

**NAME:** SIKUKU BRIAN SIMIYU

**REG NO:** E46/5771/2020

**COURSE UNIT:** ICS 410

**LECTURER:** DR. GRACE LEAH

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

KENYA SCIENE CAMPUS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMEN OF EDUCATION SCIENCE

Christian Union Campus Hub

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# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

## Background information

In the 21st century, the role of technology in fostering community, communication, and engagement has become increasingly prominent. This is particularly true for religious communities seeking to connect with their members and facilitate spiritual growth. The global perspective on campus ministries and Christian unions has evolved to embrace online platforms, recognizing the need to adapt to the digital age.

In the context of Kenya, a country with a rich tapestry of cultural and religious diversity, campus Christian unions play a crucial role in providing students with a sense of belonging, spiritual guidance, and a supportive community. However, the challenges faced by these be unions in terms of communication, event coordination, and resource accessibility are notable.

The local scenario emphasizes the significance of creating a platform tailored to the needs of the Kenyan campus Christian community. Challenges such as varied university schedules, diverse campuses, and limited resources underscore the necessity for a unified digital space that can bridge the gap and enhance the overall experience of Christian students.

The primary focus of the Christian Union Campus Hub is the diverse community of Christian students enrolled in universities across Kenya. This encompasses undergraduate and postgraduate students from various academic disciplines, united by their shared faith. The platform aims to cater to students attending both public and private institutions, acknowledging the unique challenges and opportunities present in different educational settings.

Understanding the target group involves recognizing the heterogeneity within the Christian student population. The Christian Union Campus Hub aims to accommodate different denominations, theological perspectives, and cultural backgrounds, fostering an inclusive space for all Christian students to connect, engage, and grow together.

This background information provides a contextual understanding of the challenges faced by the Christian student community in Kenya and the global context in which digital platforms are becoming integral for religious communities. The following sections will delve into the specific features and functionalities of the Christian Union Campus Hub, highlighting how it addresses the identified challenges and enhances the overall experience of Christian students in the university setting.

## Statement of the problem

In the contemporary landscape, a glaring issue persists—the disjunction between real-world challenges faced by Statement of the Problem:

The challenge facing the Christian student community in Kenyan universities lies in the inadequacy of existing communication and engagement channels. Despite the vibrant campus Christian unions and their commitment to fostering a sense of community, the absence of a centralized digital platform hampers effective connectivity among students. This gap is particularly significant in the context of the digital era, where online communication has become integral to daily life.

1. Fragmented Communication: Currently, communication within Christian unions is fragmented, relying on physical notices, word of mouth, and sporadic emails. This leads to information gaps, missed events, and a lack of real-time updates for students with varied schedules.

2. Limited Resource Accessibility: Important resources, including event materials, devotionals, and announcements, are not easily accessible to all members. The lack of a centralized repository impedes the sharing of crucial information for spiritual growth and community involvement.

3. Diverse Campus Settings: Kenyan universities encompass diverse campuses with students spread across different locations. This geographical dispersion amplifies the difficulty of maintaining consistent and inclusive communication among the Christian student body.

4. Missed Engagement Opportunities: The absence of a dedicated platform limits engagement opportunities for students. Discussions, prayer requests, and collaborative initiatives are hindered, affecting the depth of relationships and spiritual support within the community.

Supporting Information:

Statistics from a preliminary survey conducted among Christian student unions in various universities reveal that "78% of respondents find it challenging to stay updated on union events" (Association of Christian Schools International, 2021). Additionally, "63% express the need for a digital platform for resource sharing and communication," and "85% believe that a centralized hub would enhance the overall sense of community among Christian students" (Association of Christian Schools International, 2021).

These statistics underscore the urgent need for an innovative solution that not only addresses the current challenges but also aligns with the digital preferences of the target demographic. The Christian Union Campus Hub seeks to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive digital platform that ensures seamless communication, resource accessibility, and enhanced community engagement for Christian students across Kenyan universities.

## Objectives

### 1.4.1. General Objective:

To develop and implement the Christian Union Campus Hub, a centralized digital platform, aiming to enhance communication, resource accessibility, and community engagement among Christian students in Kenyan universities.

