



Jumuga Journal of Education,
Oral Studies, and Human Sciences (JJEOSHS)
editor@jumugajournal.org
<http://www.jumugajournal.org>
Volume 6, No. 1, 2023
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35544/jjeoshs.v6i1.54>

Education and Identity Politics in Uganda Revitalizing the Roman Catholic Church's values in their founded primary schools

James Kizza, PhD

Department of Business Administration and Management, University of Kisubi, Uganda

Corresponding author: Kizza James Email: kizzajames2016@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7253-7734>

&

Mubiru Pontious

Department of Business Administration and Management, University of Kisubi, Uganda

Email: pontiousmubiru@gmail.com

Abstract

The Roman Catholic Church is globally and historically renowned for the provision of quality education that stresses the development of the whole person. Traditionally, the Consecrated persons of their religious institutes - who were well grounded in the Catholic ethos, headed their respective schools. Today however, the management of Catholic schools is increasingly being handed over to the non-consecrated persons who lack proper orientation in the ethos of Catholic education. The Catholic schools are facing financial challenges that are perhaps straining them into a mission drift, from prioritising the poor and the Catholic community to giving more preference to the well-to-do; and the focus on academics with limited or no integration of the Catholic values in the curriculum. The informal interaction with teachers of Catholic primary schools in Uganda revealed an increasing secularization of the Catholic Schools. It is recommended that teachers in Catholic schools be oriented in the Roman Catholic ethos and be provided with support materials that explains their faith; and how it can be integrated in the curriculum. This should be followed by continuous professional development and support supervision so as to ensure the implementation of the Roman Catholic values in the Catholic founded primary schools.

Key words: Revitalize, Catholic Identity, Catholic Church, Church founded, primary schools

Introduction

The Catholic Church, also known as the Roman Catholic Church, is the largest Christian church, with 1.3 billion baptized Catholics worldwide as of 2022. As a church, its identity is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, the traditions, and their social teachings based on love and service to others. As teachers in our respective positions, we are relied upon to transmit the Gospel values and the Church's traditions in our schools and the communities in which we live. Traditionally, Consecrated religious persons headed and taught the Roman Catholic schools. In view of this, it was quite easy to transmit and manifest their values and traditions in their founded schools (Gleeson,

O’Gorman, Goldberg, & O’Neill, 2018). The admission of learners and recruitment of lay apostolate to teach in their schools was highly prioritized. Catholic schools used to receive external funding from the Catholic Philanthropic organizations. All these are unfortunately abruptly fading away and if collective efforts are not timely combined to study and manage this threatening environment, the Catholic identity in schools may lose its base. Catholic schools are facing an identity crisis (Gleeson, O’Gorman, Goldberg, & O’Neill, 2018).

In trying to revitalize the Roman Catholic Church’s values, in their founded primary schools, we need to appreciate the influence education in ancient Greece to our modern situations, especially with reference to Uganda. As noted in Julius Gathogo (2018:2), a Kenyan scholar of note, “We think the way we do in large part because the Greeks thought the way they did.” To understand our own ways of thinking, thus, we need to establish how the Greeks thought. In light of this, Gathogo (2018) further highpoints the contextual nature of education when he explains in length, thus:

In understanding the contextual nature of education, it is critically important to recall the Athenian education, which was basically for culture. Kenneth J. Freeman has noted thus: ‘To a Hellene, education meant the training of character and taste, and the symmetrical development of body, mind and imagination.’ Indeed, in Athens (ancient Greece) education was designed to produce an Athenian. It was designed to produce an Athenian citizen. As T. R. Glover wrote, ‘The work of the Greeks is, above all things, the discovery of the individual’. [Equally], as William Barclay has noted, ‘The aim of Athenian education was to produce Athenians, who loved beauty and who loved Athens, and who were prepared to serve Athens in peace and in war’. Similarly, in the Kenyan context, the goals of education include fostering patriotism and national pride and promoting individual development, self-fulfillment, moral values and social responsibility, among others. In view of this, prudent education management of our resources and effective teacher leadership falls within the noble goals of education. [The quest for the Roman Catholic Church’s values in their founded schools is in tandem with Greece and the Kenyan contexts, among other places, as it is geared towards self-fulfillment, upholding Church’s integrity-driven values, social responsibility, greater happiness for the greatest number, individual development, moral values, national pride, and the development of mind, body and imagination, and indeed the love of the Roman Catholic Christianity and its well-entrenched values of respect for the sanctity of human life and nature] (p.2).

