply an affirmation by him that he would build his church and the gates of hell will not overcome it. This scripture also carries an understanding that in building his church Christ would use men and several passages of the bible supports this assertion. Jesus later prayed in John 17:18 and after his resurrection he repeated the same prayer as an instruction to the disciples, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21). In essence, the church is the primary instrument, the dynamic force, and the divine institution through which the Lord would reach the world. Warren (2002), in his book *Purpose Driven Church* identified five purposes of the church springing directly from the marching order dishied out to it by Jesus:

1. **Worship:** the church exists to worship God (Matthew 4:10).
2. **Ministry:** the church exists to minister to people with changing needs, spiritual, emotional, relational and physical (Ephesian 4:12)
3. **Evangelism:** the church exists to communicate the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20)
4. **Fellowship:** the church exists to provide fellowship for believers (Ephesian 2:19)
5. **Discipleship:** the church exists to teach, train and lead believers to Christlikeness (Ephesian 4:1-16; John 17; Colossians 1:28).

The one clear instruction of Christ in John 20:21 is what is broken down into these five purposes. Pursuance of these purposes should lead to growth in the church. This is the position

canvassed by Warren (2002) when he argued that churches need to grow in five major directions: grow warmer; grow deeper; grow stronger; grow broader; and grow larger. The achievement of these growth objectives gives vitality to the church. McGavran (1970), was deeply committed to the ideals of church growth to the extent that he started the Church growth movement. His successor, Wagner (2004), listed six irreducible pre-suppositions on which church growth was founded.

Elwell (2001), in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, reasoned that the Greek word interpreted “to send” in John 20:21 carried two primary responsibilities. The first is the burden to deliver a very accurate and understandable message as given by the sending authority; and the second is the possession of full authority by the sent as given by the sender. In other words, the mandate to grow carries with it the responsibility to deliver the correct gospel so that church innovation cannot become the ground for violating scriptures. The onus is on the church to effectively discharge its purposes with dead accuracy and significantly expand its witness in the world without inhibition or unresolvable constraints. And the comfort comes from the fact that Christ is always with the church as it espouses fresh responses in faithful witness in the changing world. The purpose of the church already carries with it a seed for innovation because changes are inherently anticipated. All the congregations need to do is set boundaries and find the driving force to build and implement real innovation in the church.

These characterizations are to be read together and every church innovation should be evaluated by them. On one hand, they align with scriptural requirements; and on the other, they have been drawn from the lessons of church history and contemporary empirical research on which innovations have proven or could prove beneficial in promoting the purpose of God. This should then form the basis upon which a proposed innovation is to be accepted or rejected. Poole (2008) asserted that not all new ideas are good ideas, so it is important to seek advice and to test new ideas, to reassure each other that the changes which come about are consistent with God’s unchangeable purposes. The author noted that young people are often full of new ideas hence, older people should create opportunities to discuss these and help young people to develop responses to the challenges that will face them in later life.

Throughout history, the church has been innovating. Paulter (2010), observed that technology has played a significant role in the spread of Christianity for many centuries, for example, the first organ was introduced to the church in the 14th century, printing technology transformed the printing and distribution of the bible in the 15th century, microphones, electricity and speakers were all introduced between the 18th and 20th centuries and radios and television were introduced into the church in the last 100 years. This prompted Brust (2000) to conclude that “the church needs to keep up with what is going on; the church needs to be as current as anything else out there; otherwise, you will not reach the new generation”.

Horth and Vehar (2014) stated that innovation is creating and implementing something new that adds values. Furthermore, Dunaetz (2021) noted that the most visible forms of innovation in churches are basically new programs and activities but may also include the introduction of new technologies as was common during the COVID-19 pandemic, new administrative structure (such as adding staff), or new processes (such as determining who will be on a church board and other forms of leadership selection. Covarrubias, Dunaetz and Dykes (2021) found evidence that innovativeness increased church commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors stated that the perceived innovations strengthened relationships and church commitment during the pandemic. It was concluded that innovativeness will continue to be very important and church leaders should strive to increase it through vision casting, leadership selection, developing organizational openness, and especially through introducing

new, creative and technological based programs and activities that create and solidify relationships between the members of the congregations, environment and other congregations.

The 2015 survey of mega-churches in America by the Hartford Institute showed that most churches are growing because of inspirational worship services, innovation, nurturing of people's faith, joyful, thought-provoking services filled with a sense of God's presence. Worship services in these churches were said to be contemporary with the use of electric guitars, bass, keyboards, service projection, large screens, soundboards and Wi-Fi. The churches also offer a wide array of programs for members and engage in significant outreach to the larger community. They generally sustain innovation and the willingness to change at the available opportunity (Thumma, 2015).