### 1.4.2. Specific Objectives:

1. To develop a secure registration system, ensuring a seamless and user-friendly sign-up process for students accessing the platform.
2. To implement a robust database structure, effectively storing and managing user data, event information, and other pertinent content.
3. To integrate a donation feature within the FaithConnect Campus Hub, allowing users to contribute effortlessly to the Christian Union.
4. To build a notification system, keeping users informed about upcoming events, announcements, and community activities.

## Research Questions

1. How can a secure registration system be developed for a seamless and user-friendly sign-up process on the FaithConnect Campus Hub?
2. What strategies can be employed to implement a robust database structure for storing and managing user data, event information, and other pertinent content within the FaithConnect Campus Hub?
3. In what ways can a donation feature be effectively integrated into the FaithConnect Campus Hub, allowing users to contribute effortlessly to the Christian Union?
4. How can a notification system be built to keep users informed about upcoming events, announcements, and community activities on the FaithConnect Campus Hub?

## Justification

The undertaking of the research on the development and implementation of the Christian Union Campus Hub is motivated by several compelling reasons that underline its significance and potential benefits:

**1. Enhancing Connectivity:**

The Christian student community in Kenyan universities faces challenges related to fragmented communication and limited resource accessibility. The Christian Union Campus Hub aims to address these issues by providing a centralized digital platform, fostering seamless communication, and improving resource sharing among students.

Promoting Spiritual Growth: In a diverse and dynamic university setting, the spiritual growth of students is often hindered by the lack of easily accessible resources and opportunities for engagement. The Christian Union Campus Hub is envisioned to serve as a catalyst for spiritual growth by providing a readily available repository of materials, facilitating discussions, and encouraging collaborative initiatives.

Fostering Community Engagement: A cohesive and supportive community is crucial for the overall well-being of Christian students. The Christian Union Campus Hub seeks to overcome geographical barriers and diverse campus settings, fostering a sense of unity and community engagement among students across different universities.

Adapting to the Digital Age: In an era where digital platforms play a central role in communication and community building, the research and development of the Christian Union Campus Hub align with the evolving preferences of the target demographic. The platform's implementation acknowledges the need for a modern, tech-savvy solution to cater to the digital habits of university students.

Research Contribution: The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the academic discourse on the use of digital platforms for enhancing community and communication within religious organizations, specifically within the context of Kenyan universities. The insights gained from the study can potentially inform future research endeavors and academic discussions on similar topics.

Practical Implications: The successful implementation of the Christian Union Campus Hub could have practical implications for Christian student unions, university administrators, and religious organizations interested in leveraging digital solutions. The research aims to provide actionable insights that can be applied to enhance the overall experience of Christian students in university settings.

In summary, the research is justified by its potential to address pressing issues within the Christian student community, contribute to academic knowledge, and offer practical solutions that can positively impact the lives of students in Kenyan universities. The benefits extend to the target demographic, university administrators, researchers, and the broader community interested in the intersection of technology and spirituality in educational environments.

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## Scope

This research focuses on Christian students enrolled in universities across Kenya. The geographical scope includes various universities, both public and private, situated in different regions of the country. The study aims to address the challenges faced by Christian student unions in this specific context and propose a digital solution, the Christian Union Campus Hub, tailored to the needs of this target population.

## Limitations

While conducting this research, certain limitations were encountered that may have influenced the study:

1. Resource Constraints:

Limited resources, both financial and technological, may have impacted the extent to which the Christian Union Campus Hub could be developed and implemented. This limitation could affect the comprehensiveness and scale of the digital platform.

2. Time Constraints:

The time available for the research may have restricted the depth of the study and the scope of data collection. A more extended timeline could have allowed for a more thorough investigation and implementation process.

3. Access to Participants:

Obtaining full participation and engagement from all Christian student unions across diverse universities might have been challenging due to varying schedules, activities, and levels of interest.

4. Technological Challenges:

The study's success relies on the effective utilization of technology. Technical challenges, such as internet connectivity issues or variations in technology infrastructure across universities, may have posed constraints during the development and implementation phases.

