

Comparative Analysis of Digital Media Usage in Hungarian Religious Communities

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Abstract

The article demonstrates comparative research of the digital media usage of a particular Hungarian youth Catholic community (777 Community) and a Hungarian Krishna-Conscious Believers community. The first step is the descriptive stage which tends to focus on documenting how the investigated two groups were described or described themselves as religious communities online. After that, the intersection of online and offline religious communities' practices and discourses will be described (highlight – rituals, community, identity, authority, and presence). How religious communities shape and renegotiate technological platforms according to their values, patterns, and the construction of their identity and presence in the public sphere will be observed. Attention should be given first to what religious Internet users do online, which will be revealed by the uses and gratifications approach. Following this, by using the RSST method to identify how these communities interpret and perceive these practices in relation to their broader religious and social identities. In conclusion, we can compare different value-based strategies and approaches within these two investigated religious communities.

Keywords: Digital Media Usage; Religious Communities; Religious Social Shaping of Technology; Social Media

INTRODUCTION

The following overview of current literature provides both a framework and a context for the study beginning with exploring the RSST theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory which serve a foundation to the work as they help to unfold the relationship between social media usage and religious communities.

Religious Social Shaping of Technology

The formation of religious communities is influenced but not determined by contemporary social contexts and traditional and new media. Modifying the theory of technological determinism we think that the media technology only encourages certain new community forms and sense of presence but doesn't determine them strictly (Cheong et al., 2012; Hoover, 2012). The theory of *Religious-Social Shaping of Technology* (RSST) provides a useful analytical frame for the research. Within the *Social Shaping of Technology Theory* (SST) the technology is seen as a social process and the possibility is recognized that social groups may shape technologies towards their own ends, rather than the character of the technology determining use and outcomes. The *Religious-Social Shaping of Technology* (RSST) approach to technology as Heidi Campbell argues, involves asking questions about how technologies are conceived of, as well as used, in light of the religious community's beliefs, moral codes, and historical tradition of engagement with other forms of media technology (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999; Barzilai-Nahon & Barzilai, 2005). The RSST emphasizes that religious communities do not outright reject new forms of technology, but rather undergo a negotiation process to determine what the technology may affect in their community. Identifying the process by which religious groups evaluate a technology's potential benefits or hindrances is important because it

helps uncover the group's patterns of moral life and their visibility in the public sphere (Campbell, 2006, 2010, 2013).

The religious-social shaping of technology offers a new research method, suggesting four distinctive areas that should be explored and questioned to deeply understand a religious community's relationship towards traditional and new forms of media. These four stages of the religious-social shaping of technology approach are (1) investigating the history and tradition - setting the stage for contemporary negotiation with media, (2) social values - identifying the dominant social values of a religious community and their contemporary meanings and relevance, (3) negotiation process - during this process religious communities decide which aspects of a new technology they will accept, reject, or need to reconstruct in order for the technology to be compatible with the community's beliefs and way of life and finally (4) communal discourse of religious communities. During the evaluation of interviews a combination of reception and ritual theories of communication and media will be used (Andok, 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Carey, 2009).

Uses and Gratifications

The uses and gratifications approach was introduced in the 1970s in the media studies by Katz et al. (1973) to enable researchers to uncover how users actively seek to meet their needs from different media contents. Uses and gratifications research is particularly fruitful because it can also be adapted to the Computer Mediated Communication and social media. Social media is also used to reveal religious identities and religious communication and to encourage people to talk about their beliefs and spirituality. As a result of media convergence, digital media usage continue to be explored specifically using a uses and gratifications framework (Ratcliff et al., 2017). In their research, Papacharissi & Mendelson (2011) found nine distinct motives for using Facebook.