Generally, the emerging church is concerned about unusual transformations of older practices, meeting outside the church building such as in the local coffee shops, pubs and restaurants, appreciation of the unique life stories and burdens of individuals, particularly the millennial, and a focus on the need for people to first belong, and then behave before they can believe. However, in the contemporary evangelical churches, a number of innovations are on offer but most of them are driven by information and communication technology. Bolu (2012), Ossai-Ugbah (2011), Ihejirika (2007), Ukah (2007), Ukpog (2006) investigated different kind of innovations that are taken place in Mainline and Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. These are, innovations in church music, innovation in preaching and praying, and, innovation in physical environment.

The Nigeria Baptist Convention is the umbrella body for all Baptist congregations in Nigeria and the Southwest Baptist churches are the biggest with about 52% of the entire Baptist membership nationwide. Its stated objectives are: "To be a community of believers that represent Christ by proclaiming the gospel, discipling believers, caring and developing churches to be involved in holistic ministries – evangelistic, social and healing – and collaborating with other Christian agencies across the globe". According to Ayokunle (2014), "the NBC is involved in spreading the gospel both in Nigeria and abroad, theological education, liberal arts education and leadership development, active in the campaign against the HIV/AIDS scourge, Poverty Alleviation Education Program". To facilitate its work of ministry in every part of Nigeria, the Convention is divided into 33 Conferences and the Conferences are divided into Associations and Congregations in the same geographical areas that make up the Association.

The Baptist work in Nigeria dates back to around 1850 when Jefferson Bowen landed in Badagary, a city in South West Nigeria. He came as a missionary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, United States of America and he labored tirelessly along with indigenous converts to ensure that the Baptist work was firmly planted in the land. This effort, observed Ajayi (2014), resulted into the present Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) which was formed in 1914. According to him, at that beginning 31 churches with total membership strength of 2880 were the foundational members of the Convention. Today, Ayokunle (2014) observed that the NBC is the largest Baptist body in Africa and the third largest in the Baptist World Alliance.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention has over 10,000 churches, 3 million baptized members and about 6.5 million non-baptized members spread over 33 conferences in the nation. The South West Baptist congregation is supposedly the largest in Nigeria. This, according to Ajayi (2014), is because the Baptist enterprise is largely concentrated in the region probably because it took root from there.

The church stated intention had been clear and direct, "it was not in search of numerical

growth that is not matched with spiritual maturity” (Ajayi 2014). This philosophy, though excellent affected the growth of many Baptist congregations because it was interpreted to mean “no” to innovation. As it were, Baptist congregants are typically elitists, whether they are found in the cities or in the suburbs, educated or not, they are generally called “people of the book”; an appellation they picked up because of their knowledge and intense love for the written word of God. Members are usually active in church though they lead very busy lives with families, social commitment and work engagements.

One very painful observation about Baptist churches in Nigeria generally is the diminished spiritual vitality in congregations, stagnancy in church attendance, migration of youths to Pentecostal Churches and declining participation and involvement in church programs. There cannot be any single factor that is responsible for this development but the stronghold of traditions and rules in the face of changing culture coupled with its very cautious approach to church leadership styles and innovation. However, in recent times, there has been a significant change towards missions and evangelism and the denomination has become more receptive to impactful innovations which some years back would have been unacceptable. The NBC is currently running a vision tagged: “Mission of Kingdom growth: Moving forward, breaking new frontiers”. Ayokunle (2014), the author of this theme challenged the Convention that unless the techniques and technologies are appropriate to the realities of this stated intention, the efforts will be in vain.

Lagos Baptist West Conference

Hence, Lagos West Baptist Conference is an affiliate of the Nigerian Baptist Convention which was established in 2010 following the multiplication of the defunct Lagos State Baptist Conference into Lagos Central, Lagos East and Lagos West Baptist Conferences. It is one of the 33 conferences in the Nigeria Baptist Convention, consisting of 13 Baptist Associations and 266 congregations. The Conference upon its inauguration spelt out its vision as follows: “The vision of Lagos West Baptist Conference is putting missions first and capacity building next (Matthew 28:18-20)” (Adeniji, 2015). This vision encapsulates the whole idea behind the coming together of the cooperating congregations, to foster the development of missions and evangelism and build up people until they come to the full knowledge of the truth

Statement of the Problem

The image of the Church has taken a beating because of a combination of factors which range from boring church activities, stagnation in approach, lack of varieties, adherence to unnecessary traditions, bad personal experiences of people with churches, technological changes, innovations, and developments, and many others. These challenges create problems that require new responses and practices by the church such as immense pressure to innovate. Therefore, many Baptist congregations are not experiencing dynamic worship service which is causing many members especially, the youth category to leave for other denominations. It was established in the literature that the generation of young adults and youths would never be able to relate with the denomination if Baptist congregations remained in this posture. (Barna, 2014; Austin-Robertson, 2014; Voas & Watt, 2014). Hence, the church must respond with strategic innovation to provide solutions to these identified problems.

