

Secondary school teachers' perceptions of Catholic school management in selected schools of Lusaka District

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of a study conducted to assess Catholic and non-Catholic teachers' perceptions of Catholic schools' management in five selected Catholic secondary schools in Lusaka District of Zambia. The objectives of the study were to examine the experiences of teachers teaching in Catholic schools; to assess the teachers' perceptions of their school management in the Catholic schools, to establish aspects that influence negative perception of teaching in a Catholic school, and to investigate how religious restrictions affected the morale of teachers teaching in Catholic schools. The study used a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews to generate data. Purposive sampling was used to select 25 participants that included five school head teachers; one in each school, ten Catholic teachers and ten non-Catholic teachers; two in each school that participated in the study. Data analysis was thematic. Among the key findings were that Catholic schools were managed via a strict school management model. Further findings revealed that key management positions were seen to be a preserve for Catholic teachers, management in the schools was perceived to be conservative and mass was made compulsory. Based on the findings, the study recommended the need to make the attendance of Mass, devotion, and other religious activities optional especially for non-Catholic teachers in order to respect religious choice and further adoption of flexible styles of management and minimum supervision of teachers. Positions in school management should be available for all teachers and learners and be based on merit first before religious faith.

Keywords

Catholic secondary schools, management, perceptions, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The schools in Zambia are run through the provisions of the law and the current policies which are implemented by the government which act as the watchdog for such provisions. Part VI of the 2011 Education Act provides for the establishment, operation and registration of private or church schools. However, it is important to note that churches have actively participated in the provision of education and have been running their schools even before Zambia became independent. To date, all faith-

based founded schools are jointly controlled by faith-based institutions and the government. Thus, the role played by the church in the provision of education cannot be overemphasized. According to Ministry of Education [1] education policy, education in Zambia is intended to enhance the quality of life for all and hence under a liberalized educational system, the right of religious bodies to establish and control their own schools is recognized.



The advent of colonialism which was accompanied by the introduction of western formal education (mainly by Christian missionaries) had a significant impact on the education system as it allowed a lot of missionaries to provide education services in the country. This covers the colonial and post-colonial periods. In this period, the education system was mainly run by the Church which included the Seventh Day Adventists, the United Churches in Zambia and the Catholic Church to mention but a few. This ensured that all the Churches that offered education tailored it to their own doctrines. For instance, in the Seventh Day Adventist church, keeping the Sabbath day holy predominates in which the learners and teachers were expected to rest, in Catholic schools, attending Mass and respecting the sanctity of their religious denomination is a must.

During this period, education was formally in the hands of the missionaries and the church was at the center of its provision. The Bible was used as the main text from which content for the subject was drawn. Religious instruction was taught by missionaries as part of their evangelization process. This was because the missionaries' main concern was the conversion of the local people to Christianity. However, the conversion of the local people undermined the religious instruction that was offered by the community and this changed the attitude of people towards the veneration of spirits and other traditional ways of doing things.

According to Snelson [2], it was missionaries of the Christian Church who brought modern education to Northern Rhodesia. Missionaries who came to Northern Rhodesia now Zambia left a legacy, they did not only establish Churches but went a step ahead by establishing schools which are still standing today. Their works go beyond schools to building hospitals and providing other social services. Unlike government schools whose funding has been inconsistent, mission schools were better off. This, coupled with the discipline pupils were exposed to made them produce better results for a long time. They were the automatic choice of parents for their children. Even though these schools are still standing today, their standards may not match those of yesterday.

According to Carmody [3], one of the first actions of the government under the Multi-Party Democracy was to revise the regulations affecting the Church-run schools to enable them

to become more autonomous. To date, Church run institutions have greater freedom in terms of financing, student enrolment as well as staff appointment. However, the Church is still built on the principles which it had before of being reliant on the Christian values in which most of the people who work in these schools have to follow the Church principles. For example, those who work or teach in Catholic schools are expected to attend or celebrate Mass at the beginning and end of each term.

Significance of the study

It is hoped that the findings of this study would help the management in the Catholic schools to examine the most challenging teachers' perceptions of Catholic school management and what negative impact these challenges can have on teachers in executing their duties. Examining such perceptions would help the school managers and administrators in Catholic schools to come up with measures to help them create a more enabling environment for teachers in executing their duties especially those transferred from government schools and teaching in a Catholic school for the first time.

Statement of the problem

Zambia is a Christian nation but everyone is allowed to practice their own faith. According to the constitution of Zambia Article 19, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his or her freedom of religion or freedom to change his religion or belief either alone or with others to manifest and propagate their religion or belief in worship. However, the Catholic Church compels everyone working in their institutions to follow their doctrines. For instance, in Catholic schools, attending Mass by both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers is compulsory and disciplinary measures are taken by school management on teachers who fail to attend Mass. What has not been studied and documented are the teachers' Perceptions of Catholic schools' management and how such perceptions affect their profession in the execution of their duties. This study was on the teachers' Perceptions of Catholic and non-Catholic teachers' perception of Catholic schools' management in the selected secondary catholic schools in Lusaka.

