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Non-Catholic Students' Cultural and Religious Experiences Attending Catholic High Schools

by

Solomon Yinwaat Soabil

A dissertation

submitted to the faculty of

University of St. Thomas Minneapolis, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctorate in Educational Leadership

University of St. Thomas

Saint Paul, Minnesota

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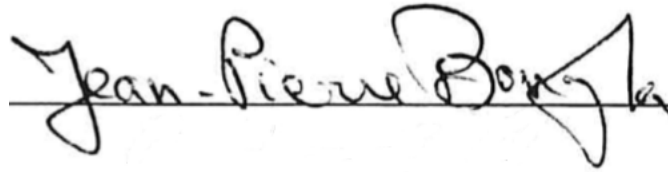
Non-Catholic Students' Cultural and Religious Experiences
Attending Catholic High Schools.

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

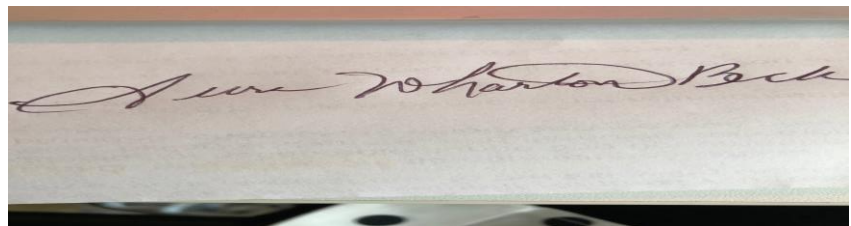
Dissertation Committee



Sarah Noonan, Ed. D., Committee Chair



Jean-Pierre Bongila, Ed. D., Committee Member



Aura Wharton-Beck, Ed. D., Committee Member

April 2, 20202

Final Approval Date

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the experiences of non-Catholic high school students attending two Catholic schools supported by government funding in Ghana. Due to financial constraints, the Catholic Church appealed to the Ghana government for financial support. Once approved, the government became part of the administration of these schools. I explored the meaning non-Catholic students ascribed to their experiences participating in the religious program with the goal of documenting the potential adverse effects of school policies. I adopted a phenomenological qualitative approach for my study. Interviews, observations, and documents constituted the sources of data collection. The data analysis revealed non-Catholic students experienced distress due to several factors. They knew little of the robust religious program of Catholic schools prior to their admission. The schools required all students to participate in Catholic worship. Non-Catholic students felt uncomfortable immersing themselves in a faith they did not profess. Participants described the liturgy as unintelligible because of its symbolism. To adapt, non-Catholic students practiced their faith in secret to maintain their religious identities. Despite the challenges, participants were impressed with the schools' serene climate and exceptional discipline, which promoted learning. They acknowledged positive relationships between students, teachers, and the administrators with few exceptions. Also, understanding participants' perspective might initiate a change of the worship policy and give students more freedom to practice their faith and ease the tension between the parties. The schools might need to revise the entrance procedures to ensure applicants know what to expect of them as students attending a Catholic school.

Keywords: Catholic school, non-Catholic, high school, religion, worship

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

My study explored the challenges non-Catholics students experienced while attending Catholic high schools and participating in the Catholic culture and mandatory worship programs in Ghana. This practice in some respect has created a kind of a conflict between the Ghana government and some of the government-assisted Catholic high school officials in the country. As a clarification to the kind of tension being discussed, I provided a definition to this conflict right from the beginning of the study. I defined this conflict as the presence of incompatible perspectives and perceptions between the government and some of the Catholic high school officials in the country in which my study took place. The tension is implicit but at times it becomes explicit when issues arise requiring a redress. I provide a background to my study.

While serving in a Catholic high school as a chaplain and spiritual director, I noticed the struggle non-Catholic students experienced attending mandatory worship services. In addition to serving as chaplain and spiritual director in this high school, I also taught Religious and Moral education (RME). The questions non-Catholic students asked in the RME class further reflected the challenges they encountered as non-Catholic students in a Catholic school. Several non-Catholic high school students: approximately 32.15% participated in the Muslim religion and other Christian denominations as opposed to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The policy of my former school required all students to participate in mandatory worship activities, such as attending Mass and rosary prayers. The early history of the school explains the reasons for this worship policy which is still in practice today. I provide a brief history of the establishment of the school. The Missionaries of Africa founded this boys' school in 1960 with the mission to prepare candidates for the major seminaries, and ultimately, the priesthood like some other Catholic

schools in the country (GES 2015). During the early years, the school granted admission only to Catholic students. The Catholic diocese in which this school is located, single-handedly controlled and managed the school until in 1990. Financial constraints compelled the diocese to apply for financial assistance from the Ghana government leading to an increase in enrollment (Wedam, 2010). The government approved this application and the school later joined the other schools in the public system of education, thus gaining a slightly new status as a government-assisted high school (Wedam, 2010).

Based on the financial support (provision of infrastructure and payment of teacher salaries), government policy required the school administrators to grant admission to non-Catholic students (The 1961 Education Act). This policy explained how non-Catholic students found their way into this Catholic school. This policy created a conflict not only between this school and the government, but also with some of the other government-assisted Catholic high schools in the country. The tension is as a result of the experiences of the non-Catholic students enrolled in these Catholic high schools who must participate in mandatory Catholic worship (GNA, 26 February 2015).

Along with offering a good education, Catholic high schools also provide students with opportunities to increase their knowledge of the Catholic faith and encourage growth in a commitment to the Catholic Church (SCCE, 1977). Basically, one of the highest priorities of Catholic schools involved the formation of students to become active and committed members of the Catholic Church.

The Ghana government's conflict with some of the assisted Catholic school officials involved the required curriculum and participation in religious services. The government wanted all schools supported with government funds to prepare students to become citizens of Ghana and advance their education. The government over the years has not favored the promotion and

teaching of one particular religion over and above other religions in public schools (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). The promulgation of the 1961 Education Act became necessary when it was brought to the notice of the government that “many of the religious bodies (churches) were admitting pupils based on religious affiliations” (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010, p. 11). Section 22 of the 1961 Education Act addressed the issue as follows:

- (a) No person shall be refused admission as a pupil to, or attendance as a pupil at, any school on account of the religious persuasion, Nationality, race or language of himself or of either of his parents.
- (b) No tests or enquiries shall be made of or concerning the religious belief of pupils or students prior to their admittance to any religious school or college. (p.7)

It is worth stating that religious education has existed in the country during the time of the castle schools in pre-colonial era (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). However, following the 1987 Education Reform, religious instruction which hitherto was part of Cultural studies was deleted due to the removal of the latter from the curriculum of basic schools. This removal resulted in a public outcry and protests from the religious bodies leading to the setting up of the National Education Reform Review Committee (NERRC) in 1994. The reform required government to allow religious education in the country (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). The reintroduction of religious education, dubbed Religious and Moral Education (RME), occurred in both basic and high schools. However, in 2007, following the Anamoah-Mensah Education Reform, RME was removed from the curriculum of basic schools (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). The Christian Council of Ghana and the National Catholic Secretariat vehemently opposed this removal; the protest led to the eventual reinstatement of RME (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). This brief history portrays the tension which existed between religious bodies and the government regarding religious education in the schools throughout the country.

The aims and priorities of both the government and some religious bodies sometimes conflicted based on the priorities of each institution. Both institutions, the government and the religious bodies supported the goal of achieving advanced educational goals as measured by national examinations. However, conflict existed regarding the status, expectations, and experiences of religious education in faith-based schools (GNA, 26 February 2015). This conflict continues to have no apparent resolution.

My study focused on the experience of non-Catholic high school students attending Catholic schools supported by government funding. My study explored the expectations of Catholic high schools on non-Catholic students with regard to their participation in mandatory Catholic worship. This included the government's rejection of these expectations, such as mandatory worship.

The conflict regarding the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools, bordered on what constituted good or bad experiences for non-Catholic students. The stance some Catholic high school administrators took sometimes conflicted with those of the government. The issue concerned what strategies were beneficial for the non-Catholic students and the quality of students' learning experiences. The most reliable source of information on how non-Catholic students experienced the Catholic worship and culture of Catholic high schools should come from the non-Catholic students themselves. They experienced the culture of the school in which they lived and studied. Only non-Catholic students could adequately tell how the Catholic culture and the religious program affected them. The essence of the students' experiences and the meaning they made from attending a Catholic high school is the central topic of my study. The non-Catholic students constituted the target group of my study because they have experienced the phenomenon (attending mandatory worship) and their perspectives and experiences should be understood and shared.

Problem Statement, Purpose, and Significance

The Constitution of Ghana (1992) states that, “all persons shall have the right to freedom: to practice in any religion and to manifest such practice” (Article 21(1) (c). Also, the 1979 and 1992 Constitutions explicitly prohibit discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of one’s conscience which include religious belief (Article 27 clauses 1-7 of the 1979 Constitution; Article 17 clauses 1-3 of the 1992 Constitution). An inherent conflict exists between the “right to freedom” in line with this Ghana constitutional provisions and the mission and goals of the Catholic schools, especially the requirement concerning the participation of non-Catholic students in Catholic worship services. The government viewed compulsory attendance of non-Catholic high school students as an infringement on the fundamental human rights and freedoms of non-Catholic students who would otherwise not participate in such religious programs when given the choice (GNA, 26 February 2015). The Ghana Education Service (GES) has, therefore, on some occasions challenged the constitutionality and legality of schools’ policies on mandatory religious worship or “infringement” on religious freedom.

In 2015, the GES “reminded all heads of first and second cycle institutions that the GES policy on religious freedom in schools remained in force” (GNA, 26 February 2015). In cases where parents assume their children enrolled in faith-based schools are denied their religious freedom, they often make references to the constitution for protection against such school policies. For instance, a Muslim student enrolled in Adisadel College fell from the fourth floor and died, allegedly as a result of being chased to go for church service, (Accra Mail, 20 March 2008). One of the Muslim leaders “appealed to the Government to intervene to ensure that their right to freedom of worship, as enshrined in the national constitution, was not trampled on” (GNA, 5 October 2014, para. 3). Next, the Catholic school officials’ viewpoint.

The school authorities who represented the Catholic Church argued that the Catholic Church owns the schools and has the mandate to decide on what will promote discipline and ensure order (School Bond Form, 2018). Students who gain admission through the schools' internal examination or the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) have 'ipso facto' freely chosen to abide by all its rules and regulations. And students' participation in all the spiritual exercises of the schools is part of their regulations as Catholic institutions (Student Admission Letter 2018). Other officials of the Church who have observed the limitations the government places on the Catholic schools including some other faith-based schools in the country recognize the partnership that exists between the two parties. So on the basis of this partnership, the Church officials argued that there is the "need for the Government to respect the Church's partnership role by removing the obstacles in the way of the Churches to manage their Schools so that morality, discipline and excellence can be reasonably assured" (Avevor 2012, para. 19). The underlying conviction of the leadership of the Catholic Church is that "Mission Schools impart an all-round education to the child, with the hope that he/she will grow up to be academically equipped, psychologically balanced, morally upright, socially disciplined and physically fit" ((Avevor 2012, para 21). Some of the Catholic schools receiving financial aid from the state experienced this problem.

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to observe and interview the non-Catholic graduate students of Bernadodalini Senior High School (BSHS; pseudonym) and those of Zumbadarana Senior High School (ZSHS; pseudonym) to learn how they experienced and made meaning of their participation in all the liturgical and the para-liturgical activities of the school. This requirement was expected of all students attending a Catholic high school. The study also concerned non-Catholic students' experiences of the Catholic culture –something they could not escape as students who lived at the school.

This study may be significant because it described the phenomenon of non-Catholic students' experiences of participating in the Catholic worship and exposed the effects of the worship requirement on non-Catholic students. The findings may better inform school authorities' decisions regarding the worship policy and campus life in general. The experiences of non-Catholic high school students may help the school authorities fashion an alternative model of Catholic education. This ensures the evangelization of the Catholic students continues while at the same time provide options for the non-Catholic students who do not profess the Catholic faith. The study may also help school leaders appreciate how their perspective is different from the perspective of non-Catholic high school students, raising their awareness about the needs of non-Catholic students to serve them better.

Research Question

To guide my study, I adopted the following research questions: How do non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience and make meaning of the role and expectations of all students attending a Catholic high school? How do non-Catholic high school students experience and make meaning of the Catholic culture in which they live and study?

Overview of Chapters

I provide an overview of the chapters in this section, beginning with the first chapter. In Chapter One, I introduced the topic of my dissertation, which focuses on the participation of non-Catholic students in mandatory Catholic worship in some parts of Ghana. During my service as a high school Chaplain and a spiritual director, I observed the struggle faced by non-Catholic students who were required to participate in Catholic worship. Their participation conflicted with their religious beliefs and values. This role awakened my knowledge of students' experience and served as the foundation for my interest and curiosity to investigate their experience. The opportunity to undertake this study offered itself during my enrollment in the doctoral program. I

reflected on the problem statement, the purpose of the study and its significance. Raising the awareness of the experiences of non-Catholic students may change perspectives and requirements in Catholic schools. I stated my research questions and defined key terminologies related to the study. To provide adequate answers to the research questions implied a thorough search in the scholarly literature which I discussed in Chapter Two.

I presented the findings from a review of scholarly literature in Chapter Two. My search included review of relevant Church documents on the topic of inclusion to examine the Church's mission toward others. I organized the studies according to themes to understand the literature and facilitate the analysis of my findings. Following the analysis, I pointed out the gaps and tensions in the literature, grounding the need for my study on the cultural and religious experiences of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school. I also showed the two analytic theories: identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2003, 2014; Striker & Burke, 2000; Striker, 1980) and cultural theory (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Smircich, 1983) to explain and analyze my content review findings and later the findings of my study. The methodology description in Chapter Three provides a blueprint for my study.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology I adopted for my study. I described the rationale for adopting the constructivist- interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research methodology and a phenomenological approach with qualitative research traditions. I explained the theoretical perspectives underlying these methods as well as the epistemological assumptions embedded in them. The constructivist-interpretivist paradigm suited my study because its fundamental assumption is that knowledge and meaning is constructed by individuals participating in social settings.

I sought to understand the meaning participants constructed with regard to their experience as non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school. I further explained why a qualitative research also suited my study. I chose transcendental phenomenology as the suitable approach for understanding the lived experience of the non-Catholic students. Studies involving human subjects like mine require permissions from Institutional Review Boards.

In Chapter Three I described the procedures used to conduct this study. I applied for permission from the IRB of the University of St. Thomas to conduct my research. The IRB approved of my application, which indicated my study design met the expectations of conducting ethical research. I described my request for permission from the IRB prior to conducting my study and how I diligently followed the IRB's prescriptions while onsite. I also noted what to do with my data in compliance with the American Psychological Association (APA; 2020), after successfully defending my dissertation. Engaging participants on the field proved challenging.

As the primary researcher for data collection, I described the challenges experienced in my encounters with the participants on the field and the strategies used to mitigate the obstacles and ensure effective data collection. I included information on recruitment and selection of participants, indicating the factors I took into consideration to ensure rich data was collected. I collected three different sources of data: interviews, observations and documents. I explain the methods adopted to analyze the data following recommended procedures. Because reliability and validity are key components in qualitative research, I analyzed my data using Moustakas' (1994) modification of Van Kaam's (1966) method of analysis. I indicated the steps that must be adhered to in using this analytic method, while explaining what happens in each stage of the analysis process. The safety and confidentiality of participants was also accounted for in this chapter.

Issues of ethical concerns arise in human relationships, but most especially in those relationships where power imbalances exist. I acknowledged the power differentials between

participants and me and showed how best I related with participants as human beings endowed with unalienable rights. Chapter Four introduced and described the data collected.

After analyzing my data multiple times, I presented the findings in Chapter Four. In this chapter, my main focus was to allow the data to speak for the participants, considering the controversial nature of the topic investigated. I envisaged my readers may like to know what exactly participants said in their own words regarding their experiences. Thus, I did not only describe participants' experiences, but also presented verbatim quotations to show how participants explained their experience in their own words.

I analyzed the data collected in Chapter Five using Identity Theory (Stets & Burke, 2003, 2014; Striker & Burke, 2000; Striker, 1980) and Cultural Theory (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Smircich, 1983) to interpret my data. After explaining the themes in detail in the Chapter Four, I then adopted and described two theories and showed how this combination of theory and its application to my themes allowed me to greater insight regarding the experience of non-Catholic high school students. The four major themes emerging from my analysis included the following themes: conflict of identities and roles, emotional challenges in adapting to the Catholic culture, inadequate administrative support, and finally, insufficient knowledge of the expectations of Catholic schools.

As I suspected, non-Catholic high school students struggled with the rule requiring them to participate in Catholic worship service and follow their religious requirements in secret. I summarized and described the implications of my findings and recommendations in Chapter Six.

My reflections on the findings in Chapter Six unearthed the practical implications of my study and the changes needed to redress harm. I recommended changes in school worship requirements and culture to tackle some of the problems inherent in the phenomenon of inclusion. I also pointed out the limitations of my research, thanked participants and ended with a summary of the lessons learned from conducting the entire study.

Definition of Terms

I adopted the following terms to conduct my study:

Catechism of the Catholic Church: “A statement of the Church’s faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Church’s Magisterium” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, p. 5).

Catholic: A member of the general body of Christians who believes in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and also acknowledges the authority of the Pope as the supreme head of the Church.

Catholic Church: A community of believers who profess their faith in the Nicene and Apostles Creeds and acknowledge the Pope as their supreme head.

Catholic High School: An institution owned by the Catholic Church within a particular diocese under the jurisdiction of a bishop.

