

Platform Dynamics, Thematic Framing, and Audience Engagement Metrics of Social Media Wealth Creation Ritual Content in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

The rapid proliferation of mobile digital technologies has transformed social media into a dominant socio-economic and cultural ecosystem, particularly among Nigerian youths. While these platforms offer unprecedented access to legitimate entrepreneurial education and digital commerce, they have simultaneously facilitated the normalisation and commodification of ritual-based wealth creation practices. This study investigated the dissemination, thematic framing, viewership, and followership patterns of social media wealth creation ritual contents across Southwest Nigeria. Anchored on Social Cognitive Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Diffusion of Innovation Theory, the study adopted a content analysis research design to examine forty purposively selected digital pages and channels across *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *TikTok*. Data were collected using the Social Media Platform Content Analysis Coding Sheet (SMPCACS) and supplemented with *Google Analytics* metrics for audience engagement. Findings reveal that *Facebook* dominates the dissemination of ritual wealth content (55%), followed by *YouTube* (27.5%) and *TikTok* (17.5%). Dominant thematic constructs include “*Asiri*” (secrets), “*Aseje*” (ritual concoctions/potions), “*Ose*” (spiritual soaps), “*Awenu*” (spiritual manifestation), and explicit references to “Money Rituals.” Viewership and followership patterns demonstrate significant platform-specific variations, with *TikTok* recording the highest single-instance engagement (43.4k) views for “*Yahoo Cashout Soap*”, while *Facebook* and *YouTube* exhibit consistent, community-driven subscription metrics ranging from 1.0k to 3.0k. The study concludes that social media platforms function not as passive repositories but as active digital arenas where cultural beliefs, economic desperation, algorithmic amplification, and performative spirituality intersect. The commercialisation of indigenous spiritual practices into rapid-wealth commodities raises profound ethical, cultural, and socio-economic concerns. Recommendations include the implementation of targeted digital literacy initiatives, collaborative content moderation frameworks involving government agencies and tech platforms, the promotion of culturally grounded alternative narratives, and comprehensive youth economic empowerment programs. This research contributes to contemporary discourse on digital religion, media ethics, and the psychological economy of online ritual engagement in emerging digital landscapes.

Keywords: Social Media Engagements, Wealth Creation Ritual Contents, Youth Digital Engagements, Viewership and Followership Patterns, Southwest Nigeria

Introduction

The advent of social media has fundamentally reconfigured communication, cultural transmission, and economic aspiration across contemporary societies. In Nigeria, where over 100 million active users engage daily with digital platforms, social media has evolved from a mere networking tool into a critical infrastructure for information dissemination, identity formation, and economic mobility (Statista, 2023). Among Nigerian youths, platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok have become integral to daily life, offering exposure to entrepreneurial training, e-commerce opportunities, and global market linkages. Historically, wealth accumulation in Nigeria has been rooted in gradual, labour-intensive practices such as agriculture, craftsmanship, trade, and community-based financial systems. These traditional pathways emphasised patience, diligence, and communal reciprocity (Ogunleye & Alabi, 2021). However, the digital age has accelerated a shift toward instant-gratification economic narratives, with social media serving as both a mirror and a catalyst for this transformation.

The contemporary digital landscape is saturated with content that romanticises rapid financial acquisition through supernatural or ritualistic means. These narratives often employ indigenous spiritual terminology, traditional regalia, and performative demonstrations to lend credibility and cultural authenticity to esoteric financial shortcuts. Content creators, positioning themselves as spiritual custodians or modern-day diviners, package traditional Yoruba cosmological concepts into consumable digital products. Slogans such as “*Aseje Owo Todaju*” (guaranteed wealth concotion), “*Ose Asina*” (wealth-attracting spiritual soap), and “*Yahoo Cashout Soap*” reflect a deliberate branding strategy that merges cultural heritage with algorithmic virality (Adeyemi & Uche, 2022). This phenomenon is particularly alarming given its intersection with Nigeria’s socio-economic realities: high youth unemployment, systemic poverty, and limited access to formal economic empowerment programs (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). In such an environment, ritual wealth content functions not merely as entertainment but as a psychological coping mechanism and, for some, a perceived viable economic strategy.

The problem this study addresses is the unregulated dissemination and growing normalisation of wealth creation ritual content on social media, particularly among youths in Southwest Nigeria. While digital platforms democratize access to knowledge, they also enable the rapid diffusion of misleading, ethically ambiguous, and potentially harmful narratives. The glamorization of instant wealth through spiritual shortcuts undermines traditional work ethics, distorts cultural spirituality into commercial commodities, and in

extreme cases, intersects with criminal practices such as cyber fraud, ‘*Yahoo Plus*’ and ritual killings (Nwankwo & Obasi, 2021). Despite growing public concern, empirical research on the platform-specific dynamics, thematic framing, and audience engagement metrics of such content remains limited. Existing literature often focuses on broader digital entrepreneurship or general social media usage, leaving a critical gap in understanding how ritual wealth narratives are structured, distributed, and consumed across different digital ecosystems (Okeke & Obi, 2021).