Research objectives

The following objectives guided the study: (1) to examine the experiences of teachers teaching in

the Catholic schools; (2) to assess the teachers' perceptions of their school management in the Catholic schools; (3) to establish aspects that influence negative perception of teaching in a Catholic school; (4) to investigate how religious restrictions affect the morale of teachers teaching in Catholic schools.

Theoretical framework

The study was guided by Skinner's reinforcement theory. Hitesh [4] defines reinforcement theory as the process of moulding for shaping the behaviour of an employee by the employer by controlling the after-effects for the consequences of that behaviour using suitable rewards and punishments which reinforce the wanted behaviour and terminate the unwanted behaviour. According to Gordan and Krishnan [1], Skinner's reinforcement theory includes four approaches; positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, extinction and punishment. Based on the restrictions or rules put in Catholic schools, some of which are linked to the Catholic faith, teachers teaching in Catholic schools are required to follow such rules and failure to do so attracts disciplinary measures. Hitesh [2], states that it is common knowledge that what gets rewarded gets repeated and what gets punished gets avoided. Therefore, Skinner's reinforcement theory is relevant to this study as it informs us about the consequences that employees in an organization are likely to face for not adhering to the restrictions or rules put in place by any organization or institution.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experiences of teachers teaching in catholic schools

Catholic schools have been known for their high academic quality. In a study by Weitzel-O'Neill and Scheopner Torres [3], it was revealed that academic excellence is often a distinguishing characteristic of Catholic schools, one that is central to the mission and identities of these schools. A study by Garcia-Huidobro [4] also revealed that academic excellence expressed catholic identity. The study also revealed the repeated conclusion that studies in the United States catholic schools' outcomes have focused almost completely on academic achievement is very important. Catholic schools are known for their interest in producing holistic learners.

Teachers' perceptions of school management in catholic schools

Management in Catholic run institutions is not done by an individual but through boards and the Church community. A Catholic school has a board which runs from the parish Priest to the Church council. This therefore ensures a bureaucratic type of leadership in which the Head teacher is the front line in the school management system. Teachers and administrators who become part of the Catholic school system are aware that they are subject to the authorities that govern the Catholic Church. A study by Zommers [5] on climate in Catholic schools revealed that teachers felt that their power was confined to making decisions in the classroom. However, involving teachers in decision making helps in the success of any school. A study by Dite [6] revealed that Catholic school principals are required to be Catholic in order to serve as the faith leader in a catholic school. On the other hand, Mihovilović [7] revealed that despite teachers' commitment to catholic education and desire to its ethos, some of them expressed concern about the reservation of head teachers and deputy head teachers' positions to Catholics. However, because the Catholic school is responsible for developing the academic and spiritual needs of the children under its care, the school administrators are a key in setting the tone of the school in the evangelization of the next generation of students. To ensure an excellent Catholic education for all learners, a strong principal in place who is an excellent faith and instructional leader is ideal for any catholic school.

Aspects that influence negative perceptions of teaching in a catholic school

Catholic schools are generally non-denominational, in that they allow teachers of any religious affiliation to teach in their schools provided they are qualified and willing to adhere fully to the rules and regulations of a catholic school. It is not reasonable to expect that all teachers in a Catholic school are motivated to teach in Catholic schools for the same reasons or have the same understanding of their dual roles of academic formation and religious formation, Kushner and Helbling [8]. A study by Cho [9] in South Korea revealed that a teacher's commitment to a school and its members is a very important subject in terms of a school's success and students' academic achievement. Generally, Catholic teachers are motivated to teach in a

catholic school by religious reasons. On the other hand, some non-Catholic teachers may not be motivated to teach in a Catholic school for a long time due to the school environment which is characterised by Catholicism. The results of the study by Convey [10] on Motivation and Job Satisfaction of Catholic School Teachers clearly showed that the motivation to teach in the school because it was a Catholic school is important for many Catholic teachers. The results of this study also showed that Catholic teachers are more likely to recognize their ministerial roles in the school and be motivated by the opportunities to assist in their students' spiritual development than non-Catholic teachers. Teachers who understand the mission of the school and are committed to fostering the school's Catholic identity are needed to maintain a vibrant Catholic school. However, this may seem to some as an extra load on those teaching in catholic schools, hence the negative perceptions. Teachers in a Catholic school have a vital role and contribution in promoting, establishing and sustaining the unique climate of the Catholic school. By their teaching and learning activities, they participate closely in the mission of Catholic schools which is an extension of the Catholic Church.