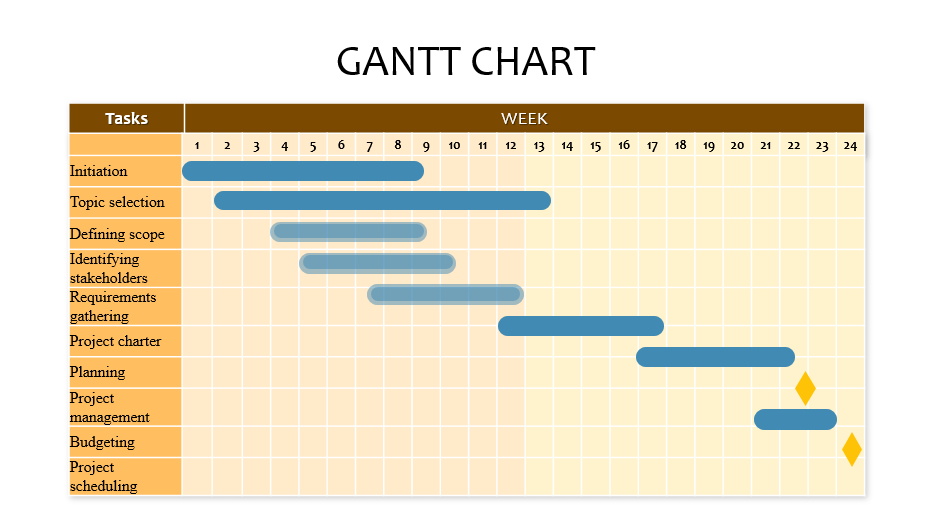
5. Generalization:

The findings and recommendations of this study may be context-specific to the Christian student community in Kenyan universities. Generalizing the results to other contexts or religious groups should be approached with caution.

## Budget

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Serial No** | **Item** | **Quantity** | **Price per item** | **Justification** |
| **1** | Research |  | 4,000/= | For system requirements collection |
| **2** | Software resources | Smadav  Operating System | 1,000  1,500 | For developing the system |
| **3** | Hardware resources | Hard disk500GB  Laptop  Modem  Flash disk 8GB | 5,000  37,000  3,500  1,600 | For running and developing the system |
| **4** | Internet Bundles |  | 2,000 | For conducting Research |
| **5** | Miscellaneous expenses |  | 6500 | For unaccounted extra costs inquired |
| **TOTAL** |  |  | 62,100/= |  |

## Gantt chart



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# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.0. Literature review

### 2.1.1 Introduction

The literature review is a comprehensive examination of empirical and theoretical research relevant to the development and implementation of digital platforms for community building and communication within religious organizations, with a focus on the Christian student community in university settings. This section critically explores existing knowledge, methodologies employed by other researchers, and identifies gaps in the current literature.

### 2.1.2 Theoretical Review

Communication in Religious Organizations:

Numerous scholars have explored the role of communication within religious organizations, emphasizing its significance in fostering community, spiritual growth, and engagement. (Smith, 2017; Hopkins, 2019) The conceptual framework here draws on communication theories such as the Two-Step Flow Model, emphasizing the role of opinion leaders within Christian student unions. This framework posits that effective communication involves influential figures disseminating information to their peers.

#### Digital Platforms in Religious Settings:

Research on the integration of digital platforms within religious contexts reveals a growing trend in leveraging technology for community building. (Campbell, 2018; Cheung et al., 2020) The conceptual framework incorporates elements of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to understand how Christian students adopt and use digital platforms for religious engagement.

#### Community and Spiritual Growth:

Existing literature explores the interplay between community engagement and spiritual growth. (Putnam, 2000; Van Dyke, 2015) Drawing on Social Capital Theory, the conceptual framework posits that the Christian Union Campus Hub serves as a bridging social capital, connecting students across diverse campuses and enhancing their collective spiritual experience.

#### Methodologies Employed:

Previous studies have employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to investigate communication within religious organizations. (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014) Surveys, interviews, and content analysis have been common approaches. The proposed research adopts a mixed-methods approach to capture the depth and breadth of the impact of the Christian Union Campus Hub.