Chapel: A small building in the school for Catholic worship for the school community.

Liturgy: The liturgy refers to the Mass, and the celebrations of the other Sacraments in the Catholic Church, as well as the Divine Office.

Liturgical Celebrations: The term as used in this study refers exclusively to the Mass, and other Sacramental celebrations.

Non-Catholic: A person who is not a member of the general body of Christians who believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, nor acknowledges the authority of the Pope as the supreme head of that Church.

Para-Liturgical Celebrations: This refers to the devotions such as the recitation of the rosary, the Way of the Cross, morning, evening, and Group Prayers.

Pentecostal: The term is used in this study to distinguish the other Churches from the Catholic Church.

Prefect: Student leaders chosen by the students themselves but approved by the school authority.

Vatican II: The twenty-first Roman Catholic council convened by Pope John XXIII. The council produced 16 documents that redefined the nature of the Church, gave bishops greater influence in church affairs, and increased lay participation in the liturgy.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The essence of this literature review is to place this study within the field of published research related to the inclusion of non-Catholic students attending Catholic high schools. An in depth understanding of the studies conducted on the phenomenon of inclusion provided insights with regard to conducting my research study. The inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools has become a matter of grave concern in Ghana and other places in the last few decades. Several questions challenge school administrators. For example, how do Catholic high schools grant admission to non-Catholic students without compromising their Catholic identity? Another challenge, how do administrators ensure non-Catholic high school students become full members of the school community without infringing upon their constitutional rights? These issues confront Catholic school administrators, the Church, and States.

I searched for answers to my research question in my review of the literature. I adopted the following key search terms: *Catholic, religion, inclusion, non-Catholic students, Catholic education, faith-based schools* and *Catholic high schools*. Using these terms, I searched the databases: ProQuest, Eric, Education Full Text, the UST Research Online (published UST dissertations) and Google Scholar. I reviewed about 25 articles, dissertations and journals including Church documents relevant to the topic. Since these documents included discussions of inclusionary policies for Catholic schools, ignoring them would have affected the quality of the study. To better understand the literature and facilitate the analysis of my findings, I organized the studies on Catholic schools according to the following themes: (a) Catholic education history and contemporary practice in Ghana; (b) mandate and mission; (c) identity and characteristics; (d) admission requirements; and (e) the school environment. A description of each theme as found in the research follows.

Catholic Education History and Contemporary Practice in Ghana

Religious presence has long existed in faith-based schools (Kong, 2013). In the 19th and 20th centuries, Christian missionaries travelled to foreign countries with two major priorities: to evangelize and to educate the people in Western culture (Dongkore, 2010). Christian missionaries established schools as a means to evangelize the people but they also used education as a tool to change the people's culture (Dongkore, 2010; Kong, 2013) as well as to equip them with the requisite skills and expertise for the exploitation of local resources (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). The setting for my study, witnessed these missionary activities.

Between 1737 and 1882, Protestant Mission Societies landed on the shores of Ghana (Dongkore, 2010). Some of these religious bodies were the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, Bremen Missionary Society, and the Society for African Missions. Others were the Presbyterians and the Methodists. Missionary societies in Ghana, like in other African countries, were concerned with the spread of their respective faiths through education (Dongkore, 2010). Many of the schools in Ghana with high academic reputation were established and run by the Christian missionaries until they became government-assisted schools. Some examples include the following:

Wesley Girls School in 1836 and Mfantshipim College in 1876 (Methodist), Adisadel College in 1910 (Anglican), St. Augustine College in 1935 and Holy Child in 1945, (Roman Catholic), the Presbyterian Boys School, formerly at Odumasi-Krobo, and now in Legon in Accra in 1938. [Today, private universities exist which some religious bodies established. Examples include:] the Valley View University (Seventh Day Adventist) in Accra in 1979, Methodist University in Accra in 2000, Islamic University College in Accra in 2002, the Catholic University at Fiapre in 2003, Evangelical Presbyterian University College, in Ho in 2008, and others. (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010, p. 9)

The Missionaries of Africa arrived in Ghana in 1906 (Abadamloora & Gilleece, 2006)

Like the previous missionaries, they established schools with the same objective: to teach western culture and to evangelize the people. By the 1960s, faith-based schools had spread throughout the country. The public schools were under the control of the state but as private properties, the mission schools were run by their respective denominations (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). The founders' goals involved ensuring the continuity and progress of their churches and respective doctrines. The missionaries of Africa in Ghana, for example, set out to deepen the faith of converts and train some followers for special ministries in the Church. Based on this foresight, they founded many schools including minor seminaries. Next, I discuss how Catholic schools operated.

The Mandate and Mission of Catholic Schools

The Catholic Church derives its mandate and mission from the Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church (Vat. II, *Lumen gentium*, para. 25). The Magisterium guides and directs activities in the Church through constitutions, decrees, declarations, and encyclicals as well as Canon Law—the law of the Church. Catholic schools are operated under the auspices of the Church and thus, they derive their mandate from the Magisterium.

Regarding the Catholic school and the salvific mission of the Church, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE, 1977) stated that “evangelization is the mission of the Church; that is she must proclaim the good news of salvation to all, generate new creatures in Christ through Baptism, and train them to live knowingly as children of God” (para. 7). In other words, the Church establishes the mandate for its schools to fulfill the Church’s mission of propagating its faith to humanity. The mission of the Catholic school is to proclaim the Word of God and administer the sacraments to those it admits. After 10 years of reflection on the changing

nature of the Catholic school Vis-à- Vis its mandate and mission, the Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE, 1988) observed:

What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its religious dimension and that this is to be found in a) the educational climate, b) the personal development of each student, c) the relationship established between culture and Gospel, and d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith (para. 1) [but it acknowledged and admonished:]

Not all students in Catholic schools are members of the Catholic Church; not all are Christians. [...] (6) The religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected, and this freedom is explicitly recognized by the Church. (7) On the other hand, a Catholic school cannot relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Christian education; this is its right and its duty. To proclaim or to offer is not to impose; however, the latter suggests a moral violence which is strictly forbidden, both by the Gospel and by Church law. (para. 6)

The mandate and mission explicated the need for school authorities to respect the freedom and conscience of non-Catholic students and to offer rather than impose on them the Catholic faith (CCE, 1988). However, it does not specify what might constitute an imposition rather than an offer. This is left to the prudent judgment of the school authorities and the teachers who run the school daily. The assumption here is that both administrators and teachers know the mandate of the Catholic school and should exercise prudence where it is required. However, a study of Catholic school teachers revealed the direct opposite.

Donlevy (2003) found teachers showed ambivalence regarding the source of the Catholic school's mandate when he explored the meaning Catholic students and teachers ascribed to their experiences relating with non-Catholic students. His later studies did not show any improved knowledge of teachers on this same topic. In his subsequent study of non-Catholic students' impact on Catholic teachers in four Catholic high schools, Donlevy (2007) found ambiguities among teachers regarding the mandate of Catholic education. Teachers "were unclear from where it came and whether it was to evangelize, teach social justice, provide catechesis, or simply to inculcate human values [and their perspectives also varied] "from fundamentalist to conservative to liberal" (Donlevy, 2007, Ambiguity: The Mandate of Catholic Education section).

The Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE; 1988) expressed the importance of religious freedom and personal conscience. However, it did not clarify the educational goals and inclusionary strategies that would take into account the non-Catholic students' religious differences and personal consciences. This lack of clarity might explain why some Catholic school teachers and administrators are at a loss about what exactly constitutes the source of the Catholic school's mandate (Donlevy, 2003; 2007). In general, institutions carry out their missions and mandates based on their identity and school culture. Next, I describe the meaning of the Catholic School "identity."

Identity of a Catholic School

Stryker and Burke (2000) observed that "commitment shapes identity [and] salience shapes role choice behavior" (p. 286). The way individuals or organizations conduct their affairs depends on their identities, which shape their behavior towards others. The Catholic school is no exception to this observation. The issue of inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools has led

many to ask the question: “What makes a Catholic school Catholic?” and “How do Catholic schools deal with this phenomenon of inclusion of non-Catholic students?”

Clark and Smrekar (2014) conducted a study on Catholic school identity. Data collected through observation, document analysis, examination of archives and artifacts, and interview with 45 stakeholders across two schools, Clark and Smrekar (2014) found Catholic schools cultivated a school climate that fosters inclusion. Inclusion provides a climate which nurtures respect and mutual understanding between Catholic and non-Catholic students. Besides, Catholic schools incorporate Catholic teachings into the school’s curriculum through which students are taught Catholic values for their faith development.

Similarly, Donlevy (2007) conducted focus groups interviews of 75 Catholic students and 36 Catholic teachers and found that inclusion exerted a positive social and psychological impact on both Catholic and non-Catholic students. Inclusion is based on the communitarian understanding that both Catholic and non-Catholic students share common values, but differences are accepted and allowed to flourish in an atmosphere of peace and understanding. Regarding the psychological dimension, both groups felt belonging and none feel left out. In addition, Donlevy (2007) also found out that as part of their identity and role performance, Catholic schools ensure the ongoing institutional enculturation that targets the Catholic students with the express purpose to evangelize and further socialize them into the Catholic faith community.

Other research studies found priority with the social rather than the pedagogical aspects of the Catholic school’s identity (Convey, 2012). In a survey of over 3, 389 participant administrators and teachers in Catholic elementary and secondary schools, Convey, (2012) found Catholic identity resides more in interpersonal relationships within the school rather than in appearance. The survey revealed that a school is Catholic not so much because of its name or the number of

crucifixes displayed on its walls. Neither is it so much dependent on the inclusion of religious instruction on the school's curriculum nor the percentage of its Catholic population. Rather, and more importantly, the school's Catholic ethos, faith community manifest in how and what is taught, the way community members relate to one another, what the environment looks like and the kind of celebrations that take place - these values give the school its Catholic identity.

What constitutes the most essential element of the Catholic identity of a Catholic school is the school's culture or the faith community (Convey, 2012). Convey's finding aligned with studies conducted by Clark (2005) and Donlevy (2007). The Catholic identity resides in the school's policy and mission, its faith development, the environment, and in the curriculum and instruction (Clark, 2005). However, Clark (2005) observed something different about each Catholic school.

Clark (2005) conducted case studies on the nature of Catholic identity in two Catholic schools serving predominantly non-Catholic students and determined how to effectively measure Catholic identity. Clark used surveys, interviews, observations, and document analysis to collect data on Catholic identity. After collecting data, the identities of the two schools were constructed and found to have elements aligned with all four domains of the study's conceptual model. This included previous definitions of Catholic school identity: (a) policy and mission, (b) faith development, (c) school environment, and (d) curriculum and instruction (Clark, 2005).

However, each school also had its unique identity based on the way it individually responded to the non-Catholic students. The unique background of non-Catholic students and their effects on the school environment was rarely duplicated in other school settings (Clark, 2005). The goal and purpose of Catholic education are clear, however, regarding the role and status of non-Catholic students, no clear administrative policies exist. Policies regarding non-Catholic students'

role and status are left to the discretion of Catholic school teachers and administrators. These policies might be arbitrary because they are based on the subjective knowledge of the administrators and teachers who run the school on daily bases. How non-Catholic students gain admission into Catholic schools constitutes my next discussion.

Admission Requirements

Catholic schools grant admission to all students based on their identity as Catholic institutions but whether they make known to the non-Catholic students during the admission procedures, what would be required of them upon admission is unclear. For example, during the entrance interviews for admission, are non-Catholic students explicitly made aware they would be required to participate in all the Catholic religious practices of the school, or it is taken for granted that they know? If they are made aware, is it legal to deny a student admission based on religion if students say they would not like to participate in the Catholic worship program of the school? Additionally, are students told of the periodic assessments required of them to ensure their continuous enrollment? Would a non-Catholic student be penalized or dismissed from the school for refusing to participate in the Catholic worship program?

These questions raise many sensitive legal factors and ethical issues regarding the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools. These legal and ethical implications require administrative diligence on the part of Catholic school administrators. Donlevy (2007) observed there are no doubt legal implications in the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools. In examining the dimensions evident in the phenomenon of inclusion, he found legal anomalies in the inclusionary policies of some schools. These anomalies made Donlevy wonder what ought to be the right procedures at the administrative level to consider when granting

admission to non-Catholic students, and likewise, what is required of them to maintain their student status with the Catholic school.

In addition, Donlevy (2009) investigated the expectations of six Catholic high school administrators regarding admission. The study revealed the entrance examination is significant in determining the likely behavior of potential non-Catholic students. It creates an opportunity for the school administrators to make known to both parents and students, the school's expectations on them when they are granted admission and the likely consequences if they breach any denominational norm (Donlevy, 2009). But does the admission requirement adequately accomplish its intended purpose in dealing with inclusion? I discuss next its limitations.

Donlevy's (2002) earlier investigation on whether Catholic schools have adequately addressed the issue of inclusion in a legal sense, particularly with those who are not of the Catholic school faith community, revealed injustices. The study which analyzed the inclusionary policy documents in communitarian and contractarian ways of one Catholic school district showed that the totality of the inclusionary documents of St. Mary's school board were incoherent and not integrated with regard to dealing with inclusion. The study confirmed the grave limitations of inclusionary policies of Catholic high schools enacted by Catholic school administrators. In that regard, to ensure fairness to non-Catholic parents and students alike, and to provide Catholic school administrators with better administrative guidelines to deal with non-Catholic parents and students, Donlevy (2002) advised such documents need to be examined and clarified.

Additionally, Donlevy (2007) investigated the dimensions evident in the phenomenon of inclusion using grounded theory and focus group interviews of 75 Catholic students and 36 Catholic teachers. He found pedagogical implications relative to inclusion. His study revealed the necessity to pre-screen non-Catholic applicants through the entrance interviews and followed by

regular subsequent assessments to ensure their conformity to the denominational norms of the school. Catholic high school administrators see the importance of admission requirements to deal with the phenomenon of inclusion. However, such inclusionary policies are not only limited in scope but also unjust to non-Catholic students and their parents. I examine next how inclusion impacts on all members of the Catholic school community.

The School Environment

Whether inclusion has a positive or negative impact on the interpersonal relationships within the school community is the essence of this section. In Clark and Smrekar's (2014) study, they found an atmosphere of respect and care coupled with feelings of mutual good will between the Catholic and the non-Catholic students. Donlevy (2007) earlier found Catholic schools exhibited a welcoming spirit towards non-Catholic students by inviting them to participate in the schools' liturgical celebrations. The non-Catholic students, in turn, contributed significantly to the diversity of views and richness in discussions held in Christian ethics classes. The teachers said they benefited from such discussions through an improved understanding of their knowledge in the Catholic faith by the challenging questions the non-Catholic students posed. Their questions made Catholic teachers to reexamine aspects of their faith which they had previously taken for granted (Donlevy, 2007).

Donlevy's (2006) study of non-Catholic students' impact upon Catholic students in four Catholic high schools found inclusion proved beneficial to Catholic students' sense of faith, appreciation of diversity and the school's faith community. In an earlier study of four urban high school students and teacher groups, the student participants reported the Catholic school's faith community is inclusive, safe, accepting, understanding and seeks social justice (Donlevy, 2003).

Conversely, Donlevy (2002) also found incoherence in the inclusionary policies of Catholic schools resulting in unfair treatment of non-Catholic students and their parents. Similarly, non-Catholic students faced the challenge of being a minority group and thus experienced the sense of being the “Other.” Yet non-Catholic students showed open-mindedness by participating in the school’s liturgy when they volunteered or were invited to do so (Donlevy, 2007). However, subsequent studies also revealed non-Catholic students’ refusal to participate in specifically religious matters was viewed as openly disrespectful to the Catholic faith (Donlevy, 2009).

Summary: Gaps and Tensions in the Literature

I found a lack of scholarly literature on the experiences of non-Catholic students in Catholic high school. Nonetheless, the available studies offered significant insights. Studies on the topic of inclusion indicated it is indeed a cause of concern for both the Church and State. Some Catholic schools have properly dealt with the phenomenon of inclusion, but for others, it is a struggle. The inability of some schools to properly handle the concerns of inclusion has caused conflicts between the Church and the State. Such conflicts between the Church and State have resulted in poor academic performance experienced by students in Ghana (Ayaga, Polka et al., 2015). Of course, when two elephants engage in a battle (African Proverb), it is the grass that suffers. It is, therefore, not surprising that in many settings, the students who are trampled upon by these two giant elephants suffer the most from such conflicts in the educational system. Although the studies so far conducted on the topic have provided some insights in understanding the issue of inclusion and its implications, there is need to investigate the issue further.

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) observed that: “different regions, different schools, and even different classes within the same school will have their own distinct history,

ambiance, and personal characteristics” (para. 5). Similarly, Clark (2005) found that some Catholic schools have unique Catholic identities because of the different ways they responded to their students, particularly the non-Catholic students who influenced school culture from their respective backgrounds and communities. Their unique perspectives and experiences are rarely duplicated in other school settings. From these observations, it is fair to conclude that, although inclusion may be understood from the generic point of view, the responses of each Catholic school, needs to be investigated. Thus, a study of how BSHS and ZSHS responded to their unique situations regarding non-Catholic students was necessary.

Additionally, my review of the literature revealed no study about the experiences of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school. Studies investigated the experiences of Catholic students and teachers and how Catholics relate with non-Catholic students (Donlevy, 2003). Another study focused on the way non-Catholic students affected Catholic teachers (Donlevy, 2007) and students (Donlevy, 2006). However, I found no study focused directly with non-Catholic students, including their experience of the Catholic worship and the culture in which they live and study. Research is needed on the non-Catholic students, their experiences of the Catholic worship, and the school culture in which they live and study. I wanted to learn how their experiences of attending a Catholic high school as non-Catholic students affected them.