After the new Millennium, several scholars conducted uses and gratifications research on digital media among religious community members. In the religious content, scholars found people engage with religious websites for (1) religious entertainment and information, (2) to donate money and (3) to be involved, and (4) to explore and reinforce faith (Laney, 2005). Brubaker & Haigh (2017) also conducted a uses and gratification examination of religious content. Their findings indicate that the desire to minister to others drives Facebook to use it for religious reasons. Users accomplish this by sharing their faith-based beliefs and offering spiritual and emotional advice and support to those who share their faith and those who do not. Other motivations for engaging with faith-based material include personal benefits such as spiritual enlightenment, religious knowledge, and relaxing entertainment. Other researchers also investigate this topic from different user perspectives. Riezu (2014) investigated the topic with Spanish content, while Ratcliff et al. (2017) for US users. The presented research executes a systematic exploration of how religious communities engage with and respond to various media technologies, highlighting how views of religious authority and community influence these interactions and their social presence.

THE 777 YOUNG CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Attention should be given to the so-called 777 community; first, we will show something about the background of this community, and after that will evaluate the media usage in this religious group. The interest of the research is focused on the process of meaning-making viewed through an interpretive cultural studies framework and seeks the intersections between individual and social creation of meaning through media usage (Bögre, 2016). During the evaluation of interviews, the reception and ritual theories of communication and media were used (Andok, 2017; Carey, 2009).

The 777 group is an online community deriving from a blog site and still based on it. It presents current issues from a Christian viewpoint but is not connected officially to a particular church. The 777 blog was launched on April 4, 2016, by Zoltán Martí. The blog's name has a theological reference; the 777 symbolizes the Holy Trinity. The blog does not connect directly to a historical church; among the editors, we can also find Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Presbyterians. The blog operates as an association which can be financially supported. Their work is voluntary; everybody posts from their home. On Facebook, 35 thousand people like and follow them. They post 5-6 different content (texts, pictures, prayers) daily. Their YouTube channel was started on January 20, 2017, and they have 4,100 subscribers and from one thousand to twenty thousand viewers per video. On Instagram, they have 3,500 followers.

The 777 blog and community exist not only online but offline, too; the editors organize one event a month which is called OFFLINE. From this practice, we can see the phenomenon we mentioned and described previously as the intersection between offline and online surfaces of everyday life. As a founder suggests: "Let us break down the virtual walls." Technically it is a blog written by a group of Christian youth and two Catholic priests. All of them do this as volunteers, so although it is a second job, they are not paid for it. They are writing blog posts about the Bible, happiness, being a father, preparing for marriage, faith, everyday life, and so many other topics. The slogan is "Faith is not a private matter."

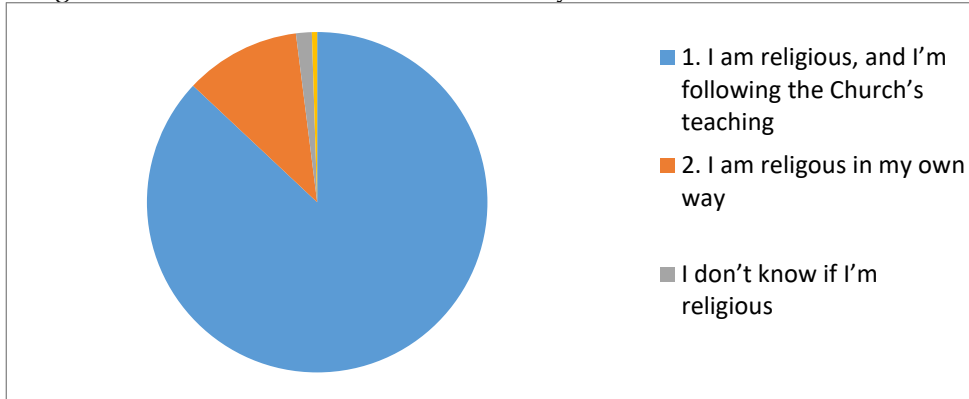
We carried out two research about the digital media usage of 777 community, one in February 2018, and the other in February 2019. Firstly, in-depth interviews were done with six bloggers; these interviews were semi-structured, containing both open and closed questions. The results were evaluated according to the methodology of the RSST theory (Campbell, 2010). Following this, two uses and

gratifications questionnaires were set up, the former contains 30 while the latter contains 44 questions. In the current article, the results of the second questionnaire will be presented. Participants ($n=604$) took on an online survey by Survio. The final sample was 63.4% female and 36.6% male. The median age of respondents was 32.7. The most significant number of participants are Roman Catholic Church (85.6%), followed by Reformed Church (5.3%), Unitarian (2%), Orthodox (1%), other (4.6%), and no answer (1.3%).