In view of the contextual nature of effective education, our mission as teachers in Catholic schools is to enable the wholesome development of the learners entrusted in our care (Istikomah & Ayuwanti, 2017). We are to inspire those entrusted to our neighbours and ourselves, bring hope in situations of hopelessness, be a source of joy to the afflicted, and provide spiritual healing to those who are at the edge of losing their respective faiths. We are called to serve selflessly without discrimination amidst growing economic, social, political, environmental and religious/spiritual challenges. For this to happen, school leadership has a key role to play. Unfortunately, however, the current crop of head teachers in our schools do not appear to be well grounded in the Roman Catholic philosophy and traditions (Gleeson, O’Gorman, Goldberg, & O’Neill, 2018). There seems to be a lack of proper orientation into the Catholic ethos that are provided to non-consecrated leaders and others who teach in our schools. Are the non-consecrated capable of teaching the Roman Catholic Church ethos? Certainly, there no clear standard policy that guides the recruitment of teachers in Uganda’s Catholic schools. In view of the foregoing, it is not enough that a member of the Roman Catholic Church is necessarily well acclimatised; hence being a member should never be equated with being well-grounded in the ethos of the Church. Understanding the values of the Catholic Church needs proper orientation of the management of our schools and continuous professional development sessions that are integrated within their social teachings.

The mission of our Roman Catholic schools should be easy to internalise for our educators if they are to live by it and ably transmit their values to our learners. An example of a vision that ably reflects what Catholic education stands for is the Armidale Diocesan Catholic Schools mission. The mission statement is as simple as: “To Proclaim Witness and Serve” (Armidale Diocesan Catholic Schools, 2019). This mission is easy to remember by the teacher

and captures the core values of the Church's faith. We are called to be witnesses of the risen Christ through service. Through service, we further God's creative acts and help fulfil the command to conquer the world and make it a better place to live in (Gen.1:28). The teachers in the Catholic Schools of Armidale Diocese are expected to integrate in their curriculum's four core principles of the Catholic faith. These include the primacy of God, sanctity of life, the common good and fidelity in relationships. The four principles guide the values that teachers are expected to transmit to the learners. Such values include: love, sanctity of life, respect, stewardship of God's creation, sacredness of the family, chastity, solidarity/brotherhood, charity and concern for the weak and the poor. Teachers in the Catholic schools are enabled to transmit these values to the learners, as well as manifest them in their schools, through support material and continuous professional development.

The Catholic Church worldwide is renowned for the provision of quality education (Stan, 2018). In Uganda, some of the best schools over the years are Catholic founded or headed by the religious-oriented leaders, for example, St. Savio Junior School and Namilyango Junior School. The Catholic schools have a dual mission of promoting the learners' academic work as well as religious development (Anonymous, 2019; McGunnigle & Hackett, 2015). The Catholic school was known for its quality and low cost education in line with the global Catholic mission of serving the poor. The communities supported the school, which lessened the financial burden on the schools. Unfortunately, the support of the school by the communities is rapidly fading away. Without external moral and financial support, the Catholic schools in Uganda are increasingly drifting away from the mission of serving the poor as schools get dominated by learners from well-to-do families. All tenets that make the Catholic schools unique, such as the Catholic identity, faith, life in Christ, sacraments, prayer, reading the scriptures and social justice/morality may be hard to appreciate in the current Catholic primary schools. The Catholic schools focus is steadily shifting from stressing Catholic values to focussing on academic superiority (quality versus commitment to faith). Secularism has permeated the Catholic primary schools and there is urgent need for immediate intervention. The cost of globalization is not only eroding our cultural values, but is creating a crisis in our schools as we strive to shape the morals of our learners.