Analytical Theory

I adopted identity theory (Stet & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000) and cultural theory (Smircich, 1983) to understand my literature review findings and later, the findings of my own study. Stet and Burke (2000) viewed personal identity as a “categorization of the self as a unique entity, distinct from other individuals. The individual acts in terms of his or her own goals and

desires rather than as a member of a group or category” (p. 228). Identity theory reveals how individuals construct their identity and its meaning as they play out their respective roles in society (Stets & Burke, 2003). Cultural theory on the other hand, is a discourse on culture which embodies the values and beliefs a group of people share—this culture is manifested in symbolic ways, such as myths, rituals, stories, legends and specialized language (Smircich, 1983). Cultural theory explains the behavior of groups of people but like identity theory, it allows an understanding regarding how culture shapes behavior and fosters group identity. I specifically chose these theories because both complement each other in some way. I believe the two theories combined might explain the experiences, perspectives and actions of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school.

When non-Catholic students arrive in either BSHS or ZSHS, they are often immediately confronted with a completely new culture, the Catholic Culture. Culture is perceived as a pattern of shared basic assumptions adopted by a group (Schein, (1992)). Culture represents the collective attempts to solve the human problems of external adaption to environment as well as the internal integration of culture within individuals. The result of these attempts to adapt and form culture is high valued and provides a way for imparting knowledge to new members as the “correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 239). Invariably, non-Catholic students are socialized right from their arrival on campus to think, feel, and perceive from a Catholic perspective. Their unique personal identities as non-Catholic students might make it difficult for them to adjust and fully participate in the Catholic culture. Additionally, even though these non-Catholic students might identify as students of their new institution, they are nonetheless restricted from fully participating in some activities of the school because of their non-Catholic identity. Their non-Catholic identity at times adversely affected their student identity.

For instance, the offices of senior prefect and chapel prefect are reserved for only Catholic students. The non-Catholic students are qualified to vote into “power” those they choose to lead them as prefects in these offices, even though they themselves are ineligible. To fully engage in all activities of the school, one must not only identify as a student but also as a Catholic. The ability to fully live out their authentic selves as students is limited due to the possession of their non-Catholic identity.

Yet, the core of one’s “identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role” and the meaning and expectations the occupant associates with that role and its performance (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). Moreover, the performance of people’s roles verifies one’s identity and “when an identity is activated, self-verification occurs” (p. 232). But the potential activation of one’s identity as a student of any of these schools, at times is culturally conditioned by the Catholic ethos. If individuals categorize themselves in ways not only to satisfy their desire to feel worthy and valuable but also to feel competent and effective, (Stets & Burke, 2000), then the state of mind of non-Catholic students denied of their identity must be understood. The dilemma of self-categorization of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school with a profound Catholic culture may be explored using identity and cultural theories as analytic tools to unearth the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. The same theories might apply for understanding their experiences of the religious dimension of the school.

As Catholic institutions, Catholic worship permeates their entire atmosphere each day from rising till bedtime. In practice, non-Catholic students are immersed in Catholic worship the very day they report to school as students. Non-Catholic students who identify as Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist or Muslim must automatically depersonalize their respective identities the very first day they arrive in the school to enact and maintain their student identity. There exists a

conflict between the respective religious identities of these non-Catholic students and each school's religious culture. This exerts a social and psychological impact on students, something the school administrators may fail to see. Whether these students were fully aware of this depersonalization prior to their admission and whether they prepared themselves psychologically to embrace this sudden change, the conflicts in situations may be understood using identity and cultural analysis.

I describe in detail, the key concepts associated with identity and cultural theories next, and then analyze my content review findings using both theories. I show how both theories help explain the difficulty involved in non-Catholic high school students attending a Catholic school. The experience of non-Catholic students may result in the depersonalization of their unique identities as well as adjustments in the non-Catholic cultural practices to participate in a Catholic high school. Identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and Cultural theory (Smircich, 1983) offer ways to interpret and appreciate how the experiences of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic school proves difficult. I begin with identity theory because this represents the personal experience.

Identity Theory

The goal of Stryker's (1980) theoretical and research program is to "understand and explain how social structures affect self and how self affects social behavior" (as cited in Stryker & Burke, 2000). Stryker and Burke (2000) viewed identity as something individuals create to explain their role in society. An identity consists of "the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies" (p. 284). The "nature of the self and

what individuals do depend to a large extent on the society within which they live” (Stets & Burke, 2003, p. 1).

Generally, the theory asserts that role choices reflect people’s identities and an individual’s identities are arranged in order of importance (Stryker & Burke, 2000). People’s identities represent a hierarchy as an organizational principle in society. The more valued identity exerts the greatest influence. This understanding explains why Catholic school teachers might allow their Catholic identity to influence their profession as teachers more than their identity as citizens. Perhaps, Catholic educators place their Catholic identity over and above their state identity. Similarly, Catholic high school priests/religious administrators are likely to manage and lead their schools in line with the mission of the Church more than the state’s constitutional provisions required of them. Perhaps, they value their loyalty to their Catholic identity more than their identity as citizens of the state. Prioritizing certain identities leads to one’s commitment for one thing over the other and thus, one’s readiness to promote the course of the thing with the higher priority over the other.

Stryker and Burke (2000) described how identities form and individuals value them. An identity consists of internally stored information and meanings. The construction of identity serves as a framework to interpret one’s experiences. Identity theorists contend that the higher the importance of an identity relative to other identities within the self, the greater the likelihood the behavior people adopt resonates with the expectations they attach to their identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). For example, Muslim students would most likely travel off campus for an Islamic prayer session when given the option, than remain on campus to attend a Catholic worship organized by the school. Muslim students likely attach more importance to their Islamic faith and identity than their role as non-Catholic students attending a Catholic worship service. Similarly,

non-Catholic Christians may likely patronize and actively participate in some Catholic rituals than they would in others.

The theory also recognizes the connection between behavior and commitment (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Commitment is defined as the “degree to which a person’s relationship to others in their networks depend on possessing a particular identity and role” (p. 286). The cost involved in losing meaningful relations with others in the event of forgoing an identity is the way commitment is measured. The higher the cost, the higher the commitments. It is no wonder the Church finds it a high cost to relinquish its schools based on their commitment rather than adhere to the administrative policies of the state.

Conceptions of identity and identity salience portray stability in identities and their importance across time and situations (Stets & Burke, 2014). When non-Catholic students arrive in a Catholic school, they find it difficult to take part in Catholic worship in which they had not been previously engaged. Rather, they try to find other avenues to continue to practice their respective faiths. When I arrived in America and found out that I could not celebrate Mass outside the University of St. Thomas because of my student visa status, I felt the same challenge. I lost opportunities to practice my faith and fully live out my identity as a Catholic priest. When such needs of individuals are fulfilled, their structured selves remain stable. But changes in their identities occur when they are unable to find or make use of present opportunities similar to their previous experiences. This might explain why non-Catholic students convert to the Catholic faith. They stay in the Catholic school for years without opportunities to practice their own faith, and eventually may adopt the identity of a Catholic student.

Another component of identity theory is the perceptual control system (Stets & Burke, 2014). The idea here is that people do not just act in ways that resonate with their identities. People use feedback from others and their own direct appraisals to understand the meanings of the behaviors in which they engage (Stets & Burke, 2014). Based on this idea, people change their behaviors to make their perceptions of the meaning mirror the meanings in their identity standard (Stets & Burke, 2014).

Because meaning is subject to social confirmation (Stets & Burke, 2014), Catholic teachers and administrators try to perpetuate the Catholic identity of their schools to win approval from members of the Catholic community. The extent to which a mismatch between perceptions and identity standards exist, it results in a similar degree of an emotional reaction and ultimately to behavior in an attempt to correct the situation (Stets & Burke, 2014). When Catholic school principals behave in ways inconsistent with the standards of Catholic education, they may suffer from emotional trauma. This leads them to design new strategies to correct the anomaly to restore approval. Identity theory explains the role choices individuals make in society and the high value and commitment they attach to some choices over others (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity theory sheds understanding about the conflict between the state and the Church. The conflict is primarily based on their respective identities and commitment to maintaining their identities. This applies to individuals as well. I describe next how culture shapes people's behavior and fosters their identity.

Cultural Theory

I also used cultural theory to help me understand how organizations operate. Cultural theory explains the behavior of groups of people, but like identity theory, it also explains how culture shapes behavior and fosters group identity (Smircich, 1983). I first define culture and show

how its key concepts explain organizational behavior, and then analyze the effects of culture on others. Siehl and Martin (1981) and Tichy (1982) defined culture as “social or normative glue that holds an organization together” (as cited in Smircich, 1983, p. 344). Culture embodies the values, and beliefs a group of people or an organization shares, which are manifested in symbolic ways such as myths, rituals, stories, legends and specialized language (Smircich, 1983).

Culture perceived as shared salient values and beliefs, accomplish four important functions (Smircich, 1983). First, culture provides a sense of identity to group members or organization. Second, Culture fosters a commitment to something larger than the self. Third, Culture facilitates the stability of the social system of the organization, and fourth, Culture plays the role of meaning making to guide and shape behavior (Smircich, 1983).

Culture is also conceived of as a world view defined as organized patterns of thought that group members understand as something that constitutes adequate knowledge and legitimates behavior (Smircich, 1983). This means an acceptable behavior in one community may be frowned on in another. Culture understood from this perspective helps interpret the behavior of groups of people and organizations.

The culture of Catholic schools is expressed through rituals and symbols that manifest its identity and gives meaning to its existence. A government that requests a Catholic school to adjust its cultural and ritual behavior to create freedom for “outsiders” who freely joined the Catholic school community, makes no sense to some Catholic school administrators. The reason: Catholic culture dominates the school community. Moreover, culture fosters commitment to something larger than the self. This means the cultural life of Catholic schools is a manifestation of their loyalty and obligation to past, current and future generations. Therefore, for Catholic schools to

sideline or relinquish their loyalty to these past and future generations in the name of inclusion is difficult for some Catholic school teachers and administrators.

The observation Smircich (1983) made about people and their cultures explains this resistance of Catholic schools. Smircich, (1983) argued that because people identify with their own culture, they find it difficult to live in that cultural context while questioning it. It is indeed a challenge to step aside and critique one's own assumptions and values adopted for several years. Cultural theory helps explain the behavior of a people as a reflection of the group identity and thus, the resistance of Catholic schools to inclusion. Despite the complexities of contemporary society which require a review of previous cultural practices, some Catholic schools still find it hard to examine the rationale for things they have lived with and taken for granted for years. Cultural theory explains how culture shapes the identity and behavior of Catholic schools and the resistance to inclusion is meant to protect and maintain Catholic identity as a Catholic institution charged with preserving this identity. This background knowledge regarding the relationship between identity and behavior served as a strong foundation for further reflection on my research question. In the next section, I describe the methodology selected to answer my research question.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

My research question concerned how non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience and make meaning of the role and expectations of all students attending a Catholic high school and the meaning they ascribe to the Catholic culture in which they live and study. In this section, I described the rationale for adopting the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research methodology and a phenomenological approach for my study. I explained the theoretical perspectives that underlined these methods and the epistemological assumptions embedded in them. After explaining my methodology, I provided specific information about the issues related to the Institutional Review Board, (IRB), the researcher's role, recruitment and selection of participants, and other procedures.

I adopted the social constructivist paradigm because this perspective views knowledge as a social construct based on the shared experiences of groups of individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This paradigm helps make “sense of the complexities of the real world” [and at the same time determine] “what is important, legitimate, and reasonable” (Patton, 2015, p. 89). Creswell (2014) argued that “individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (p. 8). This means only those who have experienced a phenomenon validly ascribe meaning to it. Besides, Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that “subjective meanings are often negotiated socially and historically” (p. 24). These subjective meanings “are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social construction) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives” (p. 24). Therefore, to adequately understand the experiences of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school, it was necessary to interview the students who have experienced the phenomenon and have constructed meaning for it. Besides, I needed to focus

on the specific historical and social contexts in which these individuals interacted and constructed meaning for the phenomenon, leading to the study of non-Catholic students attending Bernardodalini Senior High School and Zumbadarana Senior High School.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research illuminates meaning and helps explain how human phenomena unfold and how things work (Patton, 2015). Using qualitative methods for my study helped me to uncover the meaning the non-Catholic students ascribed to their experiences attending Bernardodalini and Zumbadarana Senior High Schools.

A qualitative design strategy entails a naturalistic inquiry which demands meeting and interacting with participants in their natural environment and freedom from manipulative or controlling tendencies in order to allow for the reality to unfold naturally (Patton, 2015). A detailed report of such studies could be “established by talking directly with the people, going to their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what [I] expect to find or what [I] have read in the literature” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 45). Engaging participants in their natural setting was relevant because “we cannot always separate what people say from the place where they say it” (p. 46). Thus, the venue to interview participants depended on where I could locate them and where we could find a convenient and safe place to discuss. The significance of the study also required a qualitative approach.

The findings, I anticipated, would inform the current and future administrators’ decisions regarding the worship policy of the schools and their culture. The ways systems function impact on people’s lives (Patton, 2015). Thus, an in-depth knowledge on the experiences of the graduates through a qualitative study, I anticipated, would in turn reveal how the schools function as organizations. The way participants behaved while in the schools could be “found not just within the individual but, rather within the systems of which they [were] a part” (Patton, 2015, p. 8); the

religious program, the Catholic culture, and the entire organizational set up. The study focused on going beyond the ordinary way of perceiving things regarding the experiences of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school to the deeper understanding of the meaning they ascribed to those experiences of the phenomenon.

Transcendental Phenomenology

The term phenomenology as a “philosophical tradition was first applied to social sciences by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1913/1954) to study how people describe things and experience them through their senses” (as cited in Patton, 2015, p. 116). Husserl was guided by his philosophical assumption that “we can only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken our conscious awareness” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 116). Other writers, such as Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, expanded on the views of Husserl but all these different perspectives and philosophical assumptions express some commonalities: including “the study of the lived experiences of persons, the view that these experiences are conscious ones, and the development of descriptions of the essences of these experiences, not explanations or analyses” (p. 75).

A phenomenological study, therefore, seeks to describe the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The objective of phenomenology “is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also supported this methodological approach - the “phenomenological approach is well suited to studying affective, and often intense human experiences” (p. 28). Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2018) also pointed out how the “constructivist worldview manifest in phenomenological studies, in which individuals describe their experiences” (p. 25). Since knowledge from the constructivist perspective is a social construct and

phenomenology is a tool required to explore the meaning individuals make of their experiences, then it made sense to adopt phenomenology based on its instrumentality and the intended approach of my study. I anticipated asking participants to describe “how they perceive [the phenomenon,] describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2015, p. 115). Because participants described what they had individually and collectively experienced, from the perspective of phenomenological studies, no one can validly dispute their experiences of the phenomenon. An attempt to dispute their experiences would mean imposing one’s own experiences on participants rather than what the participants had freely expressed as their experiences.

Husserl’s perspective of phenomenology constituted the framework for my study (Moustakas, 1994). The core processes that facilitate the derivation of knowledge in phenomenological studies according to Husserl included: “*epoche*, transcendental phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). I adopted Husserl’s method. I next explain briefly how each concept plays out in facilitating knowledge derivation.

The term *epoche* is “a Greek word meaning to refrain from judging, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). *Epoche* ensures “the [phenomenon is] revisited, freshly, naively, in a wide-open sense” (p. 33). Husserl’s universal *epoche* is essentially an expression of doubt. However, Husserl “does not doubt everything [but] only the natural attitude, the biases of everyday knowledge, as a basis for truth and reality” (p. 85). In other words, it is the attempt to temporally set aside one’s prejudices and assumptions to allow individuals to examine consciousness itself (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This “stance” enables researchers to engage with the phenomenon with much curiosity to see with

an open mind, through which they would be open to discover new ideas, feelings, awareness and understanding.

The next essential strategy in Husserl's phenomenological approach is his transcendental-phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). It is the process that follows after the interview data is transcribed. The process involves a continual return to the essence of an experience to ascertain its meaning in and of itself. The objective is to derive the core structure of the phenomenon by repeatedly returning to its essence to describe in textual language what is perceived externally and in consciousness.

The focus of imaginative variation, as the name suggests, is to find the possible meaning behind the textual descriptions using one's imagination (Moustakas, 1994). The rationale is to approach the phenomenon under investigation from divergent, variant and different angles, positions or functions. The ultimate task is to arrive at a structural description of the participants' experience. In other words, what accounts for what is experienced without which there is no such experience? Moustakas (1994) described this phenomenon as "the "how" that speaks to conditions that illuminate the "what" of experience" (p. 98). Instrumental in the imaginative variation is the potential to uncover the essences, the focus on what is purely possible. It is at this stage of the process that "the structures of the experience are revealed; these are the conditions that must exist for something to appear" (p. 98). The power to "imagine possible structures of time, space, materiality, causality, and relationship to self and others" is central at this phase of the research process (p. 99). The process of imaginative variation is concluded with a search for exemplifications to help clearly explain the invariant structural themes and enhance the construction of a structural description of the phenomenon explored. The description of experiences presupposes human research study.

Research involving human subjects requires adhering to certain principles that typically guide ethical research, including respect for participants, concern for their welfare and ensuring justice (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My study's compliance with these principles required approval from the IRB of the University of St. Thomas.