At first, the followers were asked about their religious self-classification and how they see their religiosity, using the categories suggested by Tomka (2002), although, in international surveys, Davie's (1990) categories are mainly used. While evaluating the religiosity of the 777 community members, the study relied on two other relevant articles by Bögre (2016) and Rosta & Hegedűs (2016). In the survey, the respondents were asked to choose one option from these four:

1. I am religious, and I am following the Church's teaching - 87% said that
2. I am religious in my own way (Davie's category: believing in but not belonging to a specific group) -11% picked this option (Davie, 1990).
3. I do not know if I am religious - 1,5% said that
4. I am not religious - 0,5% picked this option

Figure 1
Religious self-classification in 777 community



Source: Primary data.

Figure 1 shows that primarily those who follow the Church's teaching are the most interested in the work of the 777 blog. Furthermore, the research has also shown that the followers are mostly single, Roman Catholic, graduated, and urban women. This data is exciting in the Hungarian context because in 2016, the Hungarian Youth Research surveyed 8000 young people, and the survey revealed that in Hungary, only 6% avowed themselves as religious and following the Church's teaching, while 43% said that they are religious in their way.

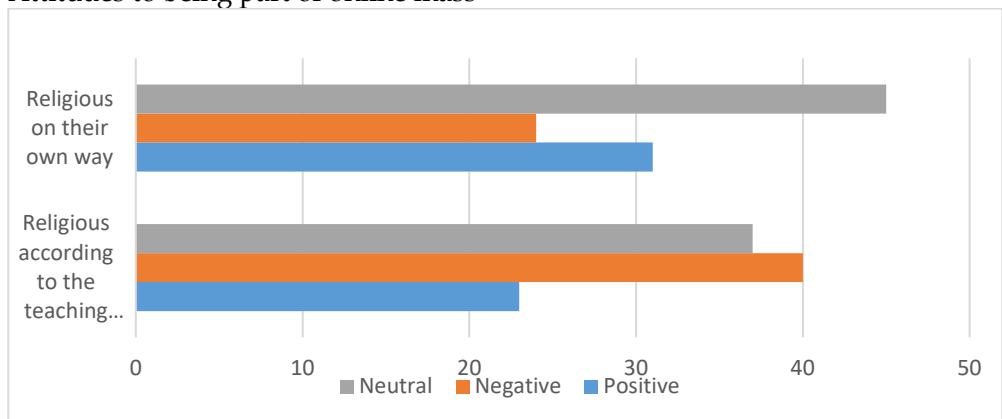
The Digital Media Usage

A hundred percent of the respondents have Internet access in their homes, 86.2% have a laptop, and 92.8% have a smartphone. Among the social network sites, Youtube is the most commonly used, with 97.1%, followed by Facebook with 89.7% and Instagram with 35.2%. Regarding the question of what purposes they use the Internet for, the most frequent answers were to keep in touch with friends (52.6%), general information seeking (51.8%), for work (46.02%). The least frequent answers were for dating (86.7%), following trends (47.6%), searching for a job (46.9%), games (42.5%), and looking for

new friendships (42.3%). They often search for religious content (75%) but do not search for esoteric content (86%). Another critical question was what kind of content and how regularly they upload their own Facebook site. The most popular activities were sending birthday wishes (32.6%), posting spiritual or religious (21.6%), or artistic content (7.9%). They hardly ever upload marketing messages (84.6%), pictures about their homes (83.2%), pets (80.4%), food (80.2%), and political issues (76.1%). From the results, we can see that belonging to a religious community is more decisive regarding what purpose they do not use the Internet for and what sites they avoid.