In this article, we attempt to answer the following questions: 1) Are our teachers aware of the Catholic values and traditions? 2) Do the teachers in our schools understand and able to explain the Catholic teachings on prayers, sacraments, as in the case of: confession, speaking in tongues, church leadership, sainthood, suffering, justice, miracles, scriptures, church liturgies and rituals, religious symbols – crucifixes, medals e.g. Benedict's medal, miraculous medal etc.? 3) How are we manifesting Catholic values and traditions in our schools? 4) How do we integrate Catholic values in the curriculum and all our Catholic activities both within and outside the classroom? The provision of adequate answers to these questions will contribute to restoring the Catholic identity in our schools. For example, the increasing challenges in this world, especially poverty, have turned many Catholics from the mother Church in favour of the preachers of the "Gospel of prosperity" religious outfits. Many other Catholics are losing the proper understanding of accepting suffering as a way of true Christian witness of following Christ by carrying the cross. Such Christians, whenever challenged by any sort of suffering, run to the increasingly self-proclaimed prophets, for prayers so as to get relieved of their assumed sufferings! The concept of prayer, especially the Catholic Mass, is being shunned by many youths in preference for the more spirit possessed prayers in Afro-Pentecostal churches, which are largely constituted by music and personal testimonies. Clearly, they are not centred on the celebration of the Eucharist! This is an exploratory study based on the authors' experiences and informal interactions with several primary teachers in the Roman Catholic Church's founded schools in Uganda.

The concept of quality education:

Quality Catholic primary schools

Whereas many educators provide different indicators of quality education, the single most important indicator is the quality of the relationship that exists between the teacher and the learner (HaseenaV.A & Ajims , 2015). The relationship in a school should not reflect the work-place type of a boss versus the worker. Such a relationship give the wrong perception that leads students to view school tasks as geared towards helping them. The view it as merely for avoiding punishments, and not because they are intended to benefit them (Istikomah & Ayuwanti, 2017). This violates the Christian principle of respecting the dignity of the individual learner. In our teaching, we should involve the learner in whatever we do e.g. prepare lessons with the learner in mind, provide adequate examples, involve learners in problem solving, and encourage them to attempt given assignments rather than threaten them with punishment for not attempting the assigned work. We should be able to explain why we do what we do to our learners so as to enable them appreciate our values. Catholic education is meant to train a wholesome person with an enquiring mind that can ably appreciate our mission as witnesses of Christ and stewards of God's creation. The curriculum in a Catholic school should integrate the academic and religious values.

The Catholic education philosophy values the school to be an essential source of empowerment to the learner (Stan, 2018). Stan (2018) further argues that the education provided in Catholic schools should bear the fruits of the values of Catholic education where learners appreciate being members of a community that shows care and concern of others especially the weak and the poor. The school should enable the socialization of both the learners and their stewards in the Catholic faith through shared experiences. The Catholic school should empower the learner with abilities to face existing challenges and evaluate life experiences in light of the Christian faith. We have to remember that each child is unique and therefore recognize the individuality of each child by attending to his/her unique educational needs.

The school should offer an enriched curriculum that takes into account the wholesome development of the learner. Their mind, body and soul should pre-occupy our daily school programmes. For instance, prayer should be an integral of every lesson to cater for the learners spiritual growth, the learning with clear instructional objectives integrating Catholic values stated among the expected competences should cater for the mind while physical activities such as sports and games should cater for the development of the learner's body. The curriculum offered in our schools should lead to the full development of learners' talents. The school should prepare learners for the culture of democratic leadership where they elect their leaders and hand over leadership positions when their term expires. The growing commercialization of politics in our country threatens the core values of leadership as a service. Our schools should contribute towards the true value of leadership by discouraging attempts by those aspiring for leadership positions in our schools to offer 'bribes' in form of gifts like sweets to sway voting in their favour. This should be clearly explained to the learners, that leadership is a service and one should be voted on merit. The dangers of 'bribing' potential voters should be explained using current examples where leaders who are voted through 'vote bribery' rarely go back to their constituencies after elections leading to misrepresentation of such constituencies.