Institutional Review Board

Prior to beginning data collection in any research study involving human subjects requires seeking and gaining approval of institutional review boards (IRB: Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since my study involved human subjects, I applied to the IRB of the University of St. Thomas for permission to conduct my research. The IRB approved of my application on November 12, 2018, indicating my study design met the expectations of ethical research. But before I contacted participants, I sought permission from the local school authorities; I sought permission while onsite as Catholic schools, the local ordinary, and the Bishop oversees these schools. So I sought and received permission from him. But because these schools are government assisted schools, I likewise sought permission from the Regional Director of Education and subsequently sent copies of the permission letters to the IRB of the University of St. Thomas.

I presented briefly, what I carried out in compliance with the ethical principles guiding my research. I recruited 21 students who graduated from two schools. Although this sample did not include some individuals, such as minors, high-risk or vulnerable individuals, as human subjects, participant identities and issues of confidentiality had to be safeguarded. I included in my application to the IRB, including details on how "selection, sampling, and collection strategies for data be implemented; and how recording, storage, and use of information will be managed" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 151). My study required asking participants to share with me how the schools' Catholic cultures impacted their lives.

Creswell (2014) exhorted researchers against deliberately collecting harmful information from participants because such stories can potentially destroy the reputation of the perpetrators and at the same time put the lives of participants at risk. Admittedly, “it is difficult to anticipate and try to plan for the impact of this information during or after an interview” (p. 98). However, being conscious of the possibility of such harmful stories was a warning sign for adequate preparation. I ensured confidentiality and participants’ psychological and emotional safety to the degree possible. I exercised caution and avoided revealing participants’ identities in data collection and analysis. I replaced participants’ real names with pseudonyms. I did not make known to participants the pseudonyms assigned to them or the names and pseudonyms assigned to others. This precaution also entailed excluding descriptions and other names that might reveal the identity of participants.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) recommended that data be stored for a minimum of five years. However, I will destroy a data within six months after I complete and successfully defend my dissertation with the exception of the signed consent forms which shall be kept for a minimum of three years upon completion of the study. Approval from the IRB led me to the fieldwork.

My Role as the Researcher

While attending graduate school, and later graduating with a master’s degree in Educational Leadership and Administration, I experienced a period of intellectual transformation. I used my learning to reflect on my experiences working in the Catholic high school to achieve a better understanding of the experiences of my former students. I also considered the overall organizations of the Catholic schools and the diocese. I grappled with the complexities and conflict

involved in the dilemma of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school and the worship requirement, coupled with the Catholic culture in which they live and study. My admission to the doctoral program provided a golden opportunity to reflect more deeply on this dilemma. As the primary instrument of the research, (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015) my background and the experiences I brought to the study, as well as my onsite before each individual participant could enhance the data collection, analysis, and interpretation; at the same time it also could constitute a hindrance. The reasons for possible effects related to my position. The age gap between the students and me is wide and my status as an elder and an educator demanded their respect as required of any relationship between a young person and an elder in the country in which my study took place. The respect due me could hinder their openness to share the negative side of their stories for fear of offending me.

Moreover, as a Catholic myself interviewing non-Catholic students on their experiences in Catholic schools, my religious difference and leadership position in the Catholic Church could also constitute a hindrance accessing their experiences of the phenomenon I investigated. Their being conscious of who I was could cause them to exercise excessive reticence and thus constitute a challenge. On the other hand, my biases could also make me focus so much on participants' bad experiences as to neglect their good ones. To overcome these potential limitations to the study demanded devising strategies to address them.

I recruited two research assistants who were non-Catholic teachers from both schools (a Christian and a Muslim) who assisted me in the data collection. The role of the research assistants was to bridge the gap between participants and myself and to help allay fears participants might have entertained. Bridging this gap did not require research assistants' presence at the time of the individual interviews I conducted with participants. I included in my application to the IRB, this strategy of collecting data from participants. In addition, prior to the interviews, I set aside my

preconceived ideas about participants' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994) in order that "the [phenomenon was] revisited, freshly, naively, in a wide open sense" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Throughout the study, I established good rapport with participants which enabled me to win their trust. I endeavored to be approachable and initiated dialogue with participants at all times.

Recruitment and Selection of Participants

The fieldwork required diligence in recruiting and selecting participants who experienced the phenomenon I explored and were at least 18 years of age or above. Based on the focus of my study which also examined the conflict of values between Catholic school officials and the government, I took two other factors into consideration in the recruitment process. I envisaged non-Catholic students may have put up a behavior while on campus based on the ruling government's convictions and perhaps his utterances about religious freedom. So, I was conscious of recruiting participants who as a group had experienced at least the last four presidents of the country (John Kufuor, 2001 –2009; John Atta Mills, 2009 –2012; John Dramani Mahama, 2012 – 2017; and Nana Akufo-Addo, 2017 –2018) while still in school. Likewise, I wanted to recruit participants who had as a group, experienced at least four Catholic administrators to learn their perspectives about their relationship with these administrators. In fulfillment of my intended purpose, I recruited participants spanning ten years from 2008 to 2018.

I paid attention to the diversity in my sampling strategies. The group studied comprised members of the Pentecostal churches who identified as Christians, and Muslim students who believe in the Islamic faith (non-Christian and non-Catholic). I recruited both Pentecostal and Muslim students to gain multiple perspectives.

My selected schools are under the authority of the diocesan Bishop who provided permission to conduct the study. In fact, before I chose this topic, I made preliminary inquiries on the possibility of gaining approval to interview participants of the schools and my findings proved positive. My Bishop agreed to support my research topic in a meeting with my dissertation Chair, Dr. Sarah Noonan and me during the summer of 2017. I knew I would gain his full support and approval but as a requirement, I included a letter in my application to the IRB meant to officially seek his permission to study the sites. Additionally, since these two schools are government assisted, I also sought permission from the Regional Director (government official) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) in charge of all the schools in the region, before I contacted participants. I likewise included in my application to the IRB, a copy of the letter granting me the permission to access the sites. I discuss next how I contacted potential participants.

While onsite, I first met with the school administrators to find out whether they had received copies of the permission letters from both the Bishop and the Regional Director of Education. Once I confirmed they had received the letters, I explained to them in brief, what I wanted to do on their respective campuses. I then proceeded to speak with a few staff members. Through this interaction, I identified two teachers, one from each school, who had good rapport with the students while they were on campus. Allaying participants' fears and creating an enabling environment for me to work with these participants required a research assistant they trusted and with whom they had a good relationship. Having identified these two potential research assistants, I located one in his house and the other in his office. After introducing my topic of investigation, I gave them the confidentiality forms to read. They needed to know the requirements of a research assistant in order to agree or not to agree to participate in the study as research assistants. Once they accepted to abide by the rules and the regulations of the research, I asked them to append their

signatures on the forms, gave each participant a copy of the form and kept two copies, which I included in my application to the IRB.

Research assistants, including other staff members in each school, helped me to gain access to names and phone numbers of those who might qualify for the study. Special permission was not needed for accessing personal information as phone numbers, email addresses or directions to where participants lived or worked. In Ghana where my study took place, it is common and legal to ask for phone numbers and email addresses of people from others, such as their teachers, friends, family members or anybody who might have the information. I used purposeful sampling strategies to ensure I selected the rich information cases for an in-depth study (Patton, 2015). I contacted these key individuals through snowballing sampling, (Merriam & Tisdell 2016). I called potential participants on the phone and briefly discussed my reasons for wanting to meet them personally to obtain the green light before driving to where each participant was located. When I met with participants I asked of the place that could be convenient for them and also free from distractions to ensure a meaningful discussion.

The purpose of meeting these potential participants was to discuss my study with them, and to ensure participants were at least 18 years of age because my study did not include minors. Although students who graduate from high school in Ghana very often are 18 years or above, I did not take things for granted. I also needed to meet them personally to give them the consent forms to read, offer them the opportunity to ask me questions for clarifications, and to freely decide whether or not to volunteer their participation in the study. I reviewed the purpose of my study with them, letting them know they constituted rich sources of information for my study and as students who graduated from the school and were no longer under the school's authority, they should feel comfortable to speak. In fact, I made them aware I did not want to sacrifice quality on

the altar of any other thing. If I wanted for instance to sacrifice quality on the altar of cost, I would have gone to the schools to recruit as many as I wanted rather than incurring the cost of travelling around to locate and recruit participants. I envisaged those students still under the school's authority, might not openly share their experiences with me for fear of being victimized, I told participants. I emphasized the voluntary nature of the study - meaning throughout the entire process they could decide to withdraw anytime they decided otherwise. I made them aware an interview could last up to 45 minutes in a session. I told them the data from any respondent who withdrew in the process would not be included in the study. I further made them aware that, because I valued their experiences, I wanted to record all that they were going to say so I did not miss anything. Recording, I indicated, spared me the effort of focusing so much on writing rather than listening attentively to them share their experiences with me. Once they individually agreed to my request to participate in the study, I asked them to sign the consent forms. Only then did we begin the interviews.

Table 1***Demographic Information of Participants***

Participant's pseudonym	Status of study or work	Religion	Age
Abanga	University	Pentecostal	21
Abdullah	University	Muslim	21
Abdul-Kareem	University	Muslim	24
Abdul-Majeed	University	Muslim	22
Abu Bakr	University	Muslim	24
Abugrago	Nursing training college	Pentecostal	19
Ahmed	Self-employed	Muslim	24
Aloliga	University	Pentecostal	21
Dery	Nurse	Pentecostal	27
Hamza	University	Muslim	21
Jamaal	University	Muslim	19
Kubaaza	University	Pentecostal	19
Mahmoud	Trained teacher	Muslim	25
Murtala	Nurse	Muslim	23
Sadiq	Teacher training college	Muslim	19
Sulemana	Teacher (non-professional)	Muslim	22
Taahiru	Self-employed	Muslim	20
Umar	Teacher training college	Muslim	23
Welaga	Trained teacher	Pentecostal	30
Yinzor	University	Pentecostal	21
Zaahid	University	Muslim	22

Table 1 provides a list of participants and their religious preferences. Seven of the participants identified as Pentecostals while 14 identified themselves as Muslims. Nine participants were selected from Bernardodalini Senior High School and 12 were selected from Zumbadarana Senior High School making a total of 21 participants. The youngest participant was 19 years old and the oldest participant was 30 years old. The list also indicates the status of participants as at the time they were interviewed. While some participants were students in colleges or universities, others engaged in some kind of employments.

Data Collection

Interviews

I chose to collect data through interviews for three main reasons. First, in phenomenological studies, conducting in-depth interviews constitute the primary method of data collection (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). Second, because the “phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions,” I adopted it based on my assumption that participants had rich information to share with me thus requiring a method that would allow for a conversational type of interaction (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114). Third and finally, I used not just interviews, but face-to-face interviews. This strategy allowed me to observe the non-verbal communications like facial and other bodily expressions, which are not observable in indirect interviews. Nonetheless, these non-verbal communications throw more light on people’s feelings and verbal expressions. Conscious of the likely disadvantages of face-to-face interviews, I devised strategies to ensure quality data collection.

Creswell (2014) said, “The more experience that a researcher has with participants in their settings, the more accurate or valid will be the findings” (p. 202). To the extent convenient, I spent some time in a brief social conversation with each participant prior to the interview as a way of getting to know participants better and also to build rapport and gain their confidence in me. This interaction was also a strategy I adopted as “the interviewer who is responsible for creating a climate in which the research participant will feel comfortable and will respond honestly and comprehensively” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114).

As the instrument of data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I designed semi-structured, open-ended questions. However, as qualitative studies are exploratory and emergent (Patton, 2015), the previously designed instrument somewhat changed. Openness to changes was intentional to create room for more relevant questions to emerge. This modification I made resonated with Moustakas' (1994) observation that "although the primary researcher may in advance develop a series of questions aimed at evoking a comprehensive account of the person's experience of the phenomenon, these are varied, altered, or not used at all" upon the researcher listening to the co-researcher share his or her experience on the selected question (p. 114). Patton (2015) observed that "the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytic capacities of the researcher than with sample size" (p. 313). Using this insight, I interviewed 21 participants, focusing more on the depth than on breadth of data collection. I adjusted the sample size from my original plan to interview 20 participants based on when I achieved data saturation. This strategy thus, guided the number of Pentecostals I interviewed in relation to the number of the Muslim participants. I interviewed nine participants in their current schools, (university/college) nine in their homes and three in private buildings.

Qualitative research is an emergent design, so I continually refined my data collection strategies and made adjustments as the inquiry deepened. Creswell and Poth (2018) argued "the key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and engage in the best practices to obtain that information" (p. 44). With this insight, I relied more on what emerged from the field rather than being fixated on my initial data collection instrument. My research question also informed and guided my interviews. I gave each interview a heading, noting essential details. Based on their responses to my interview questions, and in my attempt to

understand their experiences of the phenomenon at a deep level, I followed up with probing questions to elicit more information. Prior to my interviews I knew participants would be asked to recall past experiences. Recalling traumatic experiences could trigger emotional disturbances in participants requiring professional help. I had a counsellor available to offer any such services participants might have required but none needed such support. Also, I had planned to pause or allow time or postpone the interview if there was any need for such a strategy to enable emotionally stressed participants to recover. Attention to nonverbal cues constituted an essential part of the inquiry process.

Patton (2015) contended that “every interview is also an observation” (p. 328), which guides the interview process. Therefore, I focused on listening and observing participants’ nonverbal cues and facial expressions that communicate the meaning people attach to events and situations. Non-verbal communications cannot be audio recorded yet I wanted to ensure I recognized at the transcriptions those moments participants expressed such facial expression. I ensured this by describing in a few words what I observed in participants. For instance, I said at some points “I see you look somewhat angry” with this, the message was audio recorded. I made participants aware I appreciated the depth of their feelings, both the bad and the good, and showed interest in learning more about their experiences. Observing the nonverbal cues served as a steppingstone for me to gain more information on the topic. For instance, whenever they seemed emotionally involved in narrating their experiences, I paused to allow them to ease the tension. Certain body movements indicate a person is psychologically or physically tired, so I was conscious to suggest postponing or ending an interview if any participant showed any signs of tiredness.

Prior to ending each interview session, I asked participants if they had anything to add and to help me contact other potential participants. I made them aware I would make a follow up after listening to the audio recorded interviews and would as well provide an opportunity for them to review for accuracy following the transcriptions and analysis of the interviews. I concluded each interview by thanking them for their time and energy and for volunteering to participate in the study. I also told them I would share the final product of my study with each one of them. I often listened immediately to the audio-recorded interviews several times as soon as I ended the fieldwork for the day and returned home. This listening offered me the opportunity to make meaning out of their experiences and it further enabled me to refine my interview questions and to make follow ups for clarification where there was the need to do so. The recruitment and selection of participants and gathering of data on the field begun right from the day I received the site authority's permission letter dated February 4, 2019 until I returned to the University of St. Thomas four months later. However, I continued to access information from participants through phone calls and text messages until the IRB's permission to access data from participants expired.

Observation

Patton (2015) argued "all scientific knowledge is rooted in observation" (p. 329). Thus, to enrich my study, which is a scientific inquiry, I adopted observations as part of my data collection strategies. I previously lived and worked in a Catholic school and observed how non-Catholic students participated in the Catholic culture and mandatory worship services. Nonetheless, I wanted to see, so to speak, firsthand the interactions on the sites rather than simply assume I already knew based on previous "observations." This also constituted a way of setting aside my biases. Besides, the intellectual training I received both in the master's and the doctoral degree programs sharpened my observational senses, which hitherto were either nonexistent or biased.

This change from learning called for fresh observations using my acquired skills. As the first-order purpose in gathering observational data, I visited the sites (BSHS and ZSHS) to observe the setting, and some of the religious rituals that participants participated in while they were students in these institutions. Understanding the context within which participants interacted was “essential to a holistic perspective” (Patton, 2015, p. 332) of the phenomenon investigated. While onsite, I interacted casually with both students and staff. This interaction, though casual, made it possible for me to think of and question participants on issues I would never have thought of without the observations.

I introduced myself to participants, including my vocation as a Catholic priest to any groups of students I met. This self-introduction motivated group members to also introduce themselves and their religious denominations to me. This interaction gave me an insight on whether religion played a part in the way students interacted outside the chapel. I observed the sites paying special attention to the structure of the buildings, the religious items inside and outside of these buildings. I visited each school seven times and participated one time in Mass in one of the schools. Although I participated in the ceremony, I was conscious of my role as an observer. In general, visits to the sites enabled me to link what participants said in the interviews to the setting I observed in person. In all the visits and the observations made, I took notes, which complemented the interviews I conducted.

Documents

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recognized documents as a “ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (p. 162). Using my imagination, I located and accessed two documents each from the two schools, making four documents in

totality. In my observations, I found each school's Mission and Vision statements displayed on vantage places for public view. I took pictures of these posts, which I treated as the first set of documents for analysis.

Additionally, participants reported on signing either a bond form or an undertaking form prior to enrollment. These two categories of forms contained the rules and regulations specific to each school. Each document indicated the "dos and the don'ts" related to the school guidelines and provided a space provided for students to append their signatures if they were prepared to abide by the stated rules and regulations of the school. These documents offered relevant information for understanding each school's expectations pertaining to non-Catholic students. I found it worth the effort to access these two documents from the participants despite the non-availability of these documents with most of the participants. The bond and "undertaking forms" thus constituted the second set of documents for analysis.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis starts from data collection during the fieldwork (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). The attempt to make meaning and organize the data while on the field constituted part of my analysis. Before engaging in the systematic analysis, I transcribed all the interviews. I transcribed many of the interviews myself, but I found it necessary to engage a friend to assist me in the transcriptions. I made sure he signed the transcribers' confidentiality form, implying he consented to abide by the rules of confidentiality surrounding the study. After having transcribed the 21 interviews, in addition to the field notes and the four documents accessed, I had 320 double-spaced pages of data. Researchers adopt systematic, coherent, and logical steps to analyze and interpret data (Moustakas, 1994). I adopted Moustakas' (1994) modification of the van Kaam's

(1966) method of analysis to analyze and interpret my interviews, field notes, and research documents.