The attitudes of the bloggers and surveyees were studied from the aspect of how they are willing to live their faith by the opportunity of doing it in the digital world. Three of them are demonstrated in the following passages. These three aspects are: what group members think about (1) being part of the online mass, (2) using a confession app, or (3) being part of a digital pilgrimage. From now on, the article aims to show the differences between the answers of the “religious in their own way” and “the religious according to the teaching of the Church” groups.

Figure 2
Attitudes to being part of online mass



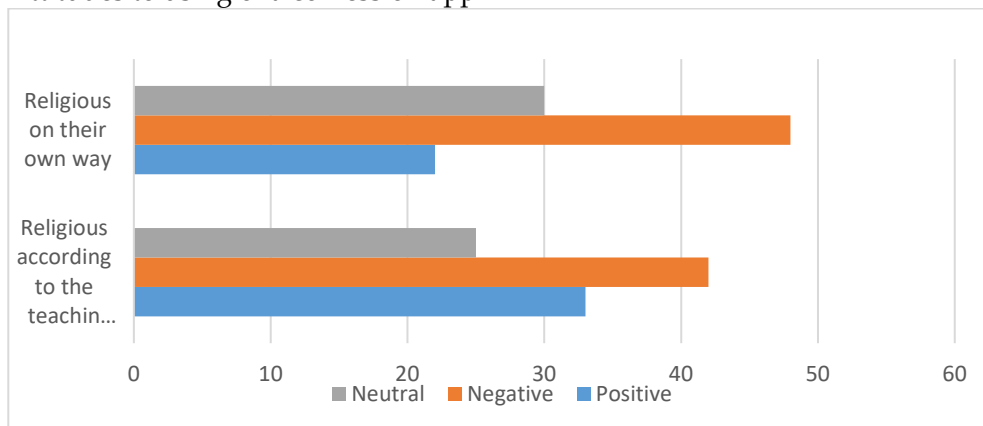
Source: Primary data.

As **Figure 2** shows, the attitude to being part of an online mass is more favorable among the group of young people who are religious in their way. How can this data be interpreted? In the offline categorization of religiosity, the first important marker is how frequently somebody attends mass. If they go every week, they will be categorized as “I am religious according to the teaching of the Church.” So, these people are essential to participating in an offline mass. They said that online mass is good because, in this way, they do not have to travel a lot to a church, it can be an exciting experience, everybody can get the Good News from anywhere, and last but not least, it is a perfect option for those, who cannot leave their home. On the other hand, most of the people in the two groups said that online mass is impersonal. They miss the group experience, miss praying together, and the most important reason is that they cannot receive the Eucharist.

There are different kinds of confession applications; for instance, somebody downloads one, showing them the Ten Commandments to choose from depending on their sins (<https://catholicapptitude.org/confession-apps/>). After that, the app gives them a penitential prayer. It will offer other options to refer directly to the sin that somebody committed.

Figure 3

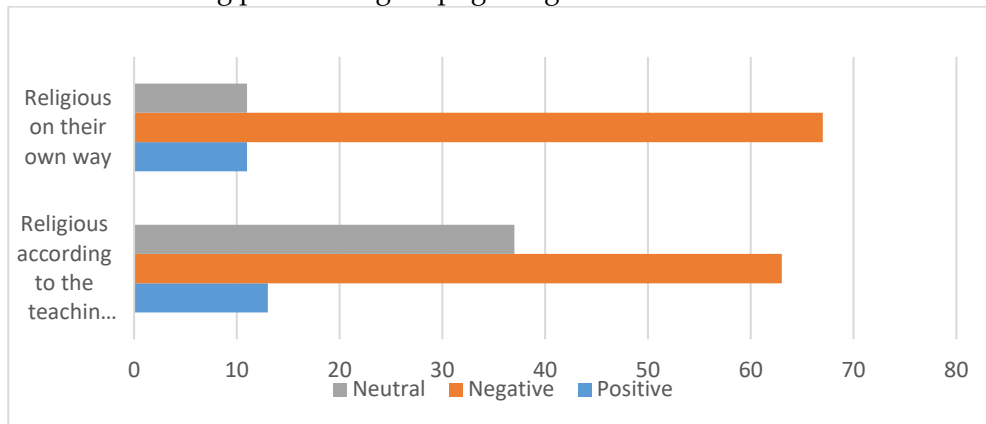
Attitudes to using of a confession app



Source: Primary data.