Improving the quality of education in schools (MOES, 2012)

The Government of Uganda prioritizes quality education and as Catholic teachers, it is our responsibility to make the school a better place for the learner to appreciate our call as dual citizens of this world, and as members of a pilgrim church. The Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) provides various indicators of quality education, which of course are in line with the Catholic mission, albeit indirectly. The indicators of quality education in schools are provided as the ability of schools to minimise the number of learners who drop out of school, raising the standards of attainment and improving the quality of learning and teaching in classes. The schools should

promote healthy life styles as well as ensure learners' safety and security. To enforce discipline in schools, positive approaches to managing learners' behaviour should be adopted as opposed to the most popular method of corporal punishment. The positive approaches to enforce discipline are in line with the discouragement of developing employer - employee relationships in schools by (Istikomah & Ayuwanti, 2017). The emphasis on the need for schools to cultivate a working relationship with the community to prevent the damage done to girls' education, future lives by defilement, early marriage, and child labour is in support of the Catholic principle of Community as opposed to individualism. We may argue that secular governments provide a foundational ground on which to build and transmit the Catholic ethos by filling up what is lacking in the government indicators.

What is perceived as quality education seems not to segregate between the various levels of education. The indicators of quality education cited by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES, 2012) were mainly in reference to primary education. These indicators are echoed in relation to higher education by (HaseenaV.A & Ajims , 2015) where quality education is measured among others, in terms of examination results, institutional facilities, sporting activities, prospects for higher education and students' employment after graduation. As teachers, we stay most of the time, almost three quarters of the learners time is spent at schools with the teachers. The parents entrust us with the responsibility of turning children into responsible citizens. The teacher plays a central role in the realization or failure of quality education in schools. Most researchers have rightly asserted that the quality of an institution is reflected in the quality of its human resources. The teachers must thus be developed and supported to enable them fulfil the mission expected of them. This can be achieved through proper orientation on what the teacher is expected of as a teacher in a Catholic founded school, which at the same time may be government aided. The government has its own expectations, and the teacher needs to be supported as to how s/he can ably integrate the demands of the secular world and the expectations of the Catholic education.

Field experiences of the realities of Roman Catholic primary schools in Uganda:

The challenges facing the Catholic founded schools in Uganda

The informal interaction with a cross section of teachers in Catholic founded schools, revealed several challenges that they encountered in manifesting the identity of Catholic schools. The challenges included the lack of teachers' accommodation, work overload caused by understaffing, lack of refresher courses and the limited supervision or support and guidance from the Parish Education Committee (PEC). The PEC is a body consisting of seasoned educationists from the Catholic faith that are relied upon to provide guidance on education issues in the Parish in line with Government policies. From the interactions, this PEC seems not to be as effective as it is mandated to be, and therefore need to be strengthened through proper orientation and guidance.

The current Roman Catholic school in Uganda is multi-denominational in nature for both the learners and the teaching staff. What is worrying, however, is the increasing overshadowing of teachers and learners by other denominations. As to how this is possible in Catholic founded schools, is an issue that needs urgent attention by both the foundation body and the school management committees. The pressing question then becomes very clear, can we maintain Catholic identity in schools that are increasingly dominated by staff and learners that do not subscribe to the Catholic faith? This however, provides an opportunity for us to interest and inform teachers and learners of other faiths of the beauty of the Catholic faith. For as St. James says, be known by works (James 2:14-26). We should therefore turn this threat into an opportunity to be true witnesses of Christ to people from other faiths.