Every congregation faces immense pressure to innovate, and the type and nature of innovation will vary from one congregation to another, probably depending on the nature of congregational activities, church governance, congregational context, and cultural environment. In the context of mainline churches in Nigeria, especially Baptist congregations,

most studies concentrated on the impact of information and communication technology as it affects church growth and enhances different aspects of church ministry. Most of them have adopted the case study approach. This brought about a gap in the understanding of innovation and innovation performance in church literature in Nigeria. It is also noticeable that the few studies that focused on technology as a tool of innovation did not establish any link between innovation and church worship services. Besides, technology usage is just a medium to achieve innovation; several key issues on church innovation can be explored.

Hence, there is a need to examine wider issues concerning the nature and content of innovation and how these affect the church's worship experiences within the emerging socio-cultural, technological and demographic changes in Nigeria while staying true to their denominational beliefs, values and understanding of Scripture. Thus, the study will establish the elements, dimensions, processes, types of innovation and its relationship and effects on worship experiences among the congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference.

Aims and Objectives of the study

The aims and objectives of this study are:

1. Identify dimensions and types of innovation in the worship experience of congregation within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches
2. Ascertain dimension, dynamism and innovations processes in the worship experience of congregations within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches
3. Ascertain dimensions and types of innovations towards handling members welfare as part of worship experience among Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches
4. Ascertain dimensions and types of innovations towards the demonstrations of Christian characters and member's conduct within the congregation of Lagos West Baptist Conference

Research Questions

1. What are the dimensions and types of innovation in the congregation's worship experience within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?
2. What are the dimensions, dynamism, and innovation processes in the worship experience of congregations within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?
3. What are the dimensions and types of innovations towards handling member's welfare as part of worship experience among Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?
4. What are the dimensions and types of innovation towards the demonstration of Christian character and member's conduct among the congregation within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?

Methodology

The study adopted the survey method to examine and identify the causal relationship between church innovation and congregations' worship experiences in Lagos West Baptist Conference. The questionnaire, which was designed with closed-ended questions using a Likert scale, was self-administered to collect data from leaders and members of Baptist churches in the Lagos West Baptist Conference churches. Descriptive statistics was used to test the demographic information of the respondents in order to organize them for easy categorization and analysis. The Population of the study consists of thirty-nine (39) church leaders and one hundred and forty-six (146) church members, selected in the Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches for the purpose of this study.

Result and findings

Table 1: Demographic Information of Church Members (N=146)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	86	59.0%
Female	60	41.0%
Age		
0-25	27	19.0%
26-50	81	55.0%
50-75	37	25.0%
75 and above	1	1.0%
Previous Service as a Church Leader		
Yes	76	52.0%
No	70	48.0%
Highest Qualification		
High School Certificate	37	25.0%
First Degree	88	60.0%
Master's Degree	12	8.0%
PhD	2	1.0%
Others	7	5.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 1 represents the demographic distribution of the selected church members. The table reveals the summary of participants' bio data regarding Gender. It is observed that 56% of the study participants were male, while 41% were female. The result implies that more males participated in the study than their female counterparts. It shows that 19% of the study participants were 0-25 years, 55% of the study participants were 26-50 years, 25% of the study participants were 50-75 years and 1% of the study participants were 75 years and above. Deducing from the findings, it is obvious that majority of the respondents were in age 26-50 years, followed by respondents in 50-75 years, these calibres of people are mature enough to give accurate information to the researcher. Furthermore, presented that 52% of the study participants have previously served as a church leader at one time or the other while 48% have not been involved in leadership position before in the Church. The result implies that, more respondents have in one time or the other occupied a leadership position in the church. Lastly, It was observed from Figure 4.1d that 25% of the study participants were SSCE holders, 60% of the study participants are First Degree holders, 8% of the study participants were Masters' holders, 1% of the study participants is PhD holders, and 5% of the study participants were holders of other certificates. The result implies that majority of the study respondents were holders of higher qualifications who have been exposed to give accurate information to the researcher.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Church Leaders (N=39)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	29	74.0%
Female	10	26.0%
Age		
0-25	4	10.0%
26-50	16	41.0%
50-75	18	46.0%
75 and above	1	3.0%
Role as Church Leaders		
Pastor	22	56.0%
Associate Pastor	5	13.0%
Ministry Head	5	13.0%
Others – Volunteers/Other ministers	7	18.0%
Qualification		
High school	9	23.0%
First degree	14	36.0%
Masters	13	33.0%
Others	3	8.0%
Professional Qualification		
Certificate	15	39.0%
Dip. Th.	2	5.0%
B. Th	12	30.0%
BA/B.Th.	3	8.0%
M.Div.	3	8.0%
M.Th.	2	5.0%
D.Min	2	5.0%
Years of Pastoral Leadership Experience		
1- 5	21	54.0%
6-10	5	13.0%
11-15	4	10.0%
16-20	3	8.0%
21 & above	6	15.0%
Years of Pastoral experience in the Former Church (if any)		
1-5	25	64.0%
6-10	5	13.0%
16-20	1	3.0%
Not applicable	8	20.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2 revealed that majority 29 (74.0%) of the respondents were male; also, majority are between the age of 26 – 75 (87%). Again, the majority are church pastors 22 (56%). The table further revealed that the majority are highly educated, with 27 (69%) having a first degree and masters degree. 15 (39.0%) and 12 (30.0%) represent most of the respondents with