How religious restrictions affect the morale of teachers teaching in catholic schools

A teacher's commitment to a school is very important in terms of a school's success and students' academic achievement. However, religious restrictions in catholic schools seem to have an impact on the morale of teachers. In a study by Cho [9] it was revealed that, for many teachers, particularly those in Catholic education settings, faith is a critical component of intrinsic motivation. In addition, the study also found that the most important reasons that influenced Catholic teachers' decisions to teach at their current Catholic schools were closely related to their faith in comparison with non-Catholic teachers. This entails that, on average, religious restrictions have more of a negative impact on the non-Catholic teachers' morale than catholic teachers in Catholic schools as catholic teachers are more familiar with such religious restrictions than non-Catholic teachers. A study done by Daniel [11] revealed that an unmarried woman was fired from a Catholic school in Montana when the principal discovered that she was pregnant; two unmarried teachers were also fired from a Catholic high school in Massachusetts

after they revealed to the principal that they were in a relationship and that the woman was pregnant. Teachers in Catholic schools need to have a commitment to create a faith community; it is a strong recommendation that teachers employed in the schools be Catholics. Mostly, non-Catholic teachers find it difficult to align their social life to the catholic norms that guide catholic schools. However, some teachers become rebellious of such norms, who in most cases end up being transferred to public schools. This makes it difficult for some of the non-Catholic teachers to blend in and become productive as some of the catholic values and norms are indirectly imposed on them. Therefore, it is important that teachers in Catholic schools are employed on the condition that they understand and are fully committed to the distinctive purpose and spirit of Catholic education as well as the values it promotes.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted a qualitative research paradigm and a phenomenological research design. This paradigm was adopted because it allowed for descriptions in the analysis of the findings from the participants. The qualitative approach ensures the achievement of a holistic view of the phenomenon by exploring meanings, feelings, experiences and perceptions [12]. On the other hand, since the study was interested in how Catholic school teachers perceive their school management; the descriptive phenomenological research design was found to be the best in describing such perceptions. Padilla-Díaz [13] states that a descriptive phenomenology deals with personal experience and require a description of the meanings of phenomena experienced by participants in a study. Therefore, descriptive phenomenology employed as a research design to this study helped to give voice to the perceptions of the participants in the context of the study. Twenty five (25) participants were involved in the study comprising of five (5) school head teachers; one in each school, ten (10) Catholic teachers and ten (10) non Catholic teachers; two in each school respectively. Purposive sampling was used with critical case consideration of teachers that had been at the school for not less than one year. This was to ensure that participants had adequate experience of having taught in a Catholic school and were ready to share their experiences. The

study was carried out in five selected Catholic secondary schools and since the participants for this research were already known and identified through purposive sampling technique. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews.

Data analysis

Since the study was qualitative, the data collected was analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis refers to topics or major themes that come out of the interviews or discussions Creswell and Creswell [14]. In this regard, thematic analysis focused on the major themes in relation to the research objectives and research questions of the study. The themes under which data were analyzed included; Experiences of teachers teaching in Catholic schools, Teachers' perceptions of their school management in Catholic schools, Aspects that influence negative perceptions of teaching in Catholic schools and effects of religious restrictions on the morale of teachers in Catholic schools. Similar arguments from emerging themes were also analysed in the context of the topic under study in relation to the research objectives. This helped in answering the research questions for the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings were presented according to themes guided by the research objectives. The major themes were; Experiences of Teachers teaching in selected Catholic Secondary Schools, Teachers' Perceptions their School Management, Aspects that influence negative perceptions of teaching in a Catholic School and How Religious restrictions affect the morale of teachers.

Experiences of teachers teaching in selected catholic secondary schools

Teachers reported various experiences of working in a Catholic managed school

The experiences were described in sub themes that emerged during interviews as follows; strict management, reward system and learner performance. The following sub themes provide the detail of the teachers' experiences: Strict management. One of the key findings noted in the study was that strict management was prevalent in all the Catholic Secondary Schools understudy. This finding was reported by both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers. Head teachers in the selected schools also responded in affirmative that Catholic Schools are managed

according to strict school policies as directed by the school managing agency which prescribes the rules and regulations for Catholic schools and that strict adherence to them is a mandate. In agreement with this, one Head Teacher said;

We are told to implement what the managing agency wants to be done in Catholic schools. So if you are the school head teacher, you only do what you are told to do, failing to do so may be costly; one can be labelled for opposing the Church authorities and this can either result in the Head Teacher to be transferred or be demoted (HT3; School C).

This entails that the Head Teachers managing Catholic schools are not at any point expected to alter any of the directives made by the school managing agency as doing so may lead to the transfer or demotion of the Head Teacher. In this case if Head Teachers do not adhere to the directives from the managing agency they can be punished by transferring them or demoting them. This clearly indicates that authoritarian kind of management in Catholic schools is upheld as a way of ensuring uniformity at every stage of management. Therefore, teachers in Catholic schools are equally expected to strictly adhere to such rules and regulations as guided by the managing agency. One teacher expressed the following sentiments;

"Teachers from different denominations teaching in a Catholic School are expected to bend to school activities related to the Catholic faith or beliefs. No teacher is allowed to bring in the Catholic School his/her beliefs except the Catholic beliefs. Teachers are somehow limited in executing their duties because whatever should be done must be within the Catholic doctrines. Therefore, creativity is also not encouraged if it goes beyond the Catholic beliefs" (Non-Catholic Teacher; School A).