It can be seen from **Figure 3** that the primary attitude within both groups is negative toward using a confession app. But the group of “religious according to the teaching of the church” is more tolerant of using a confession app. Presumably, this difference is in the offline attitudes to confession as a religious practice. Both groups think that sacraments like confession shouldn’t be digitalized; they are afraid that the app is not anonymous. Those who are positive about it said that they would use it, or are already using it and that it is necessary, beneficial, and would come in handy because it is always with them on their smartphones. So this data shows primarily not the negativity about the technology but the confession as a religious practice.

Figure 4
Attitudes to being part of a digital pilgrimage



Source: Primary data.

The attitudes of those being part of a digital pilgrimage as presented in **Figure 4**. Those who are “religious in their own way” and “religious and following the Church’s teaching” were mostly negative about this because the pilgrimage is about dedication, being there, doing the steps, and being together. Practicing faith using digital applications removes the effort made for God, the intention to worship in God’s house, and to be present in reverence and devotion.

These results prove the theory of RSST because both the community and the bloggers were either rejecting the technology or using it only under certain conditions. If a religious group thinks that technology is beneficial for them, but they recognize that the use of it could cause changes to their faith or behavior or that it is against their religious values, then they reject that aspect of the technology. For instance, they are pleased by online mass, but only when they are sick or too old and cannot leave the house. The reason for the rejection of the online mass is the aspect of not being able to receive the Eucharist. The great mass of the young community of 777 does not agree with the digitalization of faith and religion. They are using these new forms of technology carefully and adapting them to match their traditions.

THE HUNGARIAN KRISHNA - CONSCIOUS BELIEVERS

The Church of Hungarian Krishna-Conscious Believers has been officially registered in Hungary since 1989 with 10,000 members. Within the Church's leadership, the spiritual leadership and the management are separated from one another but work together during the decision-making (Kamarás, 1996). The Church of the Krishna-Conscious Believers has a Communication Department that keeps in touch with the community members and sends messages outside. In-depth interviews were made with two Church communication leaders in their Hungarian spiritual center in Budapest on December 6, 2018. The center consists of a temple, a college, a restaurant, and a shop. After the interviews, a questionnaire was composed and shared with the results to be presented later in the article.

The members of the Church follow four main rules derived from the principle: "We are not the same with our body; we are spirits." The four commandments are: (1) They do not eat meat, eggs, or fish they eat only vegetables. (2) They do not use drugs and other intoxicating agents. (3) They do not have sexual relationships except within

marriage to have children. (4) They don't gamble (about core Hindu / Krishna- Conscious Believers concepts) (Scheifinger, 2017). The Church of Hungarian Krishna-Conscious Believers doesn't reject any forms of technology including communication technology such as Internet, smartphone, or CMC. "We can use anything provided that it serves Krishna." - states one of the communication leaders. However, they make differences between the use of communication devices and the contents of mass communication and CMC. The usage of these devices is permitted but they are careful with the contents. In the international literature several scholars deal with the research of online Hindu rites and religious practices (Helland, 2010; Hervieu-Léger, 2012; Balaji, 2017).

The official website of the Hungarian Krishna-Conscious Believers is krisna.hu. They also have a Facebook site with 8,200 followers, a Twitter account with 1385 followers and a YouTube channel with 1980 subscribers. The most well-known Hungarian spiritual leader Sivarama Swami Guru's Facebook site is followed by 290,000 people. In their religion respect and hospitality are the most emphasized values. They are careful not to say anything or post on SNSs that the other party cannot exactly understand, has not been prepared for or has not received enough points to understand it accurately. For this reason, they post unique religious content within closed Facebook groups rather than in public ways.