certificates and B.th qualifications. The majority of the respondents' years of leadership experience is between 1 – 5 years (54%), with 25 (64%) having 1 – 5 years of experience in formal church.

Research Question One: What are the dimensions and types of innovation in the worship experience of congregation within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?

Table 3: Dimensions and Areas of Innovation in the Worship Experiences of Churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference (N=146)

Proclamation	Regularly	Sometime s/ Occasiona	Rarely	Never	Not Sure	Mean	Standard Dev
We use projector and TV screen to display hymns, responsive readings and bible text during worship services	126 (68%)	25 (13%)	7 (4%)	25 (14%)	2 (1%)	4.34	1.12
We stream our worship services online	87 (47%)	41 (22%)	11 (6%)	35 (19%)	11 (6%)	3.85	1.35
The pastor and other church leaders regularly use email and text messages to propagate the gospel, counsel with people and in praying for people	94 (51%)	48 (26%)	13 (7%)	13 (7%)	17 (9%)	4.02	1.30
The pastor and other church leaders regularly use social media channels such as: WhatsApp, twitter, Facebook, Telegram, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and others to communicate with members	148 (80%)	27 (14%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	6 (3%)	4.68	0.82
The pastor and other church leaders use telephone to connect with people on various needs	133 (72%)	38 (21%)	7 (4%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	4.57	0.86
Our worship services are inspirational and exciting	142 (77%)	33 (18%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	4.66	0.78
Our worship service is contemporary and classical	111 (60%)	46 (24%)	13 (7%)	5 (3%)	10 (6%)	4.31	1.08
We engage the use of information technology to enrich our worship service	109 (59%)	41 (22%)	15 (8%)	11 (6%)	9 (5%)	4.24	1.34
Our service follows a rigid order (orderliness)	50 (27%)	42 (23%)	34 (18%)	39 (21%)	20 (11%)	3.34	1.36
Our church activities is more of a stereotype	36 (20%)	46 (25%)	26 (14%)	52 (28%)	25 (13%)	3.09	1.36
Preaching, teaching and exhortation are simple but profound	119 (64%)	41 (22%)	5 (3%)	6 (3%)	14 (8%)	4.32	1.18
Weighted Mean						4.13	

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Key: Regularly = 5 Sometimes/Occasionally = 4 Rarely = 3 Never = 2 Not sure = 1
(Average = 3)

Table 3 presents the dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference. To explain the portion on proclamation in the data collected, a benchmark of 3.0 was set. The decision was based on the fact that the average of the five responses was 3.0. The table reveals that all the items used to measure proclamation in dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference supports the idea that the worship experiences of congregations in the Lagos West Baptist Conference were usually contemporary and classical, inspirational and exciting with full use of technology with church attendees experiencing a non-stereotype orderly service. This is because all the 11 items used to capture proclamation dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference are having mean above the set bench mark of 3.0.

For instance, on the item which stated that: We use projector and TV screen to display hymns, responsive readings and bible text during worship services ($\bar{x} = 4.34$). We stream our worship services online ($\bar{x} = 3.85$). The pastor and other church leaders regularly use email and text messages to propagate the gospel, counsel with people and in praying for people ($\bar{x} = 4.02$). The pastor and other church leaders regularly use social media channels such as: *WhatsApp, twitter, Facebook, Telegram, Zoom, Microsoft Teams* and others to communicate with members ($\bar{x} = 4.68$), The pastor and other church leaders use telephone to connect with people on various needs ($\bar{x} = 4.57$), Our worship services are inspirational and exciting ($\bar{x} = 4.66$), Our worship service is contemporary and classical ($\bar{x} = 4.31$), We engage the use of information technology to enrich our worship service ($\bar{x} = 4.24$), Our service follows a rigid order ($\bar{x} = 3.34$), Our church activities is more of a stereotype ($\bar{x} = 3.09$), Preaching, teaching and exhortation are simple but profound ($\bar{x} = 4.32$).