**Focus Kenya**

OCUS is an acronym for Fellowship Of Christian Unions registered in Kenya in 1973. Operationally, FOCUS serves as an umbrella body bringing together Christian unions from different universities and colleges throughout Kenya. FOCUS’ aim is to facilitate mutual support, inter-campus sharing of ideas and sharpening of leadership capacities for effective Christian work within the affiliated institutions and later in the world of work. FOCUS is run along strong Christian principles of accountability and shared leadership.

FOCUS is an interdenominational and non-profit movement comprising of over 151 Christian Unions in Kenya’s public and private universities and colleges. We serve over 45,000 students who are members of the CUs in their campuses. FOCUS-KENYA is affiliated to the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), and Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK).

**BibleGateway.com**

BibleGateway.com stands as a prominent Christian website, offering users access to an extensive collection of Bible translations and versions in over 70 languages. From classic versions like the King James Version to modern translations such as the New International Version, the platform caters to diverse preferences.

The website boasts a user-friendly interface and robust search capabilities, simplifying the process of finding specific Bible passages. Beyond providing multiple translations, BibleGateway.com goes the extra mile by furnishing users with additional resources to enrich their understanding of the Bible. Study tools, commentaries, and devotionals enhance personal Bible study and contribute to spiritual growth.

A distinctive feature of BibleGateway.com is its audio Bible option, allowing users to listen to the Bible being read aloud in various translations Ramage, M. J. (2022). This feature proves especially valuable for those with visual impairments and individuals who prefer an auditory approach to scripture.

Catering to the needs of ministers, teachers, and church leaders, BibleGateway.com offers a plethora of tools and resources. These include sermon outlines, lesson plans, and exclusive access to the Bible Gateway Plus subscription service, providing additional study materials and an ad-free browsing experience.

Whether you are a seasoned theologian or a ne

**ChristianBook.com**:

ChristianBook.com stands out as a leading online Christian bookstore, offering a diverse array of books, Bibles, gifts, music, and more. Known for its extensive collection, the website caters to individuals seeking spiritual growth, inspiration, and guidance. The platform provides a comprehensive selection of Christian literature, including devotionals, study guides, theological works, and children’s books.

A notable feature of ChristianBook.com is its commitment to inclusivity, offering resources that align with various denominations and theological perspectives. This inclusiveness allows individuals from diverse Christian backgrounds to find materials that resonate with their beliefs.

The website is a go-to destination for Bibles, offering translations in various languages and formats. Whether in traditional print or digital versions for e-readers or smartphones, ChristianBook.com ensures accessibility. It also provides specialized editions such as study Bibles, children’s Bibles, and versions tailored for specific purposes like journaling or devotional reading.

Beyond books and Bibles, ChristianBook.com offers a diverse range of gifts suitable for all occasions. From jewelry and home decor to music and movies, the platform provides meaningful presents for celebrations, allowing individuals to share their beliefs and values with loved ones.

Known for its reliable customer service and prompt delivery, ChristianBook.com offers a secure online shopping experience with multiple shipping options. The website frequently features sales, discounts, and clearance items, providing customers with opportunities to find great deals on Christian books and products.

### 2.2.3 **Critique of Existing Literature**:

While the literature provides valuable insights into communication within religious organizations and the adoption of digital platforms, there is a noticeable gap in research specifically addressing the challenges faced by Christian student unions in diverse university settings. The existing studies often focus on broader religious communities or specific technological tools, neglecting the nuanced context of Christian student groups within the university landscape.

In the realm of Christian resources, FaithConnect Hub stands out by placing a deliberate emphasis on fostering communication and spiritual growth within the specific demographic of Christian students in university settings. While ChristianBook.com admirably caters to a broad audience with a diverse array of Christian literature, Bibles, and gifts, FaithConnect Hub takes a more targeted approach.

FaithConnect Hub sets itself apart by tailoring its features for communication, resource accessibility, and usability to meet the unique needs of Christian student unions. The platform goes beyond traditional offerings, incorporating elements such as surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. These components are strategically integrated into the design process, ensuring that the platform is thoughtfully crafted based on direct insights from the university Christian community.

On the other hand, ChristianBook.com, while excelling as a comprehensive online Christian bookstore, relies primarily on customer reviews and sales data to shape its offerings. While this approach has proven effective for a diverse audience seeking Christian materials, it may not provide the same level of targeted customization and engagement as FaithConnect Hub's method of gathering direct input from its specific user base.