Similar views were shared by some other teachers that;

"Teaching in a Catholic School seems to be a Challenge especially for those who have taught in Government schools for a long time because Government school are not managed according to any religious beliefs or doctrines of a particular Church but rather managed according to what is stipulated by the Ministry of

Education” (Catholic and Non-Catholic Teachers; School B and D).

It was evident from the findings of the study that the strong strict management styles in the schools understudy was also aimed at ensuring that the teachers play their role in the development of responsible learners. In addition, strict management system was practiced as evidently seen from the complaints expressed by the participants regarding the way local policies, rules and regulations upon which Catholic secondary schools are managed. Furthermore, the findings indicated that Catholic schools are an extension of the Catholic Church hence some of the policies, rules and regulations in the Catholic schools were made by the managing agencies instituted by the Catholic Church which school administrators, management and teachers have to implement in order to reinforce stipulated discipline, values and morals without fail in the quest to offering education aimed at producing holistic learners.

Rewards

The other result which this study brought to light as reported by the majority of the participants was that the school management gave teachers different forms of rewards which among others, included rewards in monetary form which were given to outstanding teachers with exceptional performance and sometimes to all teachers when the pass rate for the learners improved in the final examinations. Giving rewards to teachers by management in Catholic schools is one ways of motivating the teachers so that that they can continue working hard as a team towards the provision of quality education to the learners. The comments about the rewards appeared to be the common sentiment shared by all the teachers. One of the teachers said that;

“In an instance where the school pass rate has improved and the school management is impressed, each teacher is given a reward in monetary form as a way of encouraging us to continue working hard as a team towards the provision of quality education to the learners” (Catholic Teacher; school A).

In the same vein, another teacher pointed out that:

“Accommodation provided by the Catholic management for their teachers is cheaper and affordable compared to renting a house outside the school” (Non-Catholic Teacher; School A).

Besides monetary rewards, the study revealed that cheaper and affordable accommodation was another form of reward provided by the Catholic management for their teachers. This is a reward in the sense that accommodation offered by the school Catholic management to their teachers is much cheaper compared to renting a house outside the school premises. From the excerpts above, it is clear that teachers appreciate that their effort in making sure that learners pass do not go unnoticed by the school management.

Learners' performance

Another finding revealed in the study was that high academic performance is an important component of Catholic schools. The Catholic school management is more concerned about the learners' performance; therefore, teachers were expected to put in their best in order to produce learners with good results as the effort of the teachers is usually reflected in the learners' performance. One Head Teacher expressed the following sentiments;

“Laziness is not tolerated in management and among teachers, hard work and sacrifice is extremely encouraged for getting things done in order for the learners to get the quality education and meet the Catholic School standards” (HT4; School D).

Catholic Schools' management consider hard working, teaching above average and producing competent holistic learners as the benchmark used to either renew or terminate the contracts of the teachers' underperforming and transferring those who are not contracted to other schools, without negotiations. It was noted that several complaints were reported which among others, was that if the learners' performance were below average in many subjects, teachers teaching those learners got their 'contracts terminated instantly and new teachers were employed. This led to anxiety among teachers who seemed to underperform. One teacher lamented that;

“Two teachers were transferred because they had failed to reach the passing threshold for the school for three consecutive years. This therefore

created anxiety for other teachers who remained” (Catholic Teacher; School C).

On the other hand, this sends a signal to other teachers who need to put more effort in the way they work.

One of the prominent findings noted in the study was strict management which was prevalent in all the Catholic Secondary Schools understudy. This finding was reported by both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers. This finding resonates with the findings of Carmody [15] who argued that Catholic School education is rooted with traditional and standard educational values supported by strong strict management styles aimed at producing holistic learners with sound character worth to live with in society. The findings indicated that Catholic schools are an extension of the Catholic Church hence some of the policies, rules and regulations in the Catholic schools were made by the managing agencies instituted by the Catholic church which school administrators, management and teachers have to implement to reinforce stipulated discipline, values and morals without fail.

The other result which this study brought to light as reported by the majority of the participants was that the school management gave teachers different forms of rewards. This finding was consistent with that of Onwuegbuchulam [16] and Ayaga [17] who affirmed that the Catholic Church is known for encouraging school management to uphold the trend of giving various forms of rewards to motivate teachers in their respective schools regardless of their religious affiliations. This is in consistent with reinforcement theory which guides this study as Hitesh [2] states that reinforcement theory implies giving a positive response when an individual shows positive and required behaviour. The fact that what gets rewarded gets repeated entails that the management in the Catholic schools makes use of rewards as a way of motivating teachers to perform to the expected standards. However, if rewards are given based on religion, other teachers who are not members of a religious group may become demotivated. What should be applauded about the Catholic management system is the embracement of inclusivity where teachers from different religions are permitted to teach in Catholic schools. Johnson and Muzata [18] observe that inclusion, once well practiced brings everyone into a productive mode where

each member strives to attain success in their learners.