Summarily, the weighted mean values of the eleven items or a grand mean of 4.13, were accepted as rated above the decision benchmark of 3.0. The finding shows that churches in Lagos West Baptist Conference practice innovation in the proclamation of the gospel, biblical message delivery and worship experiences of church attendees by utilizing information and communication gadgets such as projector, television, internet facilities, social media channels, telephone, text messaging, and electronic mail to enhance the worship experience of church attendees.

Research Question Two: What are the dimensions, dynamism and innovation processes in the worship experience of congregation within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?

Table 4: Dimensions, Dynamism and Innovation of the Process in the Worship Experiences of Churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference (N=146)

Process	SA	A	NS	D	SD	mean	Standard
We change our congregation structure to meet the changing needs	55 (29%)	72 (39%)	27 (15%)	22 (12%)	9 (5%)	3.7 7	1.1 4
We re-arrange our ministry parastatals to meet changing needs of congregation	48 (26%)	90 (49%)	24 (13%)	15 (8%)	8 (4%)	3.8 4	1.0 4
We accommodate and encourage lay leadership in church ministry	65 (35%)	83 (45%)	19 (10%)	8 (4%)	10 (5%)	4.0 0	1.0 6
We regularly include and encourage active participation of our youths in church ministry	107 (58%)	69 (37%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	4.4 9	0.7 5
We develop our youths for active participation in church activities and ministries	116 (63%)	59 (32%)	5 (3%)	3 (2%)	2 (1%)	4.5 4	0.7 3
We develop our methods and techniques for ministry expressions to respond to changing needs and to enhance effectiveness.	75 (41%)	83 (45%)	16 (9%)	6 (3%)	5 (2%)	4.1 7	0.9 2
We have a defined process for the things we do in our church	102 (55%)	69 (37%)	8 (4%)	2 (1%)	4 (2%)	4.4 2	0.8 1
Our church vision statement is clear to the members	109 (59%)	53 (28%)	18 (10%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	4.4 2	0.8 4
As a Church, we have a clear strategy for how we do ministry	85 (46%)	82 (44%)	14 (7%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	4.3 2	0.7 8
We document and record the process being followed in our ministry activities	91 (49%)	71 (38%)	14 (8%)	5 (3%)	4 (2%)	4.3 0	0.8 9
Weighted Mean						4.2 3	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Key: Strong Agreed = 5 Agreed = 4 Not Sure = 3 Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1
 Average = 3.0

Table 4 further presents the dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference. To explain the portion on process in the

data collected, a benchmark of 3.0 was set. The decision was based on the fact that the average of the five responses was 3.0. The table showed that all the items used to measure process innovation in churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference revealed the presence of changing methods and techniques in the internal workings and ministries engagements adopted within the congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference. This is because all the 10 items used to capture different dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference in term of process had mean above the set bench mark of 3.0.

For instance, on the item which stated that: We change our congregation structure to meet the changing needs ($\bar{x} = 3.77$). We re-arrange our ministry parastatals to meet changing needs of congregation ($\bar{x} = 3.84$), we accommodate and encourage lay leadership in church ministry ($\bar{x} = 4.00$). we regularly include and encourage active participation of our youths in church ministry ($\bar{x} = 4.49$), we develop our youths for active participation in church activities and ministries ($\bar{x} = 4.54$), we develop our methods and techniques for ministry expressions to respond to changing needs and to enhance effectiveness ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), we have a defined process for the things we do in our church ($\bar{x} = 4.42$), our church vision statement is clear to the members ($\bar{x} = 4.42$), as a church, we have a clear strategy for how we do ministry ($\bar{x} = 4.32$), we document and record the process being followed in our ministry activities ($\bar{x} = 4.30$).

In summary the weighted mean values of the ten items or grand mean Of 4.23 was accepted as rated above decision bench mark of 3.0. This indicates that, there is a strong presence of process innovation, constant restructuring and effective documentation of processes with full inclusion of different strata of the congregations in congregational activities within the Lagos West Baptist Conference churches.

Research Question Three: What are the dimensions and types of innovations towards handling member’s welfare as part of worship experience among Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?