In addition to applying Van Kaam's (1966) method of analysis, I also employed descriptive coding, emotion coding, and value coding (Huberman & Saldana, 2014) in the analysis process. While emotion coding allowed me to "explore [the] intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions...their perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions," value coding allowed me to explore "cultural values, identity, [as well as] the intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions" (p. 75). Using these codes, I arrived at a number of categories, and then merged them into the final seven themes. I read through the transcribed, field notes and the documents multiple times to ascertain their sense. I applied "horizontalization" at this initial stage of the analysis, meaning all data was relevant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). I did a preliminary listing and grouping of all related expressions of participants' experiences.

Next, I determined the invariant constituents (Moustakas, 1994), which demanded asking two significant questions: (a) does each expression contain a moment of experience necessary and sufficient for understanding that experience? and (b) is it possible to abstract and label it? If the responses to these questions about each expression were affirmative, then it indicated the horizon of the experience and was thus relevant. Conversely, if the responses were negative, it signified those expressions were worthless and I deleted them. At this stage, I discarded or reworded in exact descriptive terms the vague, overlapping, and repetitive expressions. After these strategies, the results became the invariant constituents of the experience of each participant.

The next step consisted of clustering and thematically arranging the invariant constituents (Moustakas, 1994). I did this by identifying and labelling related themes. These labelled

constituents became the core themes of each participant's experience. This method used in analyzing phenomenological data required at this point, validating the invariant constituents and the themes generated. The validation process required a forward and backward movement by checking the invariant constituents and their accompanying themes against the complete record of each participant. The rationale was to determine whether these constituents and themes are explicitly expressed in the transcriptions or whether they were compatible even if not explicitly expressed (Moustakas, 1994). If they were neither compatible nor explicit, it meant they were irrelevant to the participant's experiences and I discarded them. The results constituted the relevant and validated invariant constituents and themes. Out of these, I constructed an individual textual description of the experiences and included verbatim examples from each participant's transcriptions.

The next step in the analytical method was to construct an individual structural description of the experiences based on the individual textural description and imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). By this strategy, I tried to figure out the possible meaning behind these textural descriptions using my imagination. The penultimate stage of the analysis demanded I construct for each research participant a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experiences incorporating into this text the invariant constituents and themes. Because a phenomenological study focuses on the common meaning of the group's experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the final stage of my analysis included an "intuitive integration of the fundamental textual and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). For Moustakas, (1994) intuition "is the beginning place in deriving knowledge of human experience, free of every sense impression and

the natural attitude” (p. 32) and thus it is “essential in describing whatever presents itself, whatever is actually given (p. 33).

However, I am aware that no essences of any experience are completely exhausted. The synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions was but a representation of the essences at a “particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). I synthesized the textural and structural description, captured the essences of the non-Catholic students’ experiences attending the two Catholic high schools as well as their experiences of the Catholic culture in which they lived and studied at the time of my study. I reviewed the data from my vantage point as a researcher and an intuitive-thinking being “who doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wishes for or against, senses, imagines” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 32). In compliance with my study design to safeguard participants’ identity and confidentiality, I used pseudonyms throughout my analysis.

First, I replaced the names of the schools with pseudonyms. It is important to note that each school is a single sex school. By implication then, to give a male or female pseudonym to a participant or refer to a participant as “he” or “she” in relation to a school, is indirectly revealing the identity of the school as either the boys’ or the girls’ school. The danger is that those who know the schools I studied (for instance the administrators I talked to prior to my study) upon reading the final document would use the gender as an identifier of the specific school discussed. To avoid this revelation, and to protect the identity of these schools I used pseudonyms. I also used the term “chapel” for the worship places in both schools even though one of the schools used a hall for worship rather than a chapel. But again, to avoid revealing the identity of the schools, I used the name chapel as the place of worship for both schools.

I also used pseudonyms for the participants. These are conjured surnames purported not only to replace participants' real names but also to hide their gender identity. In this regard, where there is the need to use a personal pronoun for an individual participant, I used the plural form; "they" or "their" to continue to hide the gender of participants.

Likewise, I chose the generic expression "Catholic school administrator" to refer to both the male and female heads of the schools. I did not want to reveal the gender of the school heads who were male for the boys' school and female for the girls' school. Revealing their gender identify would mean disclosing the particular school under discussion or the identity of a particular headmaster or headmistress or Rev. Sister or Rev. Father and thus a breach of the confidentiality I promised to safeguard.

Reliability and Validity

In qualitative research, reliability indicates the researcher's approach mirrors those of other researchers and across different projects (Creswell, 2014). Validity is an attempt to establish the accuracy of findings that are best from the perspectives of the researcher, the participants, and the readers (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Validation of findings occurs throughout the steps in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). To validate the findings of my study, I adopted Creswell's (2014) validity strategies and approaches: triangulation, member checking, rich and thick descriptions of findings, clarifying my bias brought to the study, presenting discrepant information and spending prolonged time in the field.

Triangulation is a strategy that ensures building themes from multiple sources of the data (Creswell, 2014). I generated themes during the analysis stage from the three sources of the data I collected, which included interviews, observations, and documentations. Member checking is

another way to ascertain the validity of qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). I shared the generated themes and the descriptions under each of them with research participants through phone calls or emails to cross check with them whether these themes and the descriptions under each theme constituted a true reflection of their experiences of the Catholic culture and religious worship of the schools studied. The member checking offered the participants the opportunity to comment on my descriptions of each theme. All but one of the participants indicated I had adequately captured their views and the recorded therefore was a true reflection of their individual experiences. The one who made a single correction said, “instead of saying my father’s friends” [which I captured,] it should rather read the children of my father’s friends.” The correction was made as pointed out.

I used rich, and thick descriptions of participants’ experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Besides my desire to validate my study by presenting thick descriptions of participants’ experiences, I also wanted the data to speak for itself. In this regard, I employed a lot of verbatim quotations from participants’ own words. Thus, the result was a presentation in a concise language, a detailed description of how the non-Catholic high school graduates experienced the phenomenon of inclusion. My bias also necessitated self-reflection (Patton, 2015) to enhance validity.

Ethical Considerations

Research studies express the need to consider the ethical issues involved in human research (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015) and thus the significance of ethics in the social sciences. Issues of ethical concerns arise in human relations but most especially in those relationships where power imbalances exist.

Creswell (2014) admonished interviewers to be aware of power imbalances in research in the following words, “interviews (and observations) should begin from the premise that a power imbalance exists between the data collector and the participants” (p. 98.) Power imbalances exist between religious leaders and their followers. Since I am a religious leader, although not in participants’ respective religions, my role might constitute power imbalance between the participants and me. This relationship raised ethical issues regarding the power I hold relative to respect paid to certain leaders in my society and my dealings with them. To mitigate power imbalance and avoid exploitation, I respected the participants. Human beings are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them dignity, respect, and happiness. Participants deserved considerate treatment by me because in the light of my faith, they are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1: 27).

I ensured confidentiality in diverse ways. All recorded data, for instance, were entered into a password-protected computer and paper copies of transcribed data were locked securely in a file cabinet with no access by other people except my dissertation chair. However, the Institutional Review Board officials at the University of St. Thomas reserved the right to inspect all research records to ensure compliance.

I did not offer compensation to participants because of its potential influence on the “voluntary” nature of their participation but I thanked participants for their time, and I hope to share the results of my study with them. I know “fraudulent practices are not accepted in professional research communities, and they constitute scientific misconduct” (Creswell, 2014, p. 99). I, therefore, observed for the sake of the participants and for my own reputation, all other ethical principles that I have explicitly stated here and those I have not stated. The map of Africa below indicates the country Ghana where my study took place.

Figure 1*Map of Africa*

Figure 1 is the Map of Africa indicating the names of the countries and their locations in the map. The arrow on the figure points to the country Ghana where the study took place. Ghana is located in West Africa and is bordered to the North by Burkina Faso, to the South by the Gulf of Guinea, to the East by Togo and to the West by Cote d'Ivoire. Snipped from List of Free Images of Maps of Africa. Retrieved May 3, 2020, from

https://www.google.com/search?q=free+maps+of+africa&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwirsZb9gJnpAhXEe60KHdP3A-UQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=free+maps+of+africa&gs_lcp=CgNpbWcQDDIC

CHAPTER FOUR

CORE EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS

This chapter focuses on presenting the core experiences of participants as they emerged from the data analysis. Seven key themes emerged from the analysis. Participants' knowledge level of Catholic schools; participants' emotional reaction; participants relationship with community members; motivation for continuous enrollment; adaptation to the Catholic culture and the religious program; concerns of future participation in Catholic worship; and overall perspective of Catholic education on participants. I present my findings beginning with the first theme: participants knowledge level of Catholic schools.

Participants' Knowledge Level of Catholic Schools

In respect for holistic education, Catholic schools emphasize both the academic and the spiritual training of students (CCE, 1988). To accomplish this goal, the daily academic program is intertwined with mandatory religious rituals; all students must participate in them irrespective of their religious denominations. The religious dimension is the way by which these schools maintain their identity and fulfil their mission of evangelization. Participants indicated they did not know the real nature of these Catholic schools prior to their enrollment. The strict religious climate and the regimented nature of Bernardodalini Senior High School and Zumbadarana Senior High School were unknown to the participants prior to their admission. The school "bond" and the "undertaking" forms, which contained the rules and regulations of these schools did not make these requirements explicit to participants. Thus, participants' knowledge of the schools varied from minimal to no knowledge.

Minimal Knowledge of the Robust Religious Program

All the participants I interviewed reported no precise knowledge of the robust religious program of BSHS and ZSHS prior to their admission. They acknowledged reading on the admission letter about the schools' requirements on all students to participate in all school gatherings and they signed the student bond and undertaking forms in acceptance to do so. However, they did not anticipate the rigorous religious program they eventually experienced on campus. The 21 participants said they did not know the religious program would be so rigorous. This finding is an extension of previous studies on the subject of inclusion of students in religious activities.

I present each participant's level of knowledge beginning with Hamza. Hamza reported they knew they were "going to a Catholic school to study but the other compulsory things like going to Mass, [they] didn't know about that. It was only when [they] got to the school [they] got to know about the strict religious program." Also, Abugrago said they had heard of BSHS "to be heaven due to the high academic performance and the discipline but [they] never knew the daily routine would be so rigid. I never knew anything like that," Abugrago reiterated. Kubaaza wondered whether they would be able to cope upon experiencing the school for the first time:

The first time I heard the rising bell so early in the morning, I asked myself whether that was how things were going to be. Because at home I used to wake up at 6:00 A.M or 6:30 A. M. onwards but in school, I had to wake up around 5:00 A.M to fetch water and bath. And for the rest of the day, we moved in a circular manner and I had no time for myself. I had no idea the program was going to be so tight until I got to the school.

When I asked Abanga whether prior to their enrollment, they had any idea about the nature of the religious program and how each daily program would unfold, Abanga responded:

“Emphatically no! I had no idea the religious program would be intensive.” Aloliga described BSHS as a “school with a strict atmosphere that did not create room for non-Catholic students to practice their faith.” According to Aloliga, they “had a few friends who were very religious, but they were not given the opportunity to practice their faith.” In my attempt to find out why those students chose to enroll in a school with a strict atmosphere rather than go to the other schools that were less strict, Aloliga responded. “Personally, before I went there [BSHS] I didn’t know the school would be so strict and I don’t think my friends knew either.” The idea of engaging in the religious worship on a daily basis was a phenomenon Yinzor initially did not like about the school.

I didn’t like the school in my first year because we had to wake up every morning and go for Church services or Mass and for morning devotions. So, having it every day, every week, and every month made me not to like the school, to be honest.

But why such a sudden change of mind from liking the school and choosing to enroll in it but only to dislike it upon admission? I probed. To this question, Yinzor responded: “You know, I didn’t really understand the religious program was going to be on a daily basis until I got to the school.” Other participants knew they would participate in one or the other Catholic ritual, but they lacked a comprehensive knowledge on the entire worship program. Jamaal indicated: “I didn’t know the daily routine, but I knew it was a Catholic school and definitely there would be Mass and other things [religious activities] but I didn’t know much about the Catholic faith and the detail worship schedule.” Similarly, Welaga expressed minimal knowledge of the religious program drawing from previous experience.

I knew I would attend Mass because I attended a Catholic JHS and we used to go for Mass, but I did not know there would be so many other prayers like rosary prayers, the Way of the Cross and so on.

Other participants like Abdul-Majeed got to know about the school through browsing the Internet, but when I quizzed to know if Google had any information regarding the daily schedule and the religious program, they answered in the negative. “I did not find any information on religion. Only in my admission letter I read about the school rules and regulations but even with that, I experienced the school differently from what I read on the admission letter,” Abdul-Majeed indicated. Abdullah did not only acknowledge a lack of knowledge of the school’s expectations on non-Catholic students, but also stated that if they knew of those expectations, they would not have enrolled in the school. Abdallah said: “I had no idea the school would not allow non-Catholic students to pray. If I knew I would not be permitted to practice my faith [on campus] I would not have chosen the school.” I asked Dery who told me they knew ZSHS was a Catholic school, whether they as well knew of the religious requirements on non-Catholic students, they answered; “I actually did not have that knowledge.”

Likewise, Welaga said they “didn’t know clearly about the religious program and the daily schedule until [they] got to the school.” Some of the participants did not know about the Catholic identity of the school so those in this category had no idea about the religious requirement in the first place, let alone its intensity as some participants perceived it. Zaahid was one of those participants who told me they had no knowledge of ZSHS being a Catholic school prior to their enrollment.

I did not know the school was even a Catholic school. I only knew it was a single sex school. So, with regard to the religious program, I only had an idea from what I read on my admission letter and I did not think it would be so difficult until I got to the school.

Similarly, Abdul-Kareem and Abu Bakar indicated they had not chosen to enroll in ZSHS but through the CSSPS they were placed in the school. Participants in this group said they did not

in the first place anticipate any religious restrictions until they got to the school or at least read about it on the admission letter. “We didn’t even choose ZSHS, rather, we chose Islamic schools but the CSSPS placed us in ZSHS so the strict rules on religious worship was a surprise to us,” Abdul-Kareem explained. Abu Bakar also said. “I did not choose the school but the computer placed me in it so I had no idea the school will not allow us to pray.” Similarly, Taahiru and Ahmed were among those participants who were placed in Catholic schools by the CSSPS even though they did not choose Catholic schools at the basic level.

When I asked Taahiru to tell me what motivated them to choose the school in the first place, they answered; “I did not choose the school. The government [CSSPS] put me in it.” Likewise, in response to the same question Ahmed said, “I did not choose that school. I chose [names of schools deleted.] Umar was among those participants who did not know ZSHS was a Catholic institution before they gained admission into it. Umar explained. “I did not know that it was a Catholic school. It was my first week in the school I got to know it was a Catholic school and that we were not allowed to pray.” Sulemana likewise reported: “In fact, before our admission, we did not even know in which town this Catholic school was located.” In other words, if they did not know the location of the school, how could they know the details of the school’s liturgical program? Participants also reported on their parents’ participation at Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and their agitation regarding the school’s mandatory worship program. Perhaps, this agitation indicated parents’ lack of knowledge on the school’s religious requirements on their children prior to enrolling them in these Catholic schools. Sadiq was one of the participants who reported on this issue:

Some of our parents told the school [administrators] at a PTA meeting that they were coming to withdraw their children from the school because they didn’t bring their children

to the school to be deprived of their religious obligations. They said schooling is not more important than prayers, so they threatened to withdraw their children from the school.

Sadiq compared public schools with Catholic schools and lamented over the rigorous religious program of the latter:

Being in a Catholic school is the same as being in a public school. The only distinguishing factor is the religious program of Catholic schools. Catholic schools like praying too much! Every time they are praying! They like praying too much! Oh no!

Despite some participants' knowledge of ZSHS as a Catholic institution, they said they were "naïve" not to have found out the details of the religious program before getting enrolled in the school. In response to my question why they got enrolled in a Catholic school knowing as a Catholic institution it would require their commitment to the Catholic faith to a certain extent, Murtala explained:

We knew but I think we were naïve. We didn't take into consideration, how the worship program would affect the non-Catholic students even if it wasn't going to be demanding. We thought when we move in, things would be simple for us but when we moved in things became complicated.

In summary, participants had minimal to no knowledge of the robust religious climate of BSHS and ZSHS prior to their admission. However, participants expressed knowledge of the discipline and the good academic performance of the students of BSHS and ZSHS, which they explained, motivated their choice of the schools. Participants also knew of the Catholic identity of these schools but what constituted Catholic identity, they had no idea. These three major aspects of

the school which participants claimed some knowledge about, and the sources of their knowledge is the issue I turn to next.

Minimal Knowledge of Catholic Education

Out of the 21 participants I interviewed, ten of them expressed some level of knowledge about the schools' academic standard or the discipline or both prior to their enrollment.

Specifically, six out of the ten participants knew of the schools' discipline and their academic records. This knowledge motivated their choice and enrollment in these schools. Among those who knew of these two dimensions of the school were, Abugrago, Kubaaza, Abanga, Murtala, Yinzor and Mahmoud. Abugrago explained how they got to know about BSHS's discipline and its excellent academic performance.

When it was time for the selection of senior high schools, I went through the list of schools [for selection] and upon making further enquiries, I was told [by past students] of the academic excellence of BSHS and how good it was in terms of discipline so that inspired me to choose the school.