Another finding revealed in the study was that high academic performance is an important component of Catholic schools. Grace [19] also revealed that in many societies world over, Catholic Schools make a great effort to remain places of high academic achievement. In agreement with this, Carmody [20] argues that Catholic schools are a priority for many because of their reputation for good examination results. The Catholic schools' good reputation excellent academic results is not new as Grace [19] postulates that the good reputation for academic achievement associated with Catholic schools is an ancient phenomena which constitutes a central part of the Catholic Church's educational history globally. However, this seems to be in conflict with Waterreus [21] who argued that the performance of a student is beyond the control of a teacher. In other words, a teacher should not be viewed as the only factor that determines learners' performance but the roles played by the school management, the school as a whole and the family where learners come from should also be acknowledged.

Teachers' perceptions of their school management

To establish teachers' perceptions of their school management, various perceptions were recorded from this study. The emerging themes that described teachers' Perceptions of their school management were; management positions and conservative management. Both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers gave their perceptions on the identified themes as follows:

Management positions

The study findings revealed that key management positions like the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teachers were strictly a reserve for Catholic teachers. On the other hand, even though positions like Head of Department (HOD) or senior Teachers in a Catholic school could be occupied by either Catholics or non-Catholic teachers, Catholic teachers were always accorded the first priority. One of the teachers complained that;

“Management positions for the school head teacher, deputy head teacher and heads of departments are a preserve for Catholic teachers only and non-Catholic teachers are deprived of

management opportunities by virtue of being non Catholics” (Non-Catholic teacher; School B).

Reserving such key management positions for Catholics posed a challenge for non-Catholic teachers who lost hope for vertical mobility in management while in a Catholic school. This in most cases resulted in some of the non-Catholic teachers to request for transfers to government schools with the hope of being promoted to hold such positions.

On the other hand, one teacher stated that;

“Being a Catholic, I have a positive perception towards the school management because most of the things are not new to me, however, certain positions are strictly meant or reserved for Catholic Teachers e. g Religious Co-ordinator, Head Teacher/ Deputy Head Teacher hence non-Catholic Teachers tend to be de-motivated to teach in a Catholic school because there is no hope for them to rise to such positions while in Catholic Schools. This results in non-Catholic teachers who are eager to hold such positions to request for transfers to government schools with the hope of being promoted” (Catholic Teacher; School E).

However, being an extension of the Catholic Church, Catholic schools act as a channel through which Catholic ethos are promoted. This is because when Catholic teachers hold such key management positions they can effectively promote religious activities of the Catholic Church in the school since they are well acquainted with the religious beliefs of the Catholic Church. Therefore, it is clear that the appointment of non-Catholic teachers in key management positions will mean that Catholic ethos may not be promoted in the Catholic schools because some of their religious beliefs are in conflict with the Catholic beliefs. From the findings, it is evident that for one to hold a key management position in a Catholic, he or she has to be a practicing Catholic and be able to provide both the moral and ethical leadership in accordance with the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church.

Conservative management

It was noted from the findings that the management in Catholic schools is conservative and preserving management positions for Catholic teachers only was one of the ways of

conserving their way of managing the Catholic schools.

When interviewed on how they describe Catholic school management, some teachers gave similar views on how they feel they are managed. One of them stated that;

People have a negative perception of teaching in a catholic school because there is no room for accommodating opinions different from their way of doing things. The management should be flexible to different opinions especially from teachers coming from different religious denominations (Non-Catholic Teacher; School B).

Another teacher stated that;

“Strict supervision and no platform to accommodate views from the teachers by both the school management and administrators make teachers to lose morale in the life of the Catholic schools” (Catholic Teacher; School A).

Nonetheless, it was evident from the study findings that the conservative management in the Catholic schools was a way of aligning the Catholic school management with the Catholic education policy because schools ought to be managed in accordance with the Catholic management policy. By so doing, both the religious purpose and the academic purpose of Catholic schools are achieved.

On the other hand, the findings clearly indicate that the participants in the study appealed for a flexible kind of management style which is open to new ideas on how to manage schools, an idea which seems impossible in the life of the Catholic schools because even the Head Teachers managing the schools affirmed that they follow the directives from the school managing agencies which have an upper hand in how Catholic schools are managed. Simply put, management in the selected Catholic secondary schools is perceived to be conservative because it seems those in management at school level can hardly alter the directives from the managing agency on how Catholic schools are supposed to be managed. The school Head Teachers only implement the directives from the managing agency with little or no say on how they should manage Catholic Schools. However, it could be stated generally that the conservative nature and strong influence of the Catholic Church on the

Catholic schools appears to be responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of education, with Catholic beliefs, principles and faith inclusively among the teachers and learners.