Some teachers cited the existence of poor relationship between the school and the community. May this be a result of the limited support by the foundation bodies given to our schools or the lack of monitoring by the school management committees? The teachers interfaced with decried the limited support supervision given to the schools.

There was a suggestion that schools be facilitated with religious articles like crucifixes, bibles, hymnbooks and medals. It was also suggested the catechists be allocated time on the school timetable to help in teaching of religious doctrines to the Catholic pupils in Catholic founded schools.

The limited support from the foundation bodies also featured prominently. In addition, the foundation body was viewed as exploitative of the schools from which they demanded what the teachers considered 'a lot of money'. This notwithstanding there was inadequate funding of the schools given that many of the schools rely on school fees, which is not easily forthcoming from a largely poor Christian community. This, however, needs to be explored further in future studies. Perhaps it may be that the foundation bodies do not explain the needs for these funds, and as such, the schools do not see value for the money that they contribute.

Transmitting Catholic values in our schools

The informal interactions elicited several suggestions on how Catholic values could be preserved and transmitted in Catholic schools. A critical analysis into these views revealed the focus on the central role expected of a teacher in a Catholic school. The suggestions included the need to offer refresher courses that help interpret the values to the teachers and how best they can transmit them to the learners and their peers. It was also suggested that stakeholder place an active role in monitoring the school activities well knowing that Catholic schools are modelled on the values of the family or community. The school annual work plans were proposed to integrate Catholic values cascading down into the termly, weekly and daily work plans. Teamwork in schools was cited among the factors that could help the transmission of Catholic values in schools, which of course is in line with Catholic principle of solidarity. The love for the school and the learners entrusted to the care of teachers was stressed, not forgetting the need to keep teachers well motivated.

The foundation bodies were called upon to play an active role in the school activities. The foundation body sets the policies and procedures as well as providing the strategic direction of the school. When new employees are recruited or members appointed on the school management committees, these should be well oriented in the Catholic ethos and grounded in the values expected to be manifested in the schools they are heading or supervising. The various stakeholders like the parents need also to be oriented in the school ethos. Some teachers suggested the inclusion of catechism as an integral part of the school curriculum. The feasibility of this and at what level of primary schooling it should be implemented needs further scrutiny lest it is misconstrued by non-Catholic members of our schools as deliberate attempts to indoctrinate and convert their children into the Catholic faith.

Some teachers placed emphasis on sacraments in Catholic schools. For instance, crucifixes should be placed in all classrooms and offices. Catholic teachers and learners should be encouraged to wear rosaries, medals or scapulars. The sacraments used in the church, such as candles, holy water, religious pictures and statues need to be explained to the faithful. There was a suggestion to conduct fellowships in the schools. The feasibility of this is highly doubtful given that fellowship are more or less considered non-Catholic practices and more associated with the Pentecostal movements. Perhaps what is meant by fellowship needs to be explored further so as to investigate the suitability and appropriateness among largely conservative Catholic communities.

Other suggestions focussed mainly on the school environment and the need to make it manifest the Catholic values and traditions. The teachers suggested that remedial classes should be provided to slow learners. This may however be complicated in situations of congested classrooms especially in schools offering Universal Primary Education, where at times, the staffing is also inadequate. This limitation can also be said about the suggestion to provide revision exercises in form of homework to the learners. To build the leadership qualities of the learners, it was suggested that learners be assigned with various responsibilities. Teachers were advised to prepare schemes of work and lesson plans, which of course is among their key responsibilities. The issue then should be on the ability of the teachers to integrate Catholic values during the preparation of the schemes of work and lesson plans. It was also

suggested that school visits to each other be regularized to share experiences and learn from each other as school communities from the same Catholic family.

Interpretation of field experiences and study recommendations:

The curriculum as a transformative vehicle for social and personal change and the learner as a change agent

A quality curriculum is that which enables learners to apply what they have learnt for sustainable livelihoods. The teachers in Catholic schools should be trained on how to integrate Catholic values in the curriculum and the teaching learning process. In this section, we identify some values of Catholic education and provide suggestions as to how they can be integrated in the curriculum.