Similarly, Kubaaza got to know of the discipline and the high academic performance of the school through an engagement with its alumni. "My motivation was just the academic standard and the moral upbringing. I knew of people who were outstanding, and I admired their way of life, so I asked about their education background and they told me they attended BSHS." Other participants like Abanga equally outlined the academic standard and the overall discipline as their knowledge and motivation to enroll in BSHS prior to their admission, but added that upon their arrival on campus, only the disciplined lifestyle of some masters on campus motivated their continuous enrollment. Abanga explained:

There were some masters [on campus] I took them as people whose lifestyle I should emulate. People like [names of teachers deleted] cared for students, and they taught students not only because they wanted them to pass their examinations but they taught to fulfill the saying that service to God without service to man is vanity so people like that served as my motivation to stay and graduate but the discipline and the good academic records were the two major things I knew about the school before I got admission into it.

Other participants like Yinzor knew of both dimensions of the school through the internet which inspired them to enroll in the school. Yinzor said, “the discipline and their academic prowess attracted me to the school. For the school’s academic record, I Googled and found [BSHS] was one of the good schools according to the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results” published by the West African Examination Council (WAEC). (WASSCE is a standardized test WAEC conducts for final year students of secondary education to determine their suitability for tertiary education).

Some of the participants had an earlier opportunity to attend Catholic and non-Catholic Junior High Schools so through their assessment of the discipline and academic performance of both schools they preferred continuing their secondary education in Catholic High Schools. Dery was one of them:

Actually, I started my primary school in [name of Catholic school deleted] then I proceeded to [name of public JHS school deleted] so comparing the [academic] performance [of students] in the Catholic and the non-Catholic schools there was a great difference. And so, what we concluded was that there was much discipline in the Catholic schools as compared to the public school so that eventually led to my enrolment in ZSHS.

Like Dery, Mahmoud was one of the participants whose knowledge about ZSHS was influenced by their earlier schooling in a Catholic Junior High School. Mahmoud expressed:

I grew up in [name of town deleted] and so I knew about the discipline and the academic performance of Catholic schools [in the area]. Besides, I attended [name of Catholic JHS deleted.] So, what I learned about the Catholic schools was that, in terms of conduct, Catholic schools are disciplined. So, I chose ZSHS because of its discipline and when it comes to teaching and learning, they are outstanding. Yes! You can't be a lazy student in ZSHS. These two things attracted me to the school.

The remaining four participants only knew about the good academic performance of students. This reputation of academic performance inspired them to choose the school. Jamaal, Abdul-Majeed, Abdullah and Welaga were the four participants whose knowledge about their respective schools centered on only the academic performance record. Jamaal, however, reported other reasons besides the effectiveness of the teaching and learning in their school: "Actually, the academic performance of the school inspired me. But also, I lived in [name of hometown deleted]. And because I did not want to live far away from my family, I got admission in this nearby Catholic school." Coupled with the consultation with some students of the school at the time, Abdul-Majeed also indicated they accessed information about their school through browsing the Internet:

Some of my JHS mates were already in the school so I inquired from them about the school and they told me about its academic performance. Apart from that, I Googled, and I got to know the school was one of best schools in Northern Ghana, so I chose it.

Some of the participants acknowledged choosing their school based on its good tuition. However, they lamented over the lack of clarity in the way the Catholic schools were placed in the

general list for selection at the time they were expected to choose their schools at the JHS level.

Abdullah was one of those who lamented over the lack of clarity:

I chose BSHS because it was part of the schools the government provided for us to choose from. But I think there should have been specifications made. There should have been clarifications regarding the Catholic schools' expectations on non-Catholic students. For instance, they should have made it clear that if you want to enroll in a Catholic school you should be a Catholic [student] or you should be willing to suppress your religion in those schools. All the Catholic schools were placed in the same categories as the public schools. Seeing BSHS as one of the best schools, I decided to choose it only to realize upon admission that there were other strings attached which were not specified at the beginning.

The last participant among the four who only knew of the academic record of their school was Welaga. Welaga said some of them choose ZSHS as their topmost schools because it offered the program they wanted to study at the secondary level. However, Welaga expressed doubts about the school's religious requirements on non-Catholic students. "I chose ZSHS but when the placements were out, I began entertaining fears. I was wondering whether the school would pressurize me to do anything contrary to my faith or not. Well, I took my placement in good faith." This doubt mixed with fears perhaps buttresses the lack of clarity Abdullah raised on the need, right from the onset, to state the religious requirements of Catholic schools on non-Catholic students who wish to enroll in these schools.

Additionally, 14 out of the twenty-one participants knew of the Catholic identity of these institutions but their knowledge on what this identity actually translated into was very limited. Abdullah was among the 14 participants who knew they were being enrolled in a Catholic school

but did not know precisely the expectations of Catholic education on non-Catholic students.

Abdullah described their knowledge of the school prior to their enrollment in it as follows:

Honestly, I had no knowledge about how Catholic institutions work. I didn't take into consideration the school's religious background. I knew it was a Catholic school, but I did not know there was more to it apart from just knowing it was a Catholic school.

Similarly, Abugrago expressed vague knowledge of the school, which they gathered from past students:

I had never seen the school before but from past students and from the media, I knew it was a Catholic school. For me in particular I had heard of the school's high academic performance, but I never knew the daily program of Catholic schools would be so tight. I never knew it would be like the way I experienced it.

When I asked Hamza whether prior to their enrollment they perceived the school as they eventually experienced it, Hamza answered in the negative:

Not at all! I didn't have an idea about what I was going to meet in BSHS. At least I knew I was going to a Catholic school to study but the other compulsory things like going to Mass, I didn't know about that. It was only when I got to the school that I got to know I could not pray in my own religion.

Hamza stated further they had no option but to enroll in BSHS because of the family's influence to accept the placement:

I knew it was a Catholic school. When we were asked to choose our schools at JHS, I chose [names of public schools deleted]. I did not choose BSHS but when the results; [the CSSPS placements] were released, I realized I was placed in BSHS. Because of the

reputation of the school, my parents pressed upon me to accept the placement, but I didn't want to go to that school.

Aloliga also indicated they got to know a little about the school only when they were in their final year in JHS.

I had not heard much about BSHS. I heard of it only in my final year in the JHS. Yes, I knew it was a Catholic school, but I didn't know how Catholic schools conduct their affairs or how they operate. They just told me some few weeks to the selection of the schools, so I did not know much about the school.

It was the same response I got from Kubaaza when I inquired whether they knew of the Catholic identity of their school prior to their enrollment in it. "I knew it was a Catholic school, but I did not know how a Catholic school differed from a public school," Kubaaza stated. Similarly, Abdul-Majeed also responded in the negative stating they did not know the "essential details" of gaining admission into a Catholic high school and Dery also said, "I didn't know much about Catholic education." So also, Mahmoud, Welaga, and Zaahid indicated they "didn't know" to my open-ended question whether or not they knew what the daily program of Catholic schools would require of them, prior to their admission.

Abanga said they knew it was a Catholic school and had heard stories on how Catholic schools impose their doctrines on their students but doubted whether those stories were true probably because they were based on hearsay:

I was told if you wanted to go to a Catholic school, then you must also make up your mind to obey the Catholic ethics. Others also said it was like, if you go to a Catholic school they will force and baptize you and you will become a Catholic. Well, I said

experience is the best teacher so let me go there and see what is going to happen. When I get there and they force to baptize me I would withdraw.

Other participants equated Catholic schools with only the discipline and academic success, but they did not know about the religious dimension of these institutions. Yinzor was one those participants:

I knew Catholic schools are strictly disciplined. Besides, a single sex school is a place one can actually prioritize and focus, so I chose a Catholic school as my number one choice. But I didn't know anything about the Catholic worship program. I didn't even know what was called Mass until I got to the school, Yinzor explained.

Some participants expressed regret for attending a Catholic high school. Perhaps, such participants were not aware of the implications of Catholic education on their religious beliefs and practices if not they may not have chosen to enroll in Catholic schools to begin with. Jamaal remarked: "If I had gone to a different school where they practise Islam I would have been able to learn more about my faith and I would be a better Muslim today."

Three of the participants, Aloliga; Zaahid; and Murtala, also were aware though vaguely, of the Catholic identity of their schools but they did not freely choose to enroll in these schools. Their families "influenced" their choices based on either the schools' academic performances or for convenience's sake. Aloliga expressed how their parents got them enrolled in BSHS:

I really didn't feel free choosing the school. It was my parents who sort of imposed their choice on me. I really didn't intend to choose the school. My dad had a lot to say about his friends' children who completed that school and had good grades and a lot of things [information about the goodness of the school] and that was how I got enrolled in BSHS.

Similarly, AM explained how they got enrolled in a Catholic school due to financial constraints:

Actually, I did not choose the school myself. The school in which I had placement couldn't take me because I went late [due to a delay in raising the school fees] and they said admissions were closed and the school was full so they couldn't take new students and that explained how my parents had to look for a different school for me.

Zaahid's parents, perhaps, got Zaahid enrolled in this Catholic school because it was the last resort.

Almost for the same reasons, Murtala got enrolled in a Catholic school as a Muslim student:

Sometimes it is due to lack of choices. And sometimes, being naïve you don't take certain things into consideration. You think when you move in things will be so simple but when you move in, things become complicated. In my case I didn't get placement, but I was supposed to get one so when I had this school [through parental negotiations] I thought it was good. But if I had many choices, I wouldn't have gone to that school.

Participants' minimal knowledge of the expectations of Catholic schools is an extension on the previous studies on this subject matter. Other participants got placements in these schools, but they did not choose to enroll in them, nor did they know anything about these schools prior to their admission. I examine next this category of participants.

No Knowledge of BSHS and ZSHS

As I indicated in the preceding paragraphs, 14 out of the twenty-one participants knew, though vaguely, that they were getting enrolled in Catholic schools. The remaining seven neither chose to enroll in these schools nor did they know about the Catholic identity of these schools prior to their enrollment. Out of the seven, four were placed by the CSSPS perhaps, against their will because they had not chosen these schools at their basic level. In response to my question on how

Abdul-Kareem got enrolled in ZSHS, if they did not choose it, they retorted; “No! I never chose ZSHS. It was the government [CSSPS] who placed me in it.” Abu Bakar had the same response when I probed. “I didn’t choose ZSHS. I went to the Internet to check on my placement and I realized I was posted to ZSHS.” Taahiru and Ahmed gave similar responses. Taahiru explained how they got enrolled in ZSHS when I inquired whether they knew ZSHS was a Catholic school prior to their enrollment:

No! I didn’t even choose it. [Then how did you find yourself in ZSHS, I probed.] I went [to the Internet] and checked on my name and they had changed a school for me. I didn’t choose ZSHS. They had changed from [name of preferred school deleted] to ZSHS. I didn’t even know where the school was located until my friends helped me to find it.

Ahmed who was also placed in ZSHS by the CSSPS indicated they did not even know where the school was located:

I didn’t know it was a Catholic school. [Then how did you choose it, I queried] No! I didn’t choose it! When I checked [on the internet] for my placement I noticed they had changed the schools we chose and ZSHS was given to me and I didn’t even know where it was located so I had to trace it. Only then I got to know it was a Catholic school.

Among the remaining three participants in this category who knew nothing about these schools prior to their placements, two had the schools chosen for them by their parents/family members. Sadiq and Sulemana expressed their views on how their parents got them enrolled in this particular Catholic school. Sadiq said; “After I wrote my BECE I wasn’t placed in [X] I was placed in [name of preferred school deleted] but my father said that place was very far so they wouldn’t let me go there.” For Sadiq and others, they got placements in their preferred schools, but their parents dictated otherwise. Sulemana expressed similar sentiments. “When I completed my

JHS, I didn't know about a school called [X.] It wasn't part of the schools that I chose. I had placement in [name of preferred school deleted] but my sister said it was one way." In Sulemana's case, it was the sister who prevented them from going to their preferred school and instead got them enrolled in this Catholic school. Finally, Umar, the third participant, indicated the head teacher chose ZSHS for them but what informed the head teacher's choice was a matter of guess work for Umar. This participant had no idea what the head teacher meant by ZSHS was a good school, but they dared not ask the head teacher for an explanation, perhaps out of "respect:"

It was my head teacher at JHS who chose the school for me. When we were about to write [the BECE] they told us to choose our schools which I did but the head teacher called me later and told me he was replacing one of the schools I chose with another one. So, he removed one of my choices and replaced it with ZSHS. I didn't even know the school. He just said the school was good and it would help me and that was it.

Umar sounded dissatisfied with the choice, but they could hardly speak up. Umar also expressed feeling "scared to go there [ZSHS] because most of the schools I chose were the schools in which my family members or my friends were students already."

In summary, some of the participants knew about the Catholic identity of BSHS and ZSHS but they did not understand that enrolling in a Catholic school meant participating in a robust religious program. Others did not seek admission in these institutions perhaps, they did not even know these schools existed, but they were nonetheless placed in them by either the CSSPS, a family member or a guardian. All 21 participants had a poor picture of the religious aspect of Catholic schools prior to their admission in BSHS and ZSHS. Most of the participants, therefore, were taken aback when they began experiencing the school upon their arrival on campus. Invariably, it had a negative impact on their adjustment to the new culture. The difficulties they

encountered resulted from their identity as non-Catholic students and the little they knew of Catholic education. I examine the core cause of participants' struggle in the next topic.

Participants' Emotional Reaction

My study explored the experiences of non-Catholic students attending Catholic high Schools. The 21 participants consisted of Muslims, members of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, Jehovah Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, as well as Members of the Assemblies of God Church. The participants of the six different religious denominations experienced the Catholic culture and the Catholic worship differently based on their different religious convictions, beliefs and practices. The Muslim participants recounted very unique experiences and likewise their adjustment to the new culture as compared to their counterparts who identified as Christian though non-Catholic.

As already indicated, BSHS and ZSHS restricted non-Catholic students who gained admission into their schools from practicing their faith on campus. This explained why all the participants could not freely practice their own faiths during the three years of their enrollment and residence in the schools. The participants' inability to exercise their religious freedom and commit to their respective faiths, coupled with the schools' Catholic culture posed a challenge to them. They experienced negative feelings, fear, hurt, and coercion. They also felt uncomfortable, isolated, guilty, bored, shocked, and imprisoned. I examine each of their experiences beginning with their emotions and feelings.

Negative Emotions and Feelings

The participants experienced difficulties during the initial stages of their enrollment in BSHS and ZSHS as they participated in the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship services.

The conditions that evoked the negative feelings in participants could be traced to the perceived betrayal of their religious commitments and convictions.

As people of different faiths, they were supposed to be loyal to their own religions and therefore not associate themselves with a different religion—Catholicism. Yet, by virtue of their enrollment in a Catholic school, they ought to pay allegiance to what the school required of non-Catholic students. However, their commitment to exercise loyalty to both the institution in which they claimed membership and at the same time remain faithful to their respective religions contradicted one another. Additionally, some belief systems of participants' religions and those of Catholicism did not only contradict one another but also confused participants both in their minds and regarding their identity.

According to the participants, in Islam, Muslims profess Allah as the only One True God but in the Catholic faith, Jesus is also God. Moreover, Jesus is also the Son of God which contradicts Islam because in Islam, God has no son. These different doctrines, the Muslim participants indicated, confused and evoked bad feelings in them because they had to recite or at least listen to these prayers in the chapel which described Jesus in one instance as God and in another instance as the Son of God. For instance, Zaahid described their confusion and feeling regarding sitting in the chapel and making mental comparisons between Jesus in Catholicism and in Islam as follows:

In our Qur'an there is a messenger called Jesus, but we don't believe he is the true messenger. Our messenger is Mohammed. So, whenever I was in the church, I didn't always feel good. I know the truth and you are telling me a different thing. I was always confused, and I didn't like the idea of listening to those contradictions.

The participants described their negative emotions and feeling in multiple ways.

The rosary prayers, for some of them, sounded very repetitive and boring. Standing at one spot for several minutes and reciting the same thing over and over again made no sense to them, yet they could not walk away because it was compulsory— it frustrated them. The experience grew worse during the month of the Holy Rosary. The Catholic Church dedicates the month of October to praying the rosary, which is observed every single day. Because it was done on a daily basis, it was hell for some of them. The experience was not different with the “Way of the Cross.” Some wondered how a human being could represent Jesus, whom Catholic men and women refer to as God, in carrying his cross.

Regarding the Mass, they did not understand why in the first place the school required them to participate in a religion they do not believe in. They did not equally comprehend the liturgical gestures. Why they must bow to the altar, genuflect to the tabernacle or make the sign of the cross. For some, they equated the Mass to idol worship. The time spent at Mass each day, each week and each month was too much for participants. Three of the participants; Hamza, Umar and Murtala described their participation in the Mass as a waste of their precious time which they could have profitably used for their studies. Hamza noted; “I say it was time wasting. You are sitting in the chapel, but you are not participating. That time [spent] sitting there and not participating, I could have used that time to perform my prayers and taken my book to study.” Murtala also expressed the same idea: “It was time consuming. You will recite the rosary for long and by the time you enter the classroom it would be late.” “I found it difficult to participate in the Catholic worship and let me say it was also time consuming because you would stand for several hours listening to them recite their prayers,” Umar expressed.

Fourteen participants reported they “felt badly” by relinquishing their faith and embracing a different faith which they neither believed in nor made sense of the beliefs and actions. Hamza

expressed disapproval engaging in the liturgical gestures and for which reason felt adamant attending the rituals:

We had to go for prayers because it was compulsory but most of us didn't like to go. For instance, we had to bow down to the altar whenever we entered the chapel before we took our seats. I felt badly doing so. I felt badly but I had no option. I just had to do it, since I was already in the school. I just had to comply and get out of the place.