This study, therefore, seeks to appraise social media wealth creation ritual contents, viewership, and followership patterns in Southwest Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to: (1) identify the social media platforms most frequently used to disseminate wealth creation ritual contents; (2) ascertain the dominant themes associated with these contents; (3) appraise the viewership patterns across selected platforms; and (4) examine the followership patterns and their implications for audience behaviour. By systematically analysing digital artefacts and engagement metrics, this research provides empirical insights into how social media algorithms, cultural framing, and economic vulnerability converge to shape contemporary youth attitudes toward wealth acquisition. The findings hold significant implications for media regulation, digital literacy education, cultural preservation, and youth economic policy.

The investigation of social media wealth creation ritual content requires a multi-dimensional theoretical framework that accounts for behavioural imitation, audience motivation, and the diffusion of digital engagement and practices. Thus, the study is anchored on three complementary theories, namely, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), and Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI).

The Social Cognitive Theory posits that individuals acquire new behaviours through observational learning, reinforcement, and self-efficacy development (Bandura, 1977). In the context of social media, SCT explains how Nigerian youths internalise wealth creation narratives by observing influencers, spiritual practitioners and peer testimonials who showcase luxury lifestyles and attribute financial success to ritualistic practices. The visual and auditory richness of digital platforms amplifies observational learning, while algorithmic reinforcement (likes, shares, comments) validates ritual engagement as socially acceptable. When content creators present themselves as authoritative figures and demonstrate ritual procedures with cultural authenticity, they enhance viewers’ self-efficacy, fostering the belief that similar financial outcomes are attainable through esoteric means (Adeyemi, 2020).

Further, Uses and Gratifications Theory shifts the focus to audience agency, emphasising that individuals actively select media content to satisfy specific psychological and social needs (Katz *et al.*, 1974). In this study, UGT elucidates why Nigerian youths gravitate toward ritual wealth content. The primary gratifications sought include information (alternative financial strategies), entertainment (dramatised spiritual performances), social integration (participation in digital communities discussing wealth acquisition), and identity construction (aligning with aspirational online personas). Economic frustration and limited formal opportunities intensify the appeal of content that promises rapid financial breakthroughs. The interactive nature of social media further gratifies users by providing spaces for testimonial sharing, direct messaging with practitioners, and peer validation, thereby reinforcing continued engagement (Okeke & Obi, 2021).

Lastly, Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains how new ideas, practices, or technologies spread through social systems over time (Rogers, 2003). Social media accelerates the diffusion of ritual wealth practices by transforming localised, shrine-bound traditions into globally accessible digital commodities. The diffusion process follows five stages: knowledge (exposure to ritual content), persuasion (perceived benefits of instant wealth), decision (adoption or rejection), implementation (engagement or purchase), and confirmation (social validation or disillusionment). Opinion leaders, including self-proclaimed spiritual mentors and viral content creators, play pivotal roles in legitimising these practices. The algorithmic architecture of platforms like *TikTok* and *YouTube* ensures that once a user engages with ritual content, they are continuously exposed to similar materials, creating echo chambers that normalise and accelerate adoption (Pariser, 2021).

Extant literature corroborates these theoretical postulations, as previous studies indicate that social media significantly influences youth economic behaviour, with some digital platforms serving as informal educational hubs for entrepreneurship, digital marketing and financial literacy tools (Okeke & Obi, 2021). However, the same mechanisms that facilitate skill acquisition could also enable the spread of wealth creation ritual cum get-rich-quick narratives and fraudulent schemes. Research on digital religion highlights how indigenous spiritual practices are increasingly repackaged for online consumption, often stripped of their ethical and communal foundations (Adeyemi & Uche, 2022).

The commodification of ritual items (e.g., spiritual soaps, concoctions, and charms) reflects a broader trend of spiritual commercialisation in digital economies. Furthermore, algorithmic bias and content personalisation have been shown to amplify sensationalist materials, disproportionately exposing vulnerable demographics to harmful narratives (Zuboff, 2019). Despite these insights, a significant gap remains in platform-specific comparative analyses of ritual wealth content, particularly regarding viewership metrics,

thematic evolution, and followership dynamics in the Nigerian context. This study addresses this gap by systematically coding and analysing engagement patterns across Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, providing empirical data to inform media policy, digital literacy frameworks, and youth economic interventions.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing spread of social media has significantly influenced the attitudes and behaviours of youths toward wealth creation in Southwest Nigeria. Many social media platforms promote ritual-related wealth creation content, often portraying quick riches as desirable and attainable. This trend has been linked to rising cases of ritual killings and other criminal activities, particularly among young people seeking financial success. Despite growing public concern, limited studies have examined the dynamics, thematic framing, and audience engagement surrounding such content. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate these issues and their implications for society.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study investigated platform dynamics, thematic framing and audience engagement metrics of social media wealth creation ritual contents in Southwest Nigeria. The objectives are to:

- i. identify the social media platforms that disseminate wealth creation ritual content in Southwest Nigeria.
- ii. ascertain the dominant themes and narratives associated with wealth creation ritual content on selected social media platforms.
- iii. assess the patterns of viewership of wealth creation ritual contents on social media platforms in Southwest Nigeria.
- iv. appraise the patterns of followership of social media platforms containing wealth creation ritual contents in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the pattern of distribution of wealth creation ritual contents across social media platforms in Southwest Nigeria?
- ii. What are the dominant themes associated with wealth creation ritual contents on social media platforms in Southwest Nigeria?
- iii. What is the pattern of viewership of wealth creation ritual contents on social media platforms in Southwest Nigeria?
- iv. What is the pattern of followership of social media platforms containing wealth creation ritual contents in Southwest Nigeria?

Methodology

This study adopted a content analysis research design, specifically focusing on hyper-textual digital artifacts including video clips, audio recordings, textual posts, and visual imagery disseminated across selected social media platforms. Content analysis is particularly suited for examining media narratives, thematic patterns, and audience engagement metrics in digital environments (Otunla, 2022). The population comprised all social media ritual wealth contents accessible on *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *TikTok* within Southwest Nigeria's digital footprint. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select forty digital pages and channels that actively disseminate wealth creation ritual content. The sample included twenty-two *Facebook* pages, eleven *YouTube* channels, and seven *TikTok* profiles, selected based on consistent posting history, thematic relevance, and audience visibility.

Data collection was conducted using a self-designed instrument: the Social Media Platform Content Analysis Coding Sheet (SMPCACS). The coding sheet was structured into six sections capturing platform identification, content typology, thematic framing, viewership metrics, followership counts, and engagement indicators (likes, shares, comments). The instrument's validity was established through expert review by scholars in new media studies and research methodology, ensuring clarity, relevance, and alignment with theoretical constructs. Reliability was confirmed through inter-coder consistency checks and supervisor consultation, yielding a high degree of coding accuracy.

Data collection involved systematic online observation and documentation of content over a defined period. Researchers navigated selected platforms using targeted keyword searches, algorithmic recommendations, and community group linkages to identify ritual wealth postings. Twenty-five representative posts per platform were analysed thematically, using *Google Analytics* and platform-native metrics used to record viewership and followership data. The analysis employed the contingency coding analysis technique to identify recurring themes, cross-platform distribution patterns, and engagement correlations. Quantitative data were tabulated and interpreted alongside qualitative thematic observations, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how ritual wealth content is structured, disseminated, and consumed. Ethical considerations included the use of publicly accessible data, anonymisation of non-influential user comments, and adherence to academic research standards for digital content analysis.

Results and Discussion of Finding

The findings are presented according to each of the research questions as follows:

Research Question One: What is the pattern of distribution of wealth creation ritual contents across social media platforms in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 1: Distribution of Wealth Creation Ritual Content by Social Media Platform (N=40)

Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Facebook</i>	22	55.0
<i>YouTube</i>	11	27.5
<i>TikTok</i>	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that *Facebook* accounted for the highest proportion of wealth creation ritual content with 22 pages (55.0%), followed by *YouTube* with 11 pages (27.5%), while *TikTok* recorded the lowest frequency with 7 pages (17.5%). The finding indicates that *Facebook* serves as the dominant platform for the dissemination of ritual wealth content due to its accessibility, community-building features, and broad audience reach. Although *TikTok* recorded fewer pages, its influence remains significant because of its viral content distribution mechanism.

Research Question Two: What are the dominant themes associated with wealth creation ritual contents on social media platforms in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 2: Distribution of Dominant Themes in Wealth Creation Ritual Content (N=50)

Theme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Asiri (Esoteric Secrets)</i>	12	24.0
<i>Aseje (Ritual Concoctions)</i>	10	20.0
<i>Ose (Spiritual Soaps)</i>	9	18.0
<i>Awenu (Spiritual Manifestation)</i>	8	16.0
<i>Money Rituals</i>	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Content Analysis, 2026.