Their religious self-categorization is how they see their religiosity within the Krishna faith, and it is connected to two rites of passage. These rituals separate the phases of the deepening of faith. In the first period, the candidate becomes a disciple; the relationship between the master and the disciple is crucial during the whole process. Every disciple has to find their authentic personal spiritual leader. The name of the ritual for becoming an official disciple is "Hari Nama Diksha." During this ritual, the so-called "Diksha guru" gives

an invitation in front of the community, which functions as encouragement, and the Diksha guru gives the candidate a new spiritual name. Since that time, they have used this name on their SNSs too. Being a disciple involves both obligations and opportunities. Obligation means that they have to meditate in 16 circles with the help of the so-called guru (*mala*) beads. After the initiation, the disciple will be entitled to serve within the Krishna temple. This service can be carried out only by purified members. This means external (washed hands, face) and internal (keep the four main rules) purity. The name of the second rite of passage is “Brahmana initiation.”

In the questionnaire, the participants were asked about their religious self-categorization according to their own stages: whether the filler stands before the first initiation or has received a Hari Nama Diksha title, or has become a Brahmana. In the study, this religious self-categorization is compared with the categories used within the Catholic community: religious in their way or religious according to the teaching of the Church. The Krishna-Conscious Believers call the “see the God” practice *darshan* and the common community religious service *sanga*. They highly appreciate the common service, because members affect each other by their state of mind. They like different forms of religious entertainment: “We like dancing, singing, music is crucial for us. We emphasize the vibration of sounds, a tool for moderating our mind. We believe that words are filled with energy.” – said the communication leader.

Presumably, it will be reflected in their digital media content usage as well. To the question whether it is acceptable for them not to participate physically in a ceremony or pilgrimage but only to watch them live stream via social media they answered: “Krishna appreciates the effort. It is good to see God on the screen, but we won’t perceive the real experience.” They broadcast their religious ceremonies via social media in a closed group. On the one hand they

accept that not every member can participate physically in these rituals due to their daily activities or work. On the other hand, they would not like people who cannot understand the meaning of these rituals to see the stream.

Their outstanding religious practice is saying mantras which have different levels: the mantra said in solitude is called *japó*, with playing music together is called *bajan kintan*. In this research and article, the word *avatar* has two different meanings. The first meaning is well known in the CMC research community: on the Internet, the different virtual embodiments are called avatars. The other meaning is related to the religious language of the Krishna-Conscious Believers. For them, the word *avatar* refers to the different embodiments of Krishna.¹ The teachings of the spiritual leaders are emphasized in the Krishna-Conscious Believers community. With the help of the Internet, they write blogs where they upload lectures and meditations either in the form of podcasts or videos.

In their temple, there are several sacred God sculptures for the Krishna-Conscious Believers. They are sacred means that God exists within the sculpture. These sculptures are dressed up every day as a part of members' religious service. In this regard, they say: "Whom you love, you care about." In their homes, the Krishna-Conscious Believers live with their God in actual physical proximity. A similar phenomenon can be mentioned within the Catholic community. In an interview, Judith Zoebelin – who was a significant person in launching the Vatican website in the mid-90s, says that: "... for me, it was an experience of how the virtual made a person in a relationship to others ... he (Pope John Paul II.) became virtually someone like part of the family, part of the neighborhood. I think it was an excellent move of

¹ In the article I am going to index the different meanings avatar¹ means the virtual embodiment avatar² refers to the embodiment of Krishna.

the Church to see how much people were interested in what the Pope had to say.”² That is, for the Krishna-Conscious Believers and the Catholic community as well, it is crucial to have their religious leader or God in their home.

The Digital Media Usage

The survey was carried out between January 5 - February 5, 2019, among 64 participants. It contains 55 questions based on [Ratcliff et al. \(2017\)](#). The first part focuses on the demographic data, the second part deals with the members' supply with digital tools, and the final part reveals the religious purposes the Internet is used for by them. The final sample was 55.6% female and 44.4 % male. The median age of respondents was 36,3. Besides the general summary, the data according to the gender differences and the differences in religious self-classification of the members were filtered. In the community of Krishna-Conscious Believers, religious self-classification concerns if the members stand before or after the first (Hari Nama Diksha) or second (Brahmana) initiation.