Abdullah lamented over their restriction from practicing their faith on campus and regretted their enrollment in the school:

If I had known BSHS was a Catholic school I wouldn't have chosen it. Yes! Even at a certain point I wanted to leave the school because Muslims are supposed to pray at least five times a day but here was the case I got admission into an institution where I was limited; where I couldn't practice my religion with ease.

Additionally, Abdullah said the negative comments by some of the administrators likewise evoked bad feelings in non-Catholic students:

Wrong perception and all kinds of derogatory remarks by administrators against non-Catholic [students] were quite hurtful. [The administrator] would utter words and you would be affected. Then you feel badly about it and ask yourself, "What am I doing here in this school?" "Who asked me to come to this school?"

The same hurtful remarks from some administrators evoked similar negative feelings in Abanga. "I didn't expect some words to come from some of the religious leaders against other religions so I used to feel badly about it but well, I couldn't do anything about it." Other participants expressed the same sentiments when their prayer meeting was abruptly cut short by

one of the school administrators. Abugrigo expressed how hurt and disappointed they felt regarding the incident:

One day the [school administrator] closed our prayer meeting suddenly because according to [this administrator] we were making noise. That was very bad and very hurting. We had signed consent forms to obey the school rules and the regulations, but at least some little privileges should have also been given to us [the non-Catholic students] in the institution.

Abu Bakar expressed their frustration for engaging in the Catholic rituals but on the other hand were denied the same opportunity to practice their own religion:

We participated in their religion. Why could they not allow us at our own convenient time to also go and pray? It wasn't that we neglected the Catholic worship to go for ours. Whenever it was time for theirs, we made sure we were there to participate. We participated fully but when it concerned allowing us to practice our faith, it became a problem. I just couldn't understand that!

Ahmed and Sulemana told me "they felt badly" due to the challenges they faced in practicing their faith on campus. "I always felt badly [engaging in the Catholic rituals] because Christianity is not my religion. Islam is my religion," Sadiq stated. Some participants did not only express negative feelings, but they as well related their deviance on campus to their inability to freely practice their faith. Umar was one of them:

I felt badly because we were not allowed to also perform our religious rites on campus. Without this restriction they wouldn't have been the need to break the school rules and

regulations. We were not given that opportunity to practice our faith, so the only option was to defy some of the school rules.

Other participants had the same bad feeling because they felt too much deprived of their daily prayers which required just a few minutes for each prayer session. “Whenever it was time for praises you will see us participating. So why is it that, the little five minutes or seconds that we also wanted to use to pray, we were denied?” Abdul-Kareem lamented. Zaahid expressed the same bad feeling for being denied only a few minutes to say their prayers:

We went to the chapel, said the rosary prayers, performed other prayers but they wouldn’t give us a small opportunity to also pray [in our own way]. Maybe, five minutes would have been enough for us to use for each prayer. Why wouldn’t they give us that time to also pray to our God? So, at times I felt badly about being in a Catholic school, Zaahid lamented.

Mahmoud also remarked that “[they] felt badly” when I inquired to know how they felt about their inability to profess their faith while on campus. Participants also expressed bad feeling over the way members of the Catholic Church worshipped. Kubaaza was among those who expressed such feelings: “I felt badly the first time I stepped foot in the school. I almost thought, the Catholic Church, excuse me to say, had no God because I was surprise at the way they worshipped.”

Aloliga expressed feelings of discrimination and powerlessness for being forced to engage in the Catholic rituals on campus but was not allowed to travel off campus for similar programs:

I saw that part to be discriminatory because when it came to the same practices on campus the school required us to join the Catholic [students] in their worship but when it came to going outside the campus for similar programs, we were told not to go or provide

legitimate reasons if we wanted to go. What is more legitimate than the reason the school has given for involving us in Catholic worship despite our non-Catholic identity?

Boredom constituted part of the negative feelings. Five participants expressed feeling bored during liturgical celebrations. They did not choose to attend such celebrations and/or they could not comprehend the signs and symbols that comprised the rituals. Zaahid expressed boredom and lack of interest in the liturgy shortly after attending a few of the rituals.

At the beginning, the first day I liked it because I wanted to know how Catholic [members] pray their rosary. But with time I was bored with it. I wish I had the chance not to go. It was good at first but with time and for the rest of my stay in the school, I found the ceremonies boring.

Likewise, Murtala indicated their boredom resulted from the fact that they were forced to attend such rituals. “Sometimes it was boring! If you feel forced to do something you don’t like, you may attend the program, but you cannot concentrate because you are forced to be there. It wasn’t out of our own free will.” Umar said the only alternative to being part of a ceremony they did not understand was to doze off. “I felt bored my first day in the chapel. In fact, I slept because nothing interested me, and everything was also new to me.” While Sadiq “felt bored at times” being in the chapel, Ahmed was “always bored.” There was almost no liturgical celebration that Ahmed found interesting. Perhaps, the boredom made it practically impossible for Ahmed to benefit from any of the rituals because when I asked whether they benefited from the worship program, they said [“they] did not benefit from it.”

Other participants also felt they were compelled to participate in the rituals because they could not stay away from such practices without breaking the school rules. I examine next, the experiences of those who felt they were forced to participate in the Catholic worship program.

Feelings of Coercion

The school expected all students to be present at all school gatherings for the “sake of discipline.” In that regard, students could be punished on account of a breach of the school rules and regulations for failure to attend any religious ceremony as the School Bond and School Undertaking stipulated. It was also the desire of the schools to treat all students equally and to create a sense of oneness as a community. Thus, everyone being at the same place at the same time and engaging in the same activity was centered on building a good community spirit. Regarding the participants’ perspective on this issue, I asked probing questions to better understand how they experienced the phenomenon.

Twelve participants indicated they were forced to participate in the Catholic worship because one had no choice whether or not to participate in such rituals. Those participants who felt forced to attend religious services would be present in the chapel where most of such religious rituals took place, but they would not engage in saying the prayers or perform the liturgical signs. Among those who felt forced was Abdul-Kareem. Abdul-Kareem expressed some resentment for being compelled to participate in the liturgical celebrations: “I felt I was forced to do things I didn’t want to do so I used not to concentrate anytime I went for such Church programs. It wasn’t out of my free will that I attended those programs.” Abdul-Kareem’s explanation resonated with the old adage, which states that “you can force a donkey to the river, but you cannot force it to drink.” Similarly, Abugrago indicated how they felt coerced and how they let out their frustration: “We used to grumble! I think service to God shouldn’t be forced. Students shouldn’t be coerced to serve God. There should be some kind of dynamism in the way we serve God.” Others in this same category did not only grumble, but they as well complained to their parents. Sadiq was one of those who complained to their parents:

Sometimes I felt angry coming into that institution. At times I complained to my mother, letting her know I wasn't happy in the school because it was a Catholic school and every now and then they forced us to go to church and I wasn't used to attending Church services.

Another participant, Sulemana, recounted their unhappiness regarding the prohibition of non-Catholic students from practicing their faith on campus:

When we got to the school I realized that it was very difficult for us to pray and fast, so I decided to call my parents to inform them of what was going on and requested a transfer for me to go to a different school because I couldn't continue in that way of life.

Other participants, however, did not disclose to their parents about the painful experiences they went through because they did not want their parents to share in their pain. Abdullah was one of those hesitant to inform their parents about their struggle:

I felt suppressed to express my religion! By the time we were in the middle of the term I was very frustrated! I honestly wanted to leave [the school] but I didn't want to call my parents to tell them because they would have been discomfited.

Participants did not only feel forced, but they also felt worried for the non-Catholic but Christian students who had no Scripture Union on campus through which they could pray in their own way. Kubaaza expressed such worries:

In the public schools they have what we call Scripture Union (SU) which is a gathering of all the Christian denominations so when I got to the school and I found out that there was nothing like that, I became worried. I know the Charismatic Churches like to pray, sing

and jubilate. But in the Catholic Church, worship is most often done in silence so I believe the other Christians would have been deprived of worshipping in their own way.

The participants also expressed disbelief in some of the Catholic rituals, but they were duty bound to be present at such gatherings because they had no choice but to attend these celebrations. Abanga for instance expressed such disbelief. “Anytime there was rosary prayer I felt forced to go for it because I didn’t believe in it and even though I would be present, I wouldn’t feel comfortable at all.” Other participants also felt forced to engage in the Catholic worship program because it was the Ghana government’s decision to open up enrollment for non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools but not the students themselves. They wondered why they should be asked to do things against their will, they questioned. Dery was one of them: “If the government has asked me to go to ZSHS meanwhile I am not a Catholic [member] then they should not force me to engage in religious matters in which I don’t believe. Because participants did not want to attend such rituals, Welaga indicated that “the only way out to avoid such religious programs was to dodge” whenever it was possible and safe to do so. Welaga was not the only participant who dodged. Others also resorted to dodging the rituals. Umar was one of them: “They used to chase us to go for some of the prayers, but we often dodged because we didn’t want to participate in their worship.” Participants thought it was not right to ask people to practice a religion against their conscience thus, Abu Bakar remarked: “You don’t force people to come into your religion!” Murtala summed up participants’ impression about being asked to attend religious ceremonies they had not freely chosen to do so in the following words: “We felt we were forced to go for those religious programs so we would attend but we wouldn’t concentrate. We were forced to be there because it wasn’t out of our own free will.” Participants did not only feel forced, they also expressed feeling uncomfortable participating in the liturgical celebrations. I describe their feelings in the next topic.

Uncomfortable Feelings

The participants' uncomfortable feelings resulted from their non-Catholic and different cultural backgrounds. Culture is like the air we breathe in and out—it is found at where one is located and like air, no one can survive in his/her new environment without it. The moment first-year students arrived on campus, they were immediately immersed in the Catholic culture. But unlike breathing in air, which is done automatically, participants needed time to adjust to the culture. Suddenly uprooting participants from their respective religions and cultures and quickly transplanting them into the Catholic culture explained their uncomfortable feelings.

Eleven of the participants said they felt uncomfortable participating in the mandatory worship program. Abanga was one of them. In response to my request to share with me on how the participants experienced the Mass, the Way of the Cross, and the rosary prayers, Abanga explained how the repetitive nature of the Catholic prayers constituted a bother for them:

I would say I felt so uncomfortable even though some of the practices were common to my religion. I asked myself. Does God really demand that we make one prayer all the time hundred times? Just one prayer? We said the Hail Mary several times! I really felt uncomfortable! That was why I asked those questions. We went for rosary prayer the Way of the Cross, and we said the same Hail Mary, fifty times; Our Father, five times. Does God really command us to do things like that? Why should we be repeating prayers as if we are reciting poems?

Aloliga expressed the same uncomfortable feeling due to the disparity between what they believe in and profess in their religion contrary to what is practiced in the Catholic faith.

There were times I wasn't comfortable performing some of the rites because my faith only talks about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Even though Mary is important, we don't give much attention to her but in the Catholic faith most of the things centered on Mary. So sometimes I felt uncomfortable participating in the prayers.

The images in the chapel constituted not only a worry but they also were repulsive to participants. Welaga recounted how they felt seeing the images in the chapel for the first time:

When I got into the chapel for the first time and I saw the statue of Jesus Christ; and that of Mary, I was so surprised. So anytime I looked at those images I asked myself why they were found in the church. Those images were driving me away from the Catholic worship.

Welaga compared the Catholic Church to that of their Church and their perception of images and why they avoided the Mass.

Like the images I talked about, we don't erect statues in our Church. We don't do that!

Because the Bible says we shouldn't worship idols, I didn't want to practice idol worship and so I used to dodge the Mass.

Other participants, likewise, made the same comparisons of the Catholic faith with their respective religions and found an element of idol worship in the Catholic rituals. Abdul-Majeed indicated:

I reflected on the images in the chapel and compared it with portions of the Quran that condemn idol worship. Besides, the Bible also says: "Thou shall not worship other gods except me" So initially, I used to dodge the Mass because I wasn't comfortable participating in idol worship, which God clearly forbids.

Abdul-Majeed was not the only participant who dodged the Mass. Others also dodged the Mass because it was uncomfortable performing signs and symbols they did not comprehend. Hamza explained this viewpoint: “Most often, we didn’t understand the meaning behind the rites we performed in the chapel so most often, dodging the Mass was the only option to avoid doing things we didn’t understand and things we didn’t believe in.” Jamaal expressed the same sentiments of disbelief in the Catholic rituals as authentic worship: “I felt uncomfortable because I didn’t believe in what was happening at Mass. For instance, bowing to the altar and making the sign of the Cross for me wasn’t authentic worship.”

The feeling of discomfort for others boiled down to living as a “Catholic student” while on campus and having to make adjustments to live by one’s own faith when at home. “When school was in session, you were a Catholic [student] but at home you needed to adjust to relive by your own religion and that was discomfoting and a difficult thing to do,” Murtala explained.

The complaints by other non-Catholic students regarding what they participated in, which were not practices they performed in their respective religions and denominations constituted discomfort for others who frequently heard those complaints. Abu Bakar was one of those who felt disturbed listening to other non-Catholic students complain: “Some of my colleagues complained so much [about] participating in the prayers. They would say in their Church they don’t do this, and they don’t do that. Their complaints were so discomfoting for some of us.”

Unlike other non-Catholic students who freely expressed dissatisfaction regarding the mandatory worship program, others felt uncomfortable talking about it, not even to the administration. Sadiq remarked: “I felt uncomfortable thinking and talking about Church services. I didn’t even feel comfortable talking to [name of administrator deleted.]” Like Sadiq, Taahiru said

the “whole idea of being in a Catholic school with all those prayer restrictions made me feel uncomfortable being in the school.”

The recitation of most of the Catholic prayers constituted a source of discomfort for some participants. They wished they had the chance to compose and air their own prayers so they could feel it in themselves.

Unlike in my religion where they give you the chance to say your own prayers in your own words and in your own way, in the Catholic chapel, we recited almost all the prayers, so I did not feel comfortable with that. So most often, I felt like I was singing. I really did not feel I meant whatever I said because it was purely recital. I did not mean what I was saying. I could not feel it within me, Dery narrated.

While some participants felt isolated participating in the Catholic worship because they did not understand them, others felt the same regarding some observations they made of the Catholic culture. It is this issue of participants feeling of isolation I describe next.

Feelings of Isolation and Discrimination

In connection with participants' experience of the Catholic community, 17 participants expressed dissatisfaction over one or two things. Out of the 17, nine participants “felt isolated;” six said some of the school rules and regulations were biased towards non-Catholic students, and two “felt unwelcome.” I describe the experiences of the 16 participants beginning with the nine participants who expressed feelings of isolation.

Ahmed expressed disappointment involving the experience of attending the Church services. “The Way of the Cross; the rosary prayers; and the bible sharing were isolating and boring moments for me.” Another participant, Abdul Kareem, also recounted the feelings of the

limitations experienced by some of the non-Catholic students: “We didn’t have the freedom to express whatever we felt dissatisfied with, concerning the school. Besides, some privileges were given to only the Catholic [students] especially the baptized so we were isolated despite our membership with the community.” Regarding the prohibition of non-Catholic students from participating in some leadership positions in the school, Abu Bakar felt it was not only isolating but also an affront to their dignity as community members:

They hated us. How can we be in an institution, and yet we can’t also contest for some leadership positions? So, does it mean if we are not Christians we can’t be leaders in the society? Is it not through such practices that we learn to become leaders someday? Oh! We have Muslims who are leaders in the society too. That was an insult, Abu Bakr lamented!

Commenting on the same school policy on preserving some leadership roles for only Catholic students, Abugrigo did not object to that policy, however, they made an observation regarding the need to practice democracy cognizant of Ghana’s current dispensation as a democratic state:

We don’t dispute this fact. It is a Catholic school and they must go strictly according to their rules and regulations, but we are in a democratic society and we are in Ghana per se, so I think this practice per say wasn’t actually favorable. There were also non-Catholic [students] who were also competent but because they didn’t have equal rights, they couldn’t compete.

Hamza recounted feelings of isolation and discrimination regarding the prohibition on non-Catholic students from going off campus for some religious ceremonies, which according to the school administrator, they were not qualified to go for such programs because of their non-

Catholic identify. In the meantime, they participated in those same ceremonies on campus as non-Catholic students:

There were certain events that took place outside campus. On those occasions, the [title of administrator deleted] would say non-Catholic [students] were not allowed to go, but if you wanted to go, then you must give good reasons for wanting to go. There were other celebrations outside campus, which the school would specify that only Catholic [students] were allowed to go. These were moments I felt isolated. I felt everyone, like we do on campus, should be allowed to go and participate. If we participate in those same ceremonies on campus, why can't we do so outside of campus? I felt discriminated against on such occasions.

Other participants such as Umar, "felt isolated because they didn't allow [them] to also practice [their] faith [on campus.]" Similarly, Sulemana expressed feelings of isolation and discrimination on the occasion of their school's anniversary. "It looked like everything on that day was about the Catholic students so feeling isolated, I had to go and sleep." The mere fact that participants "could not recite the prayers, they felt left out" during liturgical celebrations as Dery expressed. Likewise, Welaga "felt left out in group prayers" in which they could not fully participate because of their non-Catholic background.

Based on the participants' strong feelings of powerlessness and discrimination, I posed probing questions to understand how they felt living in the community. Abdul-Kareem, one of the two who felt unwelcome, responded with the following explanation: "No, I won't say I felt welcome. I wasn't fully welcomed. If I were fully welcomed, my interest would have been taken into consideration when decisions were being made." Also, Umar did not feel welcome and

wanted a transfer to another school, but their families motivated them to endure and graduate. In response to my question, Umar retorted:

No! I wouldn't say I felt welcome because of those things that inhibited my ability to practice my religion. I even wanted to take a transfer to another school, but my mother objected to my decision saying that once I was already in the school, I should just try and complete.