Table 5: Dimensions and Areas of Innovation in the Handling of Members’ Welfare as part of Worship Experiences of Churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference (N=146)

People	Always	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Not Sure	Mean	Stand Dev
Our church is creative in responding to the needs of the people	137 (74%)	35 (19%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	9 (5%)	4.5 7	0.9 4
Our church offer solutions to the problems of the people	132 (71%)	45 (24%)	4 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	4.6 3	0.7 1
Our church encourages members’ growth through reminder on personal spiritual disciplines and encouragement to participate in discipleship programs.	149 (81%)	27 (15%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	4.7 0	0.7 6

Our church encourages members to invite new people to church	153 (83%)	24 (13%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	4.7 4	0.7 2
We have a creative way of receiving new worshippers in our church	127 (69%)	37 (20%)	11 (6%)	3 (2%)	7 (4%)	4.4 8	0.9 6
Our church follow-up new church attendees by someone visiting them	117 (63%)	45 (24%)	9 (5%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)	4.3 8	1.0 6
We follow up new church attendees through the use of technology, i.e. emails, telephone, Facebook etc.	97 (52%)	52 (28%)	16 (9%)	5 (3%)	14 (8%)	4.1 7	1.1 8
This church is sensitive to the need of its members	138 (75%)	36 (20%)	7 (4%)	0 (0%)	4 (2%)	4.6 4	0.7 5
The church have special prayer/fasting sessions for different kinds of members' needs	121 (65%)	50 (27%)	8 (4%)	1 (1%)	5 (3%)	4.5 2	0.8 4
We make provisions for medical care for members who may have need of it.	99 (54%)	59 (32%)	12 (7%)	6 (3%)	9 (5%)	4.2 6	1.0 5
Weighted Mean						4.5	
						1	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Key: Always = 5 Occasionally = 4 Rarely = 3 Never = 2 Not sure = 1
 Average = 3.0

Furthermore, Table 5 presents the dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference. To explain the portion on people in the data collected, a benchmark of 3.0 was set. The decision was based on the fact that the average of the five responses was 3.0. The table reveals that all the items used to measure people as a dimensions and areas of innovation in worship experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference showed that the organizational principles and processes in the congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches favoured members' welfare in creative way, offer solutions to members needs and engage in spiritual and physical activities that benefited the congregations. This is because all the 10 items used to capture people dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference had mean above the set bench mark of 3.0.

For instance, on the item which stated that: Our church is creative in responding to the needs of the people ($\bar{x} = 4.57$), our church offer of solutions to the problems of the people ($\bar{x} = 4.63$), our church encourages members' growth through reminder on personal spiritual disciplines and encouragement to participate in discipleship programs ($\bar{x} = 4.70$). our church encourages members to invite new people to church ($\bar{x} = 4.74$), we have a creative way of receiving new worshippers in our church ($\bar{x} = 4.48$), our church follow up new church attendees by someone visiting them ($\bar{x} = 4.38$), we follow up new church attendees through the use of technology, i.e. emails, telephone, Facebook etc. ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), this church is sensitive to the need

of its members ($\bar{x} = 4.64$), the church have special prayer/fasting sessions for different kinds of needs ($\bar{x} = 4.52$), we make provisions for medical care for members who may have need of it ($\bar{x} = 4.26$).

In summary, the weighted mean values of the 10 items or grand mean of 4.51 was accepted as rated above decision bench mark of 3.0. The finding indicates that church leaders within Lagos West Baptist Conference churches explore different creative approaches and innovations in dealing with physical and spiritual needs and welfare of church members.

Research Question Four: What are the dimensions and types of innovation towards the demonstration of Christian character and member's conduct among the congregation within Lagos West Baptist Conference Churches?

Table 6: Dimensions and Areas of Innovation in the Demonstration of Christian Character

and Conduct of Members within the Lagos West Baptist Conference (N=146)

Presence (Christian Character and Conduct)	SA	A	NS	D	SD	Mean	Stand Deviat
The conduct and behavior of our church members is typical of a disciple of Christ, which will always minister to the unchurched	59 (32%)	99 (54%))	18 (10%)	6 (3%)	3 (2%)	4.1 1	0.8 3
The increasing attendance in our church is traceable to the lifestyle of our members	43 (23%)	92 (50%))	32 (17%)	11 (6%)	7 (4%)	3.8 3	0.9 8
The unchurched in our community would gladly join our church because of the conduct and behavior of our members.	54 (29%)	94 (51%))	30 (16%)	2 (1%)	5 (3%)	4.0 8	0.8 6
Our church member participates in congregational programs associated with the community	61 (33%)	88 (48%))	27 (15%)	3 (2%)	6 (3%)	4.0 5	0.9 1
Our members participate in congregationally sponsored community activities such as literacy programs, medical outreach and welfare initiatives.	54 (29%)	77 (42%))	36 (20%)	5 (3%)	13 (7%)	3.8 3	1.1 0
Weighted Mean:						3.9 8	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Key: Strongly Agreed = 5 Agreed = 4 Not Sure = 3 Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1
 Average = 3

Table 6 presents the dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within Lagos West Baptist Conference. To explain the portion on presence in the data collected, a benchmark of 3.0 was set. The decision was based on the fact that the average of the five responses was 3.0. The table established that all the items used to measure presence dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist

Conference indicated strong presence of Christ lifestyle and community presence in the church environment. This is because all the 10 items used to measure the presence dimensions and areas of innovation in the experiences of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference had mean above the set bench mark of 3.0.