- 1) The Centrality of Love. When Jesus was asked by His disciples what the greatest commandment was, he replied that it is the love of God, the love of neighbour and self (Mathew 22: 37-40). We can integrate this commandment in our curriculum by teaching our learners the value of service to others before self. The current commercialization of politics in Uganda, which unfortunately is steadily permeating the lower levels of education in our primary schools, should be discouraged. People seeking leadership positions should present themselves with what they have to offer to the electorate in terms of service, upon which potential voters should base on who to vote.
- 2) The search for wisdom – through learning we acquire wisdom, and true wisdom comes from God (Sirach 1:1). We can put this into practice by beginning all our classroom activities with a prayer of a Christian hymn calling upon the Holy Spirit to be amongst us and empower us with His wisdom. The Catholic teachings clearly emphasize that wisdom is among the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Teachings on respect for human rights. The Catholic Church stand on respect for life is very clear as exemplified in its anti-abortion stand. The teacher can make reference to the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17), especially where it is stated, "Thou shall not kill" (Ex 20:13). Every Child represents a unique image of God and Catholics believe that human life begins on the very day of conception. From Prophet Jeremiah, we are told that God knew Jeremiah even before he was born (Jer. 1:4-5). When mother Mary visited her sister Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth's womb jubilate-d (Lk 1:39-45). The teacher can clearly stress this value by taking the learners through the dangers of abortion, and where possible, cases of mother who had attempted abortion but ended up giving birth to bouncing children could be referred to or brought in to share their experience. The teacher may also let learners reflect on 'supposing their mothers aborted their foetus etc.'
- 4) Charity, solidarity with the poor as emphasized by the Second Vatican Council and Saint John Paul 11 in Toronto, 1984. The story of the widow that offered the only coin she had (Mk, 12:41-44) could be used to illustrate that fact that none of us is too poor to give thanks to God. The story of the Elijah and the widow who accepted to share her only meal with Elijah (1 Kgs, 17:7-16) can be used to share the beauty of charity. The story of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk, 16:91-31) is also a good example.
- 5) Integrating the principles of Justice in our Curriculum. The right to dignified work, working conditions and fair wages are among the values a teacher should explain to the learners. The slavery of the Israelites in Egypt and how this provoked God's wrath leading to the eventual destruction on an entire Egyptian army (Ex 14: 23-31) could be a good reference study. The many stories against exploitation and injustices in the book of prophets (Amos 6) could be reference study materials. To ensure that learners appreciate what justice is, we can request them to cite examples of injustices in their surroundings and how they can manage them to bring about a just society.
- 6) Active participants in the world we live for the common good (CSR). The common good should override our commercial interests. The value of being compassionate should be clearly explained to the

learners. The teaching of St. James on the need for Christians to bear one another's burden could be used to explain what it means to be compassionate.

7) Being in right relationship with God and each other (Peace). This is stressed in the Second Vatican Council. The world is full of violence and distressing situations that make it hard for Christians to fully realise the gift of life. Our relationship with God was broken when our ancestors Adam and Eve disobeyed God through sin (Gen.3:1-7). Christ the Lamb of God and the Prince of Peace restores this relationship. The teacher can stimulate a discussion by guiding learners into a discussion of how peace in the communities they live in is distracted by human actions. The learners can they be asked to suggest ways of how peace can be maintained in the communities with reference to Christian scriptures.

8) Reconciling the demands of the state with Catholic values e.g. teaching sex education in schools. There is an on-going debate as to whether sex education should be taught in schools especially to pupils in primary schools. The government view is that this will enable learners to make informed decisions regarding their sexuality and sexual choice. The Catholic Church in Uganda is strongly against this especially when it comes to the young children in the primary schools. The church argues that schools are nurseries for potential couples. That these children are still too young to be engaged in an education best suited for adults. Introducing sex education to learners in schools would be like enticing them to explore into what may lead them into sin. The Christian teaching is such that whoever leads the young one into sin is better not to have been born (Mt. 18:6). The question that has to be handled is then the most appropriate age that sex education should be introduced to the learners and what content should be taught at what age group.