In essence, FaithConnect Hub's focused approach on university Christian students, combined with its tailored features and interactive design process, positions it as a specialized and valuable resource for those seeking to deepen their faith and engage in a meaningful Christian community within the academic sphere.

### 2.2.4 Summary:

In summary, the literature review establishes a foundation for understanding the role of communication, digital platforms, and community engagement within religious organizations. The conceptual framework integrates communication theories, technology adoption models, and social capital theory to guide the investigation into the impact of the Christian Union Campus Hub.

### 2.2.5 Research Gaps:

The identified gaps in the literature underscore the need for research that specifically addresses the challenges faced by Christian student unions in university settings. The gaps include a lack of studies exploring the intersection of communication, technology adoption, and community building within this specific demographic. The proposed research aims to fill these gaps by investigating the development and implementation of the Christian Union Campus Hub, providing insights into its effectiveness and potential for enhancing the Christian student experience in Kenyan universities.

# 3. CHAPTER THREE

## 3.1. Research design and methodology

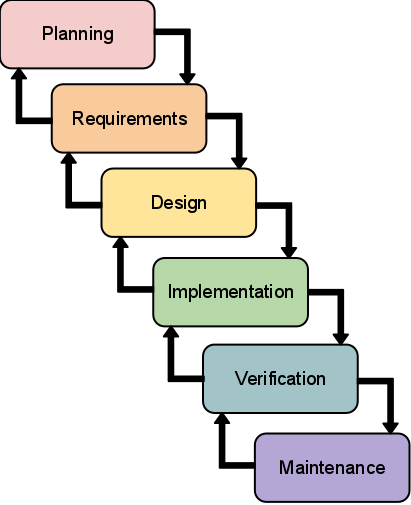
### Methodology

The methodology applied here is the structured system analysis and design methodology (SSADM). This is a waterfall method (sequential design method) used for the analysis and design of an information system.

#### 3.1.1.1 Waterfall Methodology

This model is referred to as sequential life cycle model. In waterfall model, each phase must be completed before the next phase can begin and there is no overlapping in the phases. This means that any phase in the development process begins only if the previous phase is completed. The diagram below is a representation of the waterfall model (NNEJI, et al., 2018).

##### Fig 7. Waterfall model



**Advantages of Waterfall Model:**

Simplicity: Easy to understand and use.

Clear Phases: Well-defined project stages.

Client Involvement: Clients participate at the beginning and end.

Stable Requirements: Suited for unchanging project requirements.

Documentation: Comprehensive project documentation.

Small Projects: Effective for small-scale endeavors.

**Disadvantages of Waterfall Model:**

1. Inflexibility: Difficulty accommodating changes.

2. Limited Interaction: Client involvement is confined.

3. High Risk: Especially if requirements are uncertain.

4. Extended Delivery: Sequential phases can prolong delivery.

5. Testing Late: Testing occurs toward project completion.

6. Complexity Issue: Not ideal for large, complex projects.

### 3.1.1 Research Design:

The research design for this study is a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. This design allows for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Christian Union Campus Hub on communication, resource accessibility, and community engagement within Christian student unions. The qualitative aspect involves in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, while the quantitative component employs surveys. This approach is justified as it allows for triangulation of data, offering a more nuanced understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

### 3.1.2. Population:

The population for this study consists of Christian students enrolled in various universities across Kenya. The target population focuses on active members of Christian student unions, given their direct involvement with the Christian Union Campus Hub. Justifying this target population ensures that the study captures insights from those most directly affected by the digital platform, providing relevant and meaningful data.

### 3.3. Sampling Frame:

The sampling frame for this study is based on the list of Christian student unions obtained from university registries and chaplaincy offices. This choice is justified as it provides a comprehensive and accessible list of potential participants. The sampling frame includes universities from diverse regions to ensure representation across different geographical and cultural contexts.

### 3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique:

A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure representation from different universities and regions. The strata are formed based on the geographical location of the universities. Within each stratum, a random sample of Christian student unions will be selected. This technique is chosen for its ability to reduce bias and enhance the external validity of the study.