The study findings revealed that key management positions like the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teachers were strictly a reserve for Catholic teachers. However, reserving such key management positions for Catholics posed a challenge for non-Catholic teachers who lost hope for vertical mobility in management while in a Catholic school. On the other hand, even though positions like Head of Department (HOD) or senior Teachers in a Catholic school could be occupied by either Catholics and non-Catholic teachers, Catholic teachers were always accorded the first priority. This is in accordance with the Catholic education policy because a Catholic teacher should be knowledgeable about the Catholic ethos and doctrines in order to have a proper understanding of the Catholic worldview in the achievement of Catholic ethos in the Catholic schools [22]. The appointment of non-Catholic teachers in key management positions will mean that Catholic ethos may not be promoted in the Catholic schools because some of their religious beliefs are in conflict with the Catholic beliefs. It was noted from the findings that the management in Catholic schools is conservative and hence preserving management positions for Catholic teachers only was one of the ways of conserving their way of managing the Catholic schools. Swallow [23] on the other hand reported in favour that it was a must for teachers to have a breadth of teaching philosophies, approaches and most importantly the faith and traditions of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, it was evident from the study findings that the conservative management in the Catholic schools was a way of aligning the Catholic school management with the Catholic education policy because schools ought to be managed in accordance with the Catholic management policy.

Aspects that influence negative perceptions of teaching in a catholic school

To establish the aspects that influence negative perceptions of teaching in the selected Catholic Secondary Schools, negative perceptions were recorded from this study. There were a number of emerging themes that described teachers' negative perceptions of teaching in a Catholic School and the emerging themes were;

compulsory attendance of Mass, strict rules on teachers' social life and participation in other Religious Activities. Both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers gave their negative perceptions on the identified themes as follows:

Compulsory attendance of mass

Different perceptions were reported by both Catholic and non-Catholic Teachers regarding attending Mass which is compulsory for all the teachers. However, some teachers felt that they were being compelled to attend mass against their will. Various sentiments were expressed by the teachers as follows; one of the teachers said that;

"Teachers are usually forced to attend mass even the Catholics themselves. The religious activities such as Mass should not be forced on teachers otherwise the impact or aim of such activities may not be felt or realized" (Catholic Teacher; School C).

Another teacher expressed the following sentiments;

"Some teachers shun away from Mass because some of the activities done during Mass are not in line with their religious beliefs. In most cases, they attend Mass because they are required to do so by management and failing to do so may attract disciplinary measures" (Catholic Teacher; School A).

From the excerpts above, it seems some teachers do not attend Mass willingly but do so because it is a mandate, and given an option to choose whether to attend Mass or not, most of them would not be in attendance.

In the same vein, another teacher stated that;

"Attending Mass is compulsory but some teachers attend mass for fear of going against what they are expected of in a Catholic school especially those who are teaching in the school under contract" (Non-Catholic Teacher; School B).

The findings of the study indicated that some teachers especially non-Catholics felt that they were being compelled to attend Mass indicating that some of the activities performed during Mass are not in line with their religious beliefs. In most cases, they attend Mass because they are required to do so by management and failing to do so may

attract disciplinary measures. Relevant authorities should come in and challenge the constitutionality and legality of the Catholic schools' policies on their stance of making participation in religious activities compulsory for both teachers and learners in Catholic schools.

From the participants' responses on the Compulsory attendance of Mass by both teachers and learners in Catholic schools, it shows clearly that Catholic schools do not function in isolation from the Catholic Church.

From the participants' responses, it showed that the Catholic schools were more than an education institution as it forms an important part of the Catholic Church. This entails that if one is to teach in Catholic school, they have to conform to the Catholic values which the school practices. This is evidently expressed in the compulsory attendance of Mass by the teachers teaching in the Catholic schools understudy.

Compulsory participation in other religious activities

Apart from Mass, there are a number of other religious activities that teachers are supposed to participate in and the most prominent ones were morning devotion and Catholic retreats or day of prayer. Teachers expressed various sentiments regarding compulsory participation in morning devotion and Catholic retreats as follows;

One teacher said that;

"It is compulsory for all teachers especially Grade teachers to spearhead morning devotion with learners in their respective classes daily before lessons begin and taking part in other religious activities such as retreat where teachers worship and pray together at the beginning of each term usually outside the school premises. Failing to participate in such activities is a serious offence" (Non-Catholic Teacher; School A).

In agreement with the teachers' expressions above, one of the Head Teachers interviewed said;

"Participating in religious activities like the day of prayer is compulsory for all the teachers, failure to do so without any convincing reason may attract disciplinary measures because teachers are supposed to lead by example so that pupils follow suit when they are required to

participate in religious activities" (HT5; School E).

Another teacher said that;

"Learners and teachers are required to take part in morning devotion daily before the first lesson begins regardless of which Church they are affiliated to. This in some cases is seen by some non-Catholic teachers as a way of converting pupils to the Catholic faith when in the actual sense it is not true, this is just a way of promoting holistic learning for the pupils" (Catholic Teacher; School D).