9) Stewardship of Creation. When God created the world, He saw that all was good (Genesis 1:31). God put man in charge of this wonderful creation to help Him continue His creative activities. The mother church basing on this fact calls upon us to harness the environment in a sustainable way (Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace 2008). Haseena & Ajims (2015) explained how values such as environment stewardship stressed by Pope Benedict XVI could be integrated in the school activities. For example, involving learners in voluntary work related to restoring the environment, participating in environmental awareness campaigns or maintaining a clean compound

10) Gratitude – this is the value that requires us to be thankful to God for His goodness. All that we have and what we are is by God's grace. God was pleased with Abel for he always offered to Him the best of his fruits of work (Gen 4:1-5). After the floods, Noah offered to God a sacrifice that produced a beautiful scent that made God regret having destroyed the sinful man (Gen 8:20-22). For this God made a covenant with Noah through the sign of the Rainbow never to destroy the world again with water. When God requested Abraham to offer his only son to Him, Abraham accepted without hesitation. God blessed him with many more gifts, and up till name the Christian faithful take Abraham to be the father of the Christian faith (Gal 3: 6-9). When we give, we are bound to even receive more.

11) Community versus Individualism. Our ancestors Adam and Eve may have sinned because of individualism. Perhaps, if Eve were in company of Adam, the serpent would not have easily tempted her. We are a worshipping community, and the value of community is clearly stressed in Jesus' teaching. Where two or three are gathered in prayer, there I will always be in their midst (Mt. 18:20). When we work together, we are able to solve many challenges that face us than we leave everything to ourselves. The growing cases of Christians committing suicide occur when such individuals isolate themselves and thus receive no companionship, support and comfort leading to such ungodly acts.

Conclusion and recommendations on developing the Catholic identity in schools

The growing secularization of society and the trends towards the establishment of a single religion is threatening the preservation of the Catholic identity in Catholic founded schools. The foundation of the Roman

Catholic school is built on the dual mission of promoting learners' academic activities as well as religious development (McGunnigle & Hackett, 2015). The mission of the Catholic is to serve the poor. The reality points to the steady drift of Catholic primary schools from this ideal mission. The manifestations in the mission drift include, but not limited to the charging of exorbitant fees, limited care for both teachers and students' welfare, and the increasing prioritization of the academics over the spiritual development of the learners. The following recommendations are made from the study:

- 1) Have a clear grasp of Catholic Values (You cannot offer what you do not have). The church should provide support materials on the Catholic values and their interpretations, and how these can be integrated in the curriculum without the fear of indoctrinating learners.
- 2) The need for each Catholic school to articulate its vision, mission, objectives and motto. In the same vein, as educators in Catholic schools, we need to redefine our identity by reflecting on who we are and why we are. The vision and mission should be easy to internalise.
- 3) Find easier ways of transmitting these values. These may include the use of music, dance & drama. When such media is used are used, the main goal should not be to entertain but rather to educate and transmit the Catholic gospel values to the learners. This can be achieved by clearly explaining to the audience the message that is carried in such activities.
- 4) Learning the culture of savings. In Africa, our spending patterns are characteristic of the 'inverted funnel' where we earn less but spend more. Efforts should be to train our Catholic communities in the value of thrift. The Church grew mainly because it had believers who from their savings could support its activities.
- 5) Train learners to understand themselves and the world around them. We should not simply transmit knowledge but educate learners to think critically and be able to evaluate the world around them
- 6) Maintain a data base of our Alumni who should act as role models, source of support and inspiration to learners in our schools
- 7) There should be a clear policy on how teachers are sourced, recruited, oriented, developed and promoted in our schools. Being a Catholic is necessary but not sufficient to enable a person transmit Catholic identity in a catholic school. Proper orientation and regular retreats, if possible, on a termly basis should be organised for teachers in our schools to share experiences and how they can manage challenges in an increasingly secular society
- 8) The Parish Education Committees (PEC) where they exist should be strengthened to conduct regular supervision and provide support to our schools. The PEC should ensure the manifestation of a Catholic identity in a Catholic school
- 9) Have a policy on learner recruitment that prioritises learners from vulnerable families. This, in essence, requires that our schools be supported with means of generating additional funds. For example, schools based in rural areas where the church has land, should be enabled access to some of this land so as to set up school gardens. Seminars on how to manage income generating projects should be organized for both parents and teachers of our schools