For instance, on the item which stated that: The conduct and behavior of our church members is typical of a disciple of Christ, which will always minister to the unchurched ($\bar{x} = 4.11$), the increasing attendance in our church is traceable to the lifestyle of our members ($\bar{x} = 3.83$), the unchurched in our community would gladly join our church because of the conduct and behavior of our members ($\bar{x} = 4.08$). our church member participates in congregational programs associated with the community ($\bar{x} = 4.05$), our members participate in congregationally sponsored community activities such as literacy programs, medical outreach and welfare initiatives ($\bar{x} = 3.83$). The weighted mean values of the five items or grand mean which is (3.98) on the table was accepted as rated above decision benchmark of 3.0.

In summary, this finding indicates that the congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference demonstrates high level of Christian character and conducts within the church community and participates effectively in organized church programmes, community programmes, through Christian lifestyles and behaviour which enhances worship experiences of church attendees and their immediate community.

Summarily, findings revealed that leaders in Lagos West Baptist Conference displayed strong innovative abilities in quick, effective and timely responses to the outbreak of Covid 19 by migrating to online worship services with the use of ICT gadgets which ensured continuity in worship experiences of congregations in the Lagos West Baptist Conference during the Covid-19 outbreaks experiences and afterwards. By this, the churches were able to keep, sustained and increased membership.

To further answer research question three, responses from key personality interview revealed that leaders in Lagos West Baptist Conference are innovative and dynamic leaders. Responses also shows excellent level of creativity and innovation in church worship services, use of equipment, people management, and communication. The responses also highlighted the leaders' practices, creativity and innovation during COVID'19 outbreaks which ensures that church programmes were not suspended but migrated to online/virtual services through the use of information and communication technology tools and resources.

Hence, in totality, the Lagos West Baptist Conference Congregations demonstrated a high level of multiplicity of the dimensions in the areas of innovations in their worship experiences through proclamation of the gospel (Grand $\bar{x} = 4.13$), biblical message delivery leading to a clear understanding of the worship process among the attendees (Grand $\bar{x} = 4.23$) arisen from church leaders' explorations of different creative approaches and innovations in dealing with the diverse needs and welfare of church members (Grand $\bar{x} = 4.51$) culminating in a high level of Christian Character and conducts within the church community (Grand $\bar{x} = 3.98$). This was exceptionally demonstrated during COVID'19 outbreaks (Grand $\bar{x} = 3.65$) which ensures that church programs were not suspended but migrated to online/virtual services through the use of information and communication technology tools and resources.

Ultimately, the findings for research question three revealed that there were different dimensions and diverse areas of innovation in the worship experience of churches within the Lagos West Baptist Conference in relation to: (a) proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and biblical message delivery as part of worship experiences among the congregation. (b) clear understanding of the process in the worship experience of the congregation (c) dealing with needs and welfare of church members (d) demonstration of high level of Christian

character and conduct; and, (e) innovative approaches to worship experiences and church administration during the COVID-19 outbreaks as well as congregational vitality afterwards.

Discussion of findings

Findings revealed that church leaders in Lagos West Baptist Conference deployed different types of innovation through new ideas and methods that enhanced their ministries. The study highlighted different types of innovations being initiated by the church leaders of Lagos West Baptist Conference. These included experimenting with new ideas that enhanced the congregation's vitality and ministry, introducing new methods, trying out new things that could bring about effectiveness in the order of service and administration, designing new ways of interacting with one another, create new level of engagement with the community, regularly develop new methods of sharing responsibilities, regularly comes up with new ways to organizes the church ministry department, application of information and communication technologies in the administration and worship services of the congregations, and always find new ways of dealing effectively with the community and other church bodies, among others. This established that church leaders and their practices in Lagos West Baptist Conference are creative and innovative, which is one major factor for the growth and vitality of the congregations.

These practices are compared with the innovative capabilities of different great transformational leaders in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament contains stories of leaders: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Joshua, Saul, David, Nehemiah and the Prophets. Each of them was raised for a different reason with an overarching purpose to bring restoration of God's image in everyone and everything, but they all displayed different leadership characteristics. The New Testament recorded many transformational leaders who exhibited great characteristics and practices. These include Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, James, and Timothy, among many others.