The data show us that according to the Religious Social Shaping of Technology theory, the norms and values of the Krishna - Conscious Believers community are reflected in their digital media usage. On the other hand, no significant differences were noticed among the patterns of the members' digital media usage depending on their religious self-classification. They use the Internet almost the same way. On the basis of their religious self-classification, however, divergences can be revealed in the level of the expression of religious identity. Among the SNSs, YouTube (95.2%), and Facebook (92.1%) are the most popular, followed by Instagram (23.8%). In general, they have had a Facebook

² Up Close with Sister Judith Zoebelin - available at 7:22: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPnttsjU_cc

profile for more than one year, they have between 200-500 friends, and they belong to 1-5 Facebook groups that are connected to their religious community.

The data show us that the norms and values of the Krishna - Conscious Believers community are reflected in their digital media usage. Questions 14, 28, 29, 33, and 38 from the questionnaire are related to this point. Question 14 is a typical uses and gratifications question and sounds like this: What purposes do you use the Internet for? The general results are the same as what was filtered based on the religion's self-classification. The most used functions are work (64%), general information seeking (37.5%), keeping in touch with friends (31.25%), colleagues (31.25), and religious or spiritual activity (34.3%). The least used functions are dating (82.8%), gaming (79.6%), following trends (64.6%), escaping from everyday life (50%), and seeking a job (48.4%). Question 28 sounds like this: "What content and how frequently do you upload or share on your own website?" The most typical answers are sharing religious content (54.6%) and motivating and self-helping content (21.8%). The least typical answers are: sharing pictures of pets (82.8%), sharing political issues (81.25%), and sharing pictures of own home (75%).

Question 29 is the following: "Which is the most frequently used activity by you on Facebook?" The most common activities are: using the messenger function (57.8%), and giving likes to friends' content (39.06%). The least common activities are video streaming (90.6%), expressing emotional status (82,1%), and using hashtags (78,1%). Question 33: "What religion-related activities do you pursue online?" The most frequent activities are: seeking information about Krishna - Conscious gurus (59.3%), watching religious lectures (50%), listening to religious music (48.4%), and news and information seeking about the Krishna - Conscious Believers community (42.1%). The least frequent activities are meditation in the group (74%), using religious

applications (60.9%), and taking part in online pilgrimage (59.3%). Question 38 asks: "What do you use the krishna.hu webpage for?" The top answers are: reading spiritual leaders' or gurus' blogs (43.7%), and information seeking about the programs of the Krishna - Conscious Believers community (38.8%). The least popular activities are: donating money for the Krishna - Conscious Believers community (57.6%), seeking yoga (56.2%), and following the food-giving program (53.1%).

As it is seen, the Hungarian results largely differ from the Americans in the point of donation (Laney, 2005). In the American religious uses and gratifications research, the fifth most popular activity is donating money to a religious community. The lectures and ceremonies broadcast via the Internet are considered authentic and close to the offline experiences, while online meditation and online pilgrimage are less. The Krishna-Conscious Believers refuse the digital meditation. As they say, the streamed event would divide their awareness and it would lead to the failure of the meditation because they are not able to reach the final goal, the full spiritual concentration.

They listen to spiritual lectures in their free time (90.5%) while using public transport (52.4%) or waiting for scheduled events (41.3%). The sequence of Facebook contents related activities is as follows: they give likes primarily, rarely share content, and rarely make comments. The Krishna - Conscious Believers community sees digital media as an opportunity to coordinate the life of their offline group, so these devices only support and supplement offline activities and never replace them. Their Facebook group is characterized as a religious (76.2%), spiritual (63.4%), and cultural (53.9%) community.