The study's findings revealed that morning devotion and Catholic retreats were the major religious activities made compulsory for all the teachers and those in management. However, the way such religious activities were conducted seemed to be in conflict with the religious beliefs of some of the non-Catholic teachers, for example, at times, prayers said during morning devotion or Catholic retreats were pre-written meaning that they did not come from the heart.

On the other hand, being familiar with the Catholic faith and beliefs, Catholic teachers were unbothered about such religious activities and how they were conducted, however, what did not seem well for some of them is that at times such activities did not fit well in their schedule. In view of the different sentiments critically shared by the majority of the participants, it is clear that there is need for management to make the participation in other religious activities optional for teachers. This is because, non-Catholics whether Christian or not may need to participate in or exempted from the religious activities out of their will as a way of embracing the religious diversity of the members of staff.

Strict rules on teachers' social life

Generally, the participants in the study indicated that the school management is quiet strict on the social life of the teachers. Teachers expressed various views on strict rules on Teachers' social life by management. These views were expressed as follows;

One teacher expressed the following sentiments;

"The School management is too strict and inquisitive on the visitors of the opposite sex who come to visit single members of staff who are accommodated within the school premises. This

discourages members of staff who are not yet married to stay in the teachers' compound for fear of the school managers invading their privacy" (Non-Catholic Teacher; School E).

From the above excerpt, the teacher complains of the restrictions that comes with being accommodated in the school houses, a complaint which was expressed by another teacher as follows;

"Accommodation offered to teachers by the school should not come with restrictions on who should visit them and who should not as long as such visitors do not put the lives of other teachers accommodated in teachers' compound in danger" (Non-Catholic Teacher; School E).

One teacher expressed the following sentiments;

"In an effort to uphold morality among teachers who are role models to the learners, the school management is quiet inquisitive about teachers' social life e.g. a female teacher who becomes pregnant out of wedlock is given a force transfer to a public school. Furthermore, in an instance where a couple divorces while staying in the Teachers' compound, either is them are not allowed to continue staying in school" (Catholic Teacher; School D).

From the teachers' expression above, it is clear that the Catholic schools are run side by side with the Catholic ethos and as such, the Catholic school management encourages the teachers to uphold issues to do with morality as a way of showing that Catholic schools practice what the Catholic Church teaches with regards to morality. This in most cases is looked at with mixed feelings by both the Catholic and non-Catholic teachers. It could be stated however that the Catholic secondary schools are strongly guided by the Catholic ethos which emphasize strongly the aspect of upholding morality as seen through the emphasis on teachers being role models to learners both in school and subsequently the society at large. Teachers teaching in Catholic schools are therefore expected to lead exemplary lives.

The study findings indicated that compulsory participation in religious activities such as Mass was one of the aspects that were influencing negative perceptions of teaching in the Catholic

schools. The study pointed out that attendance of Mass was compulsory for both teachers and learners regardless of their religious affiliations. On the contrary, the Constitution of Zambia [24], Article 19 (1) states that, except with one's consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of religion or belief in worship. In the same line, Article 19 (2) states that except with one's consent, no person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance relating to a religion other than his own. From the participants' responses on the Compulsory attendance of Mass by both teachers and learners in Catholic schools, it shows clearly that Catholic schools do not function in isolation from the Catholic Church. In agreement with this, Cook [25] states that, for Catholics, Mass is a central aspect of their faith and is considered as an important religious ritual where all Catholic beliefs and values are expressed in practical terms. Catholic schools are therefore an important part of the Catholic Church's mission. Arthur [26] also pointed out that Catholic schools are closely connected with Catholic parishes as it is believed that Catholic education is best achieved in a three-way partnership with home, school and parish, the students are taken to the Church for grade level masses or masses for the whole school at least twice in a year. This was evident even with the schools understudy as each one of them was located in close proximity to the Catholic parishes. Being familiar with the Catholic faith and beliefs, Catholic teachers were unbothered about such religious activities and how they were conducted, however, what did not seem well for some of them is that at times such activities did not fit well in their schedule. This finding is similar to the result noted by Swallow [23] who articulated in support that Catholic teachers teach well in Catholic schools because the faith, beliefs, values and norms upon which the schools are being administered are the same to those upheld in the Catholic Church. On the contrary, Wolsonovich, Smilaycoff, and Ribera [27] state that, making participation in religious activities optional for teachers would make Catholic schools lose their sense of affiliation to the Catholic Church. This entails that, since Catholic Schools are an extension of the Catholic Church, the enrolment of non-Catholic students and the employment of non-Catholic teachers in Catholic schools is an indication that the Catholic

Church through Catholic schools are appreciative of the opportunity to share their faith to non-Catholic students and non-Catholic teachers.