It is established from the findings that leaders in the Lagos West Baptist Conference are fulfilling the agenda of God as seen from the biblical survey of leaders and leadership themes in the Old and New Testaments. God's purpose for leadership is to lead people from where they are to where God wants them to be (Clinton, 2010), grow them into Christlikeness so that they can participate in the great commission (Matthew, 28:18-20), bright motives and biblical methods as inspired by the Holy Spirit, equip; empower, correct, train, coach, encourage, confront, and development their followers through establishment of good relationship, interpersonal and effective communication, creativity and innovation, and remain visionary as they lead others in the pursuance of the truth.

Finding from this study agreed with the definition and concepts of innovation as highlighted by Evans (1991). According to the author, innovation is the ability to discover new relationships, see things from new perspectives and form new combinations from existing concepts. Simiyu (2013) also established that innovation has to do with successfully implementing creative ideas within an organization. Furthermore, Horth and Vehar (2014) stated that innovation is creating and implementing something new that adds value to the organization and its people. Dunaetz (2021) noted that the most visible forms of innovation in churches are basically new programs and activities but may also include the introduction of new technologies, as was common during the COVID-19 pandemic, new administrative structure (such as adding staff), or new processes (such as determining who will be on a church board and other forms of leadership selection.

Covarrubias, Dunaetz and Dykes (2021) found evidence that innovativeness increased church commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors stated that the perceived innovations strengthened relationships and church commitment during the pandemic. It was concluded that innovativeness will continue to be very important, and church leaders should strive to increase it through vision casting, leadership selection, developing organizational openness, and especially through introducing new, creative and technological-based programs and activities that create and solidify relationships between the members of the congregations, environment and other congregations.

In addition, Poole (2008) supported this finding, quoting Genesis chapter one, verse one to five and Jeremiah chapter thirty-one, verse thirty-one to thirty-three. He stated that innovation is doing new or old things in a new way. The author examined innovation in God's creation and new creation. In Jeremiah, God promised a new way to restore people's relationship with Him, broken by disobedience. God's plans and purpose for mankind remained the same, but He did find a new way of reaching out to His people. Poole further established that change is part of life and that older people should create opportunities to discuss innovative ideas, especially from the young people, to develop responses to the challenges that they will face later in life. However, these innovations must be consistent with God's unchangeable purposes.

Summary of findings

The summary of the findings are as follows:

1. churches in Lagos West Baptist Conference practices innovation in the proclamation of the gospel, biblical message delivery and worship experiences of church attendees by utilising information and communication gadgets such as projector, television, internet facilities, social media channels, telephone, text messaging, and electronic mail to enhance the worship experience of church attendees.
2. There is dynamism, innovation and a clear understanding of the process in the worship experience of church members within the Lagos West Baptist Conference.
3. church leaders within Lagos West Baptist Conference churches explore different creative approaches and innovations in dealing with church members' physical and spiritual needs and welfare.
4. There is a high level of character conduct within the church community through church programmes using different areas of innovation to enhance the worship experiences of church attendees and their immediate community.
5. churches in Lagos West Baptist conferences embrace open innovation, process innovation, and organisational innovation.
6. leaders in Lagos West Baptist Conference displayed strong innovative abilities in quick, effective and timely responses to the outbreak of Covid 19 by migrating to online worship services with the use of ICT gadgets, which ensured continuity in worship experiences of congregations in the Lagos West Baptist Conference during the Covid-19 outbreaks experiences and afterwards. By this, the churches could keep, sustain and increase membership.

Conclusion

This study explored the dimensions of innovation and worship experience among congregations in Lagos West Baptist Conference, South-Western, Nigeria. The findings reveal a significant relationship between innovative leadership practices, worship experience and

church growth. Hence, the Church should prioritize innovation and participatory worship practices to enhance the worship experience of the congregants in the congregations of Lagos West Baptist Conference.

Recommendations

1. The leaders and congregations should leverage more on technology and digital platforms by investing, maintaining, and expanding the church's online presence, including websites, social media, and virtual worship services, to reach a broader audience.
2. Churches should offer ongoing training programs, collaboration and partnership for their leaders to keep them updated with the latest technological advancement and innovative practices to remain adaptable and effective in their roles.
3. Leaders are to remain spiritually, culturally, and traditionally sensitive while developing and maintaining being contextually adaptable and flexible. This will help to recognize the diverse needs and challenges within the local landscape and how they affect their locality and congregation to ensure adequate responses through tailored strategies and plans.

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