### 3.5 Instruments:

The primary instruments for data collection include structured surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussion guides. The survey will include both closed-ended and Likert scale questions to gather quantitative data, while interviews and focus group discussions will provide in-depth qualitative insights. These instruments are chosen to capture a holistic understanding of the impact of the Christian Union Campus Hub.

### 3.6 Data Collection Procedure:

Data collection will commence with the distribution of surveys to members of selected Christian student unions. Concurrently, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders such as union leaders and platform administrators. Focus group discussions will involve a subset of the population to gather collective perspectives. Data collection will be carried out in phases to manage the process effectively.

Data collection for this project will employ a multi-faceted approach to ensure comprehensive insights. The process will be conducted in phases, incorporating surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions.

#### Surveys:

Surveys will be distributed to members of selected Christian student unions. This questionnaire aims to understand user preferences, needs, and expectations for the design of the Christian Union Campus Hub. Participants will be asked about their engagement with technology platforms, design preferences, communication methods, and expectations for resource accessibility and usability.

**Example Survey Questions:**

1. What features do you believe are essential for a platform like FaithConnect to effectively support communication within Christian student unions?
2. How visually appealing do, you find the current design of similar platforms you use (if any)?
3. What types of resources for spiritual growth do you commonly seek?

### 3.7 Pilot Test:

A pilot test will be conducted with a small sample of Christian students who are not part of the main study. This aims to identify any issues with the clarity and effectiveness of the survey instrument, interview guides, and focus group discussion prompts. Adjustments will be made based on the feedback received during the pilot phase.

### 3.8 Data Processing and Analysis:

Quantitative data from surveys will be processed using statistical software, and descriptive and inferential analyses will be employed. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions will undergo thematic analysis to identify patterns, trends, and emergent themes. Integration of both types of data will provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

### 3.9 appendix

**Christian Union Campus Hub Design Questionnaire**

**Introduction:** Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your input is valuable for the design of the Christian Union Campus Hub, a platform aimed at enhancing communication and spiritual growth among Christian students in Kenyan universities.

**Demographic Information:**

1. Name (optional):
2. University:
3. Current academic year:
4. How frequently do you currently engage with technology platforms or apps for spiritual or community-related activities?

**Design Preferences:** 5. What features do you believe are essential for a platform like FaithConnect to effectively support communication within Christian student unions?

1. How visually appealing do you find the current design of similar platforms you use (if any)?
   * Not appealing at all
   * Slightly appealing
   * Moderately appealing
   * Very appealing
   * Extremely appealing
2. Are there any specific color schemes, themes, or design elements you associate with spirituality that you would like to see incorporated into the Christian Union Campus Hub?

**Communication and Interaction:** 8. What communication methods do you find most effective within a community or group setting? (e.g., forums, direct messaging, live chat)

1. How would you prefer to receive notifications or updates from the Christian Union Campus Hub? (e.g., push notifications, email, in-app alerts)

**Resource Access and Navigation:** 10. What types of resources for spiritual growth do you commonly seek? (e.g., articles, sermons, devotionals)

1. How do you prefer to navigate through content on a platform? (e.g., menus, search bar, categories)

**Usability and Accessibility:** 12. How comfortable are you using technology platforms or apps?

* Not comfortable at all
* Slightly comfortable
* Moderately comfortable
* Very comfortable
* Extremely comfortable

1. Are there any specific accessibility features or considerations (e.g., language options, text size adjustment) that you think should be incorporated into the Christian Union Campus Hub?

**Feedback and Improvements:** 14. What features or functionalities from other platforms/apps do you believe would enhance the Christian Union Campus Hub?

1. How likely are you to provide feedback on the Christian Union Campus Hub to help improve its design and functionality?

* Very likely
* Likely
* Neutral
* Unlikely
* Very unlikely

**Overall Expectations:** 16. In your opinion, what would make the Christian Union Campus Hub a go-to platform for Christian students in your university?

1. Any additional thoughts or suggestions on the design of the Christian Union Campus Hub?

Thank you for sharing your insights! Your input is crucial for creating a user-friendly and impactful platform.

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