Although there were no differences in the pattern of digital media use according to religious self-classification (the members stand before or after the first or second initiation), there were differences in the articulation of religious identity. In the concept of religious

identity, Lövheim’s (2013) work was followed (see also [Chetty, 2017](#); [Neriya & Shahar, 2017](#)). Although an in-depth evaluation of this field was not conducted, it raised some interesting questions about their online religious identity. In the questionnaire, they were asked whether their Facebook profile or background pictures refer to their religious identity and what name they use on SNSs, official and/or spiritual name. On the Facebook site of the members who stand after the first or second initiation the references to religious identity appeared in higher proportion both in the use of the name (official name / spiritual name) and in the profile and/or background pictures ([Table 1](#)).

Table 1
References to religious identity

Questions	Members before the initiation	Members after the first (Hari Nama Dikhsa) initiation	Members after the second (Brahmana) initiation
What name do you use on your Facebook profile? (Q23)			
I have only one Facebook profile and I use my spiritual name, or at first my spiritual name after the official name.	12.7%	23.5%	28.6%
Do your Facebook profile or background images refer to your religious identity? (Q25) Yes	61.9%	70.6%	71.4%

Source: Primary data.

Comparative research conducted by [Elmasry et al. \(2014\)](#) can be mentioned here in which he found that the expression of religious identity occurs in higher proportion among Egyptian and Qatari

students than the Americans. According to gender comparison significant differences in the purpose of digital media usage could not be identified. Both women's and men's digital media usage is based on the values and norms of the Krishna - Conscious Believers community. Minor differences emerged in the following points:

Men's access to digital media is more dominant - Question 9: "Do you have a PC or laptop?" Answer - yes, among men was 92.9%, and among women was 88.6%. Question 10: "Do you have Internet access in your home?" The answer yes among men was 100 %, and among women was 85.7%. The following chart shows the SNSs' preferences (**Table 2**).

Table 2
Gender differences within the preferences of the SNSs

Social Network Sites	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube	Snapchat
Woman	94.3 %	20%	0%	94.3%	0%
Men	89.3%	28.6%	14.3%	96.4%	0%

Source: Primary data.

The expression of religious identity is more characteristic among women (**Table 3**). The men belong to more Facebook groups (6-10 groups) than women (1-5 groups), which are connected to their work. (Q30, Q31) Women give fewer donations, men upload more videos on the YouTube channel of the community, and men are less interested in searching for vegetarian recipes.

Table 3

Gender differences in the expression of religious identity

Questions	Woman	Man
What name do you use on your Facebook profile? (Q23) I have only one Facebook profile and I use my spiritual name. or at first my spiritual after the official name.	23.7 %	17.8%
Do your Facebook profile or background images refer to your religious identity? (Q25) Yes	62.9%	60.7%

Source: Primary data.

CONCLUSION

In the Internet age, people do not just belong to one community online and another offline. They often belong to multiple or multisided online and offline communities. So religion online is much more personalized and catered by the individual rather than the institution. The Internet allows people to express their religiosity in new ways. We were interested in how religious rituals are being transported online and how they were either changed or modified because of the digital environment. The study evaluates how religious user communities actively negotiate and shape their technologies in light of their values, norms, and self-interpretations concerning public presence.

The following similarities and differences were found in comparing these two religious communities (777 community and Krishna - Conscious Believers community). In both groups, the most used digital functions were: for work, keeping in touch with friends, general information seeking, keep in touch with colleagues. The least used functions were: gaming, dating, and following trends. Both communities are the most reluctant about digital pilgrimage. From the

results, we can state that belonging to a religious community is more prescriptive in terms of what purpose the community members do not use the Internet for and what sites they should avoid.

For the members of the 777 community, the Internet sites function as digital meeting points that they frequently visit. So as a result, much more respondents were collected here in a much shorter time than in the Krishna - Conscious Believers community. The Facebook profile and/or background pictures of the 777 community members reflect their religious identity less (29.3 %) than that of the Krishna - Conscious Believers' (61.9%).

So in sum, although some differences were found between the two communities, these results reinforce the theory of RSST because both groups were either rejecting the technology or using it only under certain conditions. If a religious group thinks that technology is beneficial for them, but they recognize that the use of it could cause changes in their faith or behavior or that it is against their religious values, then they reject that aspect of the technology.

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