References

- Anonymous. (2019, November 26). Retrieved June 5, 2022, from <https://ugcolleges.com/2019/11/26/list-of-catholic-founded-schools-in-uganda/>
- Armida Diocesan Catholic Schools. (2019). Retrieved June 6, 2022, from <https://arm.catholic.edu.au/>
- Gathogo, J. (2018). Reconstruction of pastoral and theological education in tropical Africa: A review of the case of St. Andrew's College, Kabare. *HTS Theologese Studies / Theological Studies*, 74(1), 9 pages. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.5049>

Gleeson, J., O'Gorman, J., Goldberg, P., & O'Neill, M. M. (2018, June). The Characteristics of Catholic Schools: Comparative Perspectives from the USA and Queensland, Australia. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 21(2), 76-106. doi:10.15365/joce.2102042018

HaseenaV.A, & Ajims, M. P. (2015). Aspects of Quality in Education for the Improvement of Educational Scenarion. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(4), 100-105. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083740.pdf>

Istikomah, D. A., & Ayuwanti, I. (2017). Improving the quality of school as a solutions of education problem. *International Conference on Educational Research and Innovation (ICERI 2017)*, (pp. 99-101). UNY Yogyakarta. Retrieved May 25, 2022, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332393728_IMPROVING_THE_QUALITY_OF_SCHOOL_AS_A_SOLUTIONS_OF_EDUCATION_PROBLEM

McGunnigle, C., & Hackett, C. (2015). Spiritual and Religious Capabilities for Catholic Schools. *eJournal of Catholic Education in Australasia: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1, Article 6*, 2(1), 1-30. Retrieved June 2, 2022, from <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/ecea/vol2/iss1/6>

MOES. (2012). Evaluating and improving the quality of education. Retrieved May 24, 2022, from https://www.education.go.ug/utsep/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/how-can-we-improve-our-school-part1_tcm76-38166.pdf

Stan, I. C. (2018). The Future of Catholic Education in Africa: Narrating and documenting our own stories. *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, 30, 6-38. Retrieved May 25, 2022

Author biographies

Kizza James, PhD, is a lecturer in the Department of Business Administration and Management at the University of Kisubi. He has taught in higher education institutions for over 20 years. He has special research interests in the Roman Catholic education, especially with reference to the primary school education levels, as the future of the Roman Catholic Church in Uganda. (Email: kizzajames2016@gmail.com).

Mubiru Pontious, MA Leadership, is a lecturer in the Department of Business Administration and Management at the University of Kisubi. He is a PhD candidate in Agriculture and innovation. He was a head teacher in Catholic private founded school in Uganda. He was also an Inspector of Schools in one of the Catholic Dioceses in Uganda. He has special research interests in the revitalization of the Catholic Identity in Catholic founded schools. (Email: pontiousmubiru@gmail.com).

Competing Interests:

The authors declares that they have no financial or personal relationships or undue interests that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Author(s) contributions:

The researchers concedes that they are the sole authors of this article that creatively contributes to the world of academia, and is not published by any other Journal elsewhere.

Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

Ethical considerations statement:

As noted above, in the acknowledgement section, this research article followed all ethical standards for research.