How religious restrictions affect the morale of teachers

The general response from the participants on how religious restrictions affected the morale of teachers was that a number of religious activities proved to affect their morale negatively. The study established that there were different religious factors that affected teachers' morale. One of the factors reported was the compulsory attendance of mass. In the verbatim excerpt below, a teacher laments about the effects of making Mass compulsory:

"Attending mass should not be an issue of forcing us but we should be given a chance to make our personal decisions either to attend mass or not. The management in Catholic schools should embrace the diversity of religious denominations their members of staff belong to. Attending Mass by members of staff should be optional" (Non – Catholic Teacher; School E).

Another teacher expressed the following sentiments;

"Attending Mass and devotion is a religious restriction which the Catholic schools have imposed on all teachers which in most cases is against non-Catholic teachers and non-Catholic learners" (Catholic Teacher; School D).

From the excerpts above, fear appears to be experienced by teachers once they fail to attend Mass; that they are likely to be disciplined by management. This fear leads to low morale. When the researcher interviewed the heads of the schools on the issue of compulsory Mass, the findings indicate that Mass was compulsory but some head teachers wondered whether all teachers attended mass willingly or not. One of the head teachers said;

"Some non-Catholic teachers openly tell the school managers that they feel suffocated being or working in a Catholic school because there are too much Rules and religious restrictions" (HT3; School C).

Generally, the study revealed that participation in religious activities by teachers

appeared to affect their morale negatively because participation in such activities was in most cases done against their will because the teachers were not given a chance to choose whether or not to participate in such activities. This clearly shows that the compulsory attendance of Mass negatively affected the morale of mostly non-Catholic teachers as they felt that doing so is going against what they believe in their respective religious denominations.

The general response from the participants on how religious restrictions affected the morale of teachers was that a number of religious activities proved to affect their morale negatively. It could be stated however that the Catholic secondary schools are strongly guided by the Catholic ethos which emphasize strongly the aspect of upholding morality as seen through the emphasis on teachers being role models to learners both in school and subsequently the society at large. In agreement with this, Grace [19] argues that the instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrines; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life. Teachers teaching in Catholic schools are therefore expected to lead exemplary lives. In line with this, Henze [28] postulates that teachers act as catalysts in determining the desired identity of Catholic schools as they can either build or destroy it hence the need for the Catholic Church to ensure that the right teachers teach in the Catholic schools. In other words, this means that Catholic schools are established as an extension of the Catholic Church as a way of the Church to give to the community.

CONCLUSION

The study was intended to establish the perception of teachers towards Catholic Schools' management in selected Catholic Secondary schools in Lusaka District. The study was designed with a focus on four objectives as stated earlier. One of the prominent findings noted in the study was strict management which was prevalent in all the Catholic Secondary Schools understudy. This finding was reported by both Catholic and non-Catholic teachers. The other result which this study brought to light as reported by the majority of the participants was that the school management gave teachers different forms of rewards regardless of their

religious affiliation as a way of motivating them. Another finding revealed in the study was that high academic performance is an important component of Catholic schools. Other study findings revealed that key management positions like the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teachers were strictly a reserve for Catholic teachers. However, reserving such key management positions for Catholics posed a challenge for non-Catholic teachers who lost hope for vertical mobility in management while in a Catholic school. However, this is in accordance with the Catholic education policy because a Catholic teacher ought to be well informed about the Catholic doctrines which are relevant in the management of a Catholic school. The study findings also indicated that compulsory participation in religious activities such as Mass was one of the aspects that were influencing negative perceptions of teaching in the Catholic schools. The study pointed out that attendance of Mass was compulsory for both teachers and learners regardless of their religious affiliations. From the participants' responses on the Compulsory attendance of Mass by both teachers and learners in Catholic schools, it showed clearly that Catholic schools do not function in isolation from the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the general response from the participants on how religious restrictions affected the morale of teachers was that a number of religious activities proved to affect their morale negatively. It could be stated however that the Catholic secondary schools are strongly guided by the Catholic ethos which emphasize strongly the aspect of upholding morality as seen through the emphasis on teachers being role models to learners both in school and subsequently the

society at large. However, it is important to note that the findings of the study could not be generalized to all Catholic schools because the views of the participants could not give the overall representation of all teachers teaching in Catholic schools.

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made. First, there is need to make the attendance of Mass, participation in morning devotion and other religious activities optional for non-Catholic teachers in selected Catholic secondary schools. This would help boost the morale of teachers who seem to be negatively affected by such compulsory religious activities. Second, there is need to adopt flexible styles of management and minimum supervision of teachers in selected Catholic secondary schools. This will help management in recognizing individual differences among teachers which makes it easy to improve efficiency in the schools. Third, there is need for the managing agencies to involve teachers in the decision making process in the selected Catholic secondary schools, this would lead to optimum innovation in the schools. Forth, positions in school management should not only be confined to those who are Catholics but also to non-Catholics so that management is balanced and not biased in selected Catholic secondary schools. Fifth, there is need for the position of a Head Boy and Head Girl in the catholic school should not just be reserved for catholic learners only, but, also for other learners from other denominations to have the chance of practicing leadership in selected Catholic secondary schools. This would help in the realization of inclusiveness in the school management.

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