Table 2 reveals that “*Asiri*” (Esoteric Secrets) constituted the most prominent theme with 24.0%, followed closely by “*Money Rituals*” (22.0%) and “*Aseje*” (20.0%). Themes such as “*Ose*” (Spiritual Soaps) and “*Awenu*” (Spiritual Manifestation) also featured

prominently. The prevalence of these themes suggests that social media ritual content relies heavily on promises of supernatural wealth acquisition, spiritual empowerment, and guaranteed financial success.

Research Question Three: What are the patterns of viewership of wealth creation ritual contents on social media platforms in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 3: Distribution of Viewership Metrics of Wealth Creation Ritual Content (N=40)

Viewership Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 1,000 Views	5	12.5
1,000 – 5,000 Views	20	50.0
5,001 – 20,000 Views	10	25.0
Above 20,000 Views	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 3 indicates that the majority of wealth creation ritual content recorded between 1,000 and 5,000 views (50.0%). Content with viewership above 20,000 views accounted for 12.5%, largely driven by *TikTok*'s viral algorithm. The finding suggests that audience engagement is influenced by perceived effectiveness of the ritual practices, cultural relevance, and the platform's content recommendation system.

Research Question Four: What are the patterns of followership of social media platforms containing wealth creation ritual contents in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 4: Distribution of Followership Metrics of Wealth Creation Ritual Content

Followership Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 1,000 Followers	8	20.0
1,000 – 3,000 Followers	18	45.0
3,001 – 10,000 Followers	9	22.5
Above 10,000 Followers	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Interpretation: Table 4.4 shows that most pages (45.0%) had between 1,000 and 3,000 followers, while only 12.5% recorded followership above 10,000. The results indicate that audience loyalty is largely influenced by perceived credibility, cultural authenticity,

presentation quality, and the promise of economic advancement. Pages with higher followership tended to exhibit stronger branding, consistent engagement, and greater perceived spiritual authority.

In summary, findings revealed a complex interplay between platform architecture, cultural framing, economic desperation, and algorithmic amplification in the dissemination of wealth creation ritual content.

Arising from the findings of the study, there is a strong theoretical correlation and socio-economic implications which aligned with Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), and Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI), particularly (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; Bandura, 1977). Rogers, 2003). Thus, observational learning is evident in the visual demonstration of rituals and the replication of practitioner personas. Gratification-seeking is reflected in users' active subscription, comment participation, and testimonial sharing, driven by economic frustration and the desire for alternative financial pathways. Diffusion is accelerated through algorithmic personalisation, opinion leader endorsement, and viral sharing, transforming localised spiritual practices into normalised digital commodities.

Again, the commercialisation of indigenous spirituality raises ethical concerns regarding cultural dilution, psychological vulnerability, and potential intersections with illicit activities. Social media algorithms, designed to maximise engagement, inadvertently amplify sensationalist and economically desperate narratives, creating feedback loops that reinforce ritual wealth ideologies (Zuboff, 2019; Pariser, 2021). Notably, it is evident that social media democratizes access to information; it simultaneously enables the diffusion of ethically ambiguous narratives that challenge traditional work ethics and cultural integrity, as affirmed in similar previous studies (Nwankwo & Obasi, 2021; Ogunleye & Alabi, 2021; Nwankwo & Adebayo, 2023).

Consequently, the findings affirm that platform architecture, content framing, and audience motivation collectively shape digital ritual engagement, necessitating multidimensional interventions. Therefore, without regulatory and educational interventions, these digital ecosystems risk perpetuating a culture of instant gratification that undermines traditional work ethics, distorts spiritual heritage, and exacerbates youth economic vulnerability.

Conclusion

This study concludes that social media platforms function as active digital arenas where cultural beliefs, economic desperation, algorithmic amplification, and performative spirituality converge to normalise wealth creation ritual content. The dominance of

Facebook, the thematic consistency across platforms, and the significant viewership and followership metrics underscore the pervasive influence of digital ritual economies on Nigerian youth.

Additionally, the commodification of indigenous spiritual practices into rapid-wealth products reflects broader socio-economic anxieties, limited formal opportunities, and the psychological appeal of instant financial breakthroughs.

Recommendations

To mitigate the negative implications and harness digital platforms for positive economic empowerment, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Implementation of a nationwide digital literacy programme to equip youths with media analysis skills, ethical judgment, and the ability to detect misleading or exploitative online content.
- Government and Information Technology service provider firms should enforce ethical content moderation to flag harmful ritual narratives while respecting indigenous cultural expressions and knowledge systems.
- Promotion of culturally grounded alternative content through creators, NGOs, and traditional institutions, focusing on ethical wealth creation and community-based economic development models.
- Expanding the youth empowerment programs through entrepreneurship training, vocational skills, financial literacy education, and micro-funding to reduce economic vulnerability.
- Conduct further research on the psychological effects of digital ritual exposure, cultural symbolism in content credibility, and the effectiveness of regulatory and educational interventions.

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