Those who felt some of the school rules and regulations were bias toward the non-Catholic students, is the issue I turn to next. Six of the participants had this viewpoint about some specific rules and regulations about the school.

Regarding the reservation of the Senior Prefect's position for only the baptized Catholic students, Hamza felt the school administration was biased in judging the leadership qualities of the non-Catholic students. "I would say the school authorities were bias[ed] because regarding the position of the Senior Prefect, everyone could contest for it on condition that you had the leadership skills." Abugrago had the same impression that reserving the Senior Prefect's position, for instance, for only the Baptized Catholic students was bias and discriminatory:

There was this practice, I don't know how to put it, but I would say it was a bias[ed] way of treating students especially the non-Catholic students. One could see that the Catholic students in the school were given privileges and opportunities that outweighed those for the non-Catholic students. A clear example to this was the policy that only the baptized Catholic [students] could contest for the Senior Prefect's position.

Likewise, Kubaaza indicated that as students of the same school, it was discriminatory to reserve a particular leadership position for a select group. "I think the school authorities were bias.

We were all students so some posts shouldn't have been allocated to only the Catholic [students.] Once we were all students, anyone could aspire for whatever position [they] deemed capable of exercising leadership.”

Abdullah expressed the same sentiments of discrimination and powerlessness.

Even though it wasn't our school, giving certain positions like the Senior Prefect's position to only Catholic [students,] in fact, Communicants, was unfair. As students of the school, I think equal opportunity should have been given to every student to contest for any position. So, limiting certain students and giving certain students an upper hand wasn't fair at all.

Based on this perceived discrimination, Abu Bakar indicated that shortly before they graduated from the school, they instructed their colleague non-Catholic students to register their dissatisfaction by not even contesting for any of those positions in which the school allowed them to exercise leadership. “When we were in our final year [of school] we told our colleagues not to aspire for any position in the school and as seniors, they listened to us and didn't aspire for any leadership positions,” Abu Bakar explained.

Though Aloliga expressed dissatisfaction over the restriction of non-Catholic students from engaging in certain leadership position, they tried consoling themselves by the following argument: “it is a Catholic institution, so we have to respect their rules and regulations.” The participants also indicated they felt guilty. I describe next the issues that evoked in them this guilt feeling.

Guilt Feelings

The participants who expressed guilty feelings participating in the Catholic worship indicated they were engaging in wrongdoing because their religions do not permit them to practice

other religions. They also felt they were responsible for the wrongdoing because they had the option to leave the school. But considering the cost involved in leaving the school, which I would consider later, they indicated it was practically impossible for all those who faced challenges to vacate the school. Their continuous enrollment in the school and consistently engaging in “wrongdoing” intensified their feeling of guilt. Four of the participants expressed this guilt feeling.

Abdullah narrated the challenges they faced in living out their faith on campus and wondered whether they would enter heaven upon their death—an expression of guilt. “That was what happened, and with time, we managed, struggled and hid and prayed once or twice in a day. Would I be able to make it to Jannah (paradise)? Would I be punished for what I am doing here?” Abdullah questioned.

Another participant, Abu Bakar recounted their fears of committing a sin by participating in the Catholic worship: “I asked myself. Are we committing a sin? Because I have God I worship. I know He is God. And here they are telling me Jesus is God. I felt like I was committing a sin.”

“For the Sunday services, there were instances we got up late and could not say our own prayers before going for the Mass and for that reason I felt guilty about it,” said Sadiq. Similarly, Sulemana also wondered what the consequences of their inability might be, as the school culture did not permit participants to pray: “It got to a point we wondered whether God would punish us upon our death for our lack of commitment in our faith. And who would be blamed for this? The school or our parents?” Feelings of imprisonment were part of participants’ experience.

Feelings of Imprisonment

Participants indicated BSHS and ZSHS require students to remain on campus until the mid-term break or vacation. Thus, except for very legitimate and obvious reasons like sickness,

students were not permitted (given exeats) to travel off campus. Additionally, life on campus appeared rigid. Students were monitored of their whereabouts and in what activities they engaged, participants recounted. Five of the participants felt being in a Catholic school is like being in prison.

Abugrago perceived the school they attended was a prison and for them schooling should not be that way. Accordingly, they used to refer to the school as a prison:

Once you got into the school, there was no leaving unless you were given an exeat or unless you had a particular reason which was very crucial if not you were not allowed to leave the campus and I think schooling shouldn't be so. We shouldn't make the school look like it is a prison. In fact, at that time we used to refer to it as a prison.

Another participant, Taahiru lamented over the difficulties involved in obtaining exeats to travel off campus which for them resonated with prison life. "You could be seriously sick and ask for an exeat, but they will not sign one for you unless they saw you [descriptive words deleted.] Are we in prison? That was their problem."

Talking about the strict nature of the rules and regulations governing life on campus, Abanga described the school as an optional prison opened to only those who willingly chose to go there. "I would describe BSHS as an optional prison. If you choose to go to prison, then you don't complain." Likewise, Dery explained how they had to go by whatever the school required of them because they chose to enroll in a Catholic school. "There were non-Catholic schools I could have attended but I chose to go to ZSHS. So, once I chose to imprison myself by putting the rope around my neck, I was ready to follow their path," Dery narrated. Talking about participants' desire to join the Catholic students to worship off campus during certain occasions, Aloliga explained the morale behind their desire as follows: "We just wanted to feel the outside environment because we had

been inside the school for a very long time like in prison so we just wanted to go out of campus for fresh air.” The emotional reaction of participants resulted in some disrespect towards the Catholic faith, which confirmed Donlevy’s (2009) study in which he found non-Catholic students’ refusal to participate in specifically religious matters and describe it as openly disrespectful to the Catholic Faith. Culture or community life is all about human relations.

The way members of an institution relate with one another tells a lot about how each member feels within the community. In this regard, the investigation on participants’ experiences of the Catholic culture and the religious worship program would be incomplete without examining relationships within BSHS and ZSHS. It is onto this issue, I turn next.

Participants’ Relationship with Community Members

A critical examination of participants’ relationship with and perception of the school administrators, the Catholic teachers and the Catholic students is relevant in understanding how the non-Catholic students experienced the Catholic school community. I examine first, participants’ relationship with and perception of the administrators. Participants’ experiences, needless to say, differed from administrator to administrator. Nonetheless, their different experiences indicated how administrators’ conduct or attitude either enhanced or became detrimental to their life on campus. Participants had both negative and positive perceptions about, as well as bad and good experiences in relating with the four school administrators on the scene.

Participants described all the four administrators as time conscious and hardworking. They felt they put in their best to ensure students’ success in their academic work. They ensured teachers were up and doing and would not take any flimsy excuses from any member of the teaching staff whose conduct was inconsistent with the Catholic spirit of hard work, punctuality and overall discipline. Participants indicated many of the administrators were out for students’ good. They

described some administrators as disciplined, consistent and principled, which they attributed to their training as religious leaders and which impacted positively on their administrative responsibilities. They said the administrators had time for them and they cared about them. However, participants' also expressed challenges relating with some of the administrators.

Eleven of the participants raised concerns bordering on the interpersonal relationship that existed between them and their administrator. They found some utterances of their administrators derogatory and hurtful especially those made against non-Catholic students' religious beliefs and practices. Participants felt cursed by their administrators' utterances. Participants found the administrators' negative comments inconsistent with their vocation as religious leaders who ought to be role models and mediators of God's mercy and love, thus they expressed shock and disbelief.

Abanga was one of those who expressed shock over a comment the administrator made regarding students' involvement in wrongdoing but entertained fears to own up because they were uncertain of the consequences.

I was shocked to hear from people who are [religious title deleted;] Catholic [members]—who hold responsible positions in the Church; renowned people say certain things you don't expect them to say. Opening your mouth to tell students they [description deleted.] You are a [religious title deleted.] Some students were even cursed for committing certain crimes. Some students committed a crime and were asked to own up but out of fear, they did not own up and this [administrator] told them [description deleted.] I was surprised because I think as a religious leader whose lifestyle students should emulate, words like that shouldn't come from your mouth.

Abanga interpreted administrators' negative comments as a cause for the dwindling of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life:

One time I heard people complaining about lack of vocations, but I think some of the priests and religious are the same people who discourage students from entering the seminaries and the formation houses because of their negative lifestyle. If somebody commits a crime and you who are supposed to be a God-fearing person, insult the person in a way that a lay person wouldn't even do that, how do you expect me to become like you? No! I won't want to become like you. So the priests and the religious are the same people who are driving students away from becoming priests and religious.

Abugrago perceived the [administrator] was their spiritual parent but lamented over the fact that they found it very difficult to approach [X] for any meaningful discussion:

Before you could approach [X] and talk with [X] you were already worn out and that shouldn't have been the case because we saw [X] as our spiritual parent. As the head of the school we should have been free to cry out or pour our grievances to [X]

Another participant, Hamza, said they were afraid of their administrators and so they could not approach them to clarify certain administrative issues they did not understand. "Mostly everyone was afraid of [identity deleted]. How would you even approach [X] to ask why the non-Catholic [students] were not allowed to [activity deleted?] That was a difficult thing to do," Hamza stressed. Abdullah also indicated that the negative utterances reinforced their fear to approach their administrator to discuss any religious matters they were confronted with:

The [administrator] was so fearsome. We feared [X] so much that we couldn't approach [X]. More to the point, [the administrator] told us numerous times that if we weren't comfortable in the school we could leave." So, there was nothing much to discuss about religion. [The administrator] had said it countless times and we had heard it already. So, there was no need going to [X] on matters regarding our religious differences.

Likewise, Aloliga also said the administrator “was so strict so most of us were afraid of [X] and to be very honest, even the Catholic students were afraid of [X.]” Other participants acknowledged occasionally chatting with their administrators, but it was purely on academics. Yinzor acknowledged: “[The administrator] knew I wasn’t a Catholic but [X] didn’t know my religious denomination so I told [X] and that was all. Apart from that anything else that we spoke about was purely academic and that was it.” Jamaal expressed the same view: “I didn’t interact much with the [administrator.]” Jamaal linked their minimal interaction with the administrator to their character traits and personality types. “Already, I am not the type who likes to go to authorities to discuss personal issues so the fear I had for my [administrator] put me off. So, I dealt with challenges at my level.”

Participants also felt there was no need to approach their administrators because at best they won’t listen and at worse, they would get angry. Abdul-Majeed was one of those who held this viewpoint:

If you had a problem, the [administrator] wouldn’t listen to you. At times the [administrator] didn’t give a fair hearing to all parties. The [administrator] could just hear something, maybe for the first time about something going on and all of a sudden [X] would just explode using abusive language. This very much concerned students’ poor academic performance and misconduct.

Abdul-Majeed, therefore, felt anger was not the best option to correct student misconduct or poor academic performance so they prescribed an alternative:

I think if students were not performing well, it could be as a result of psychological problems. The students could be facing problems maybe within themselves or in the

family and if counsellors attend to them, they might become better. So that's just it. Apart from that, everything was okay.

Narrating their experience within the Catholic community, Abdul-Kareem said they “experienced more joy than pain” and that those who gave them so much pain were the administrator and one teacher who openly demonstrated [X] dislike for a select group of non-Catholic students in the school.

[“This teacher] sort of made up [X] mind not to like some of us. Even in class we were insulted for no known reason,” Abdul-Kareem expressed.

Still on participants' relationship with this administrator, Sadiq indicated: “Even the teachers were afraid of the administrator. During our first year, they said one teacher was transferred to another school for carrying the grievances of the non-Catholic students to the school administrator.” This administrator, according to the participants, described some of the non-Catholic students as stubborn. “Our [administrator] described us as stubborn students,” said Sulemana. I describe next the experiences of those who expressed good interpersonal relationship with their administrators.

Among the 21 participants studied, five of them said they related well with their school administrators. Dery described an incident in which participants felt they were unjustly treated by a member of the teaching staff and so they had to seek redress by reporting the matter to their administrator—a sign of good rapport with the administrator.

One of the teachers [punishment deleted] so we reported the case to the [administrator] because we felt unfairly treated and the [administrator] reasoned with us because [X] said

in matters like that, the whole members of staff should have been involved so the teacher had no right to take a unilateral decision on the matter.

Similarly, Zaahid also said they did not hesitate to approach the [administrator] with any challenge they faced because [X] understood their plight. However, Zaahid also acknowledged they did not discuss religious matters with [X.] “The [administrator] understood us better than any other person [on campus] so even though I didn’t discuss religious matters with [X] I freely discussed other issues with [X] and [X] often understood me.” Murtala likewise, indicated the [administrator was friendly to them and it was “through the [administrator’s] efforts some of us got baptized and were able to attain certain positions on campus.” Taahiru shared similar sentiments regarding their relationship with their administrator. “Our [administrator] was free with us and often visited our dormitories, chatted with us and if you had a problem you could follow up to [X] bungalow. Many students, including Muslim students went to [X] but I didn’t go,” Other participants also indicated the administrator used to give them pieces of advice but [X] also made unofficial visits to them in the classrooms to share fun with students.

The [administrator] used to call us individually to advise us and [X] would also come to the classrooms and recite the Koran half, half and we would laugh. Yeah! We used to crack jokes and laugh together so we felt comfortable interacting with our [administrator,] Ahmed narrated.

Next, I describe participants’ relationship with the Catholic teachers.

The participants who expressed good interpersonal relationship with the Catholic teachers were 15 in number. Participants related with the Catholic teachers just like family members. Hamza said: “In my first year, I was always quiet in class because I felt I did not belong, but as the years went by the school became a community to me and we lived like a family.” Abugrago

described the teachers as “very open” and they “didn’t have any fear approaching them.” The non-Catholic identity of participants did not constitute an obstacle to their interaction with the Catholic teachers. “I could easily approach them and open up my mind to them. The fact that they were Catholic, and we were non-Catholic didn’t pose as a problem for me approaching them as my teachers,” Kubaaza explained. Other participants like Aloliga described the teachers as “very free and good” and thus they “liked them a lot.” Participants also indicated they could approach their teachers, but they went further to say their interaction with them centered on only academics. Yinzor was one of them: “I approached my teachers, but our conversations weren’t about faith but academics. Aside academics, we had nothing else to talk about.” In fact, Yinzor indicated “religious issues ended in the chapel.” Likewise, Jamaal said they could interact with the teachers in class, but their interaction had nothing to do with faith: “I related well with my teachers in class. But most of them didn’t even talk about Catholicism, they just taught us and left.” Abdul-Majeed also indicated relating with the teachers only at the level of academics: “I always consulted the teachers concerning lectures I did not understand properly and needed clarifications. I think that was the only relationship I had with the teachers in general.” Participants also made references to some specific teachers they often went to for professional help. Abdullah was one of them: “We were free with the teachers and could go to them for advice, but we used to go to [name of teacher deleted] who was part of the school Guidance and Counselling Team who did a lot to help us.” Other participants also noted they had a good relationship with their teachers but made specific reference to one of the teachers who was so helpful to them. Dery narrated how helpful the teachers were, especially one of them. “I felt comfortable relating with the teachers but most especially with [name of teacher deleted] who knew I was a non-Catholic [student] and helped me anytime I was facing challenges.”

Welaga said some of the teachers did not only know their identity as non-Catholic students but knew their names as well and helped them in times of need. “Some of the teachers for instance [name of teacher deleted] knew my name and was always ready to help me out in my studies. I was just free with most of the teachers.” Abdul-Kareem said the teachers were “very friendly” to them and mentioned names of some teachers whom they described as “loving and caring.” Abu Bakar expressed their joy over the teachers’ good relationship with them as follows: “Wow! Per my judgement, all the Catholic teachers who taught me were good towards us. None of them criticized us for being Muslims.” In the same way, Mahmoud described their relationship with their teachers as “awesome” [because] they tried treating us equally without any discrimination.” Umar described the teachers as “good and hardworking.” Murtala found not only the Catholic teachers friendly but all the teachers on campus, accordingly, were friendly. “All the teachers were friendly. There were others who weren’t Catholic [members] but were teaching in the school and they were also friendly.” Other participants also expressed challenges relating with some teachers. I describe in the next paragraphs, the concerns the participants raised.

Five participants were not too happy with the way some teachers related with them. Sulemana indicated “not all the Catholic teachers on campus were approachable. Some of them were very harsh and we couldn’t even look at their faces let alone to talk to them.” Sulemana, however, singled out the “school counsellors” they often went to for counselling. Others also felt discriminated against by some teachers who confiscated their items such as bangles, or chains and either burnt them or threw them away with the explanation that those items were inconsistent with the Catholic faith. Ahmed was one of those who raised this complaint: “They used to seize our bangles or rings and burnt them or threw them away. That we couldn’t wear those things in a Catholic school except Catholic items such as the rosary.” The remaining three participants said punishments meted out to students were either too harsh or inappropriate for their age as young

adults. Mahmoud observed: “Some of the teachers used to cane us for misbehaving but we thought we were matured enough and should not have been treated as if we were kids.” Abugrago also lamented over the beating they received from some teachers. “There were instances some of the teachers gave us lashes; they inflicted physical pain on us, yet we were not allowed to express ourselves.” Abugrago further lamented over the harsh punishments they received from teachers. “We were punished to fell tress and chop them into pieces.” So also, Taahiru expressed their disappointment in the way the teachers punished students. “They will ask us to dig a pit, after which they will ask us to cover it with gravel. I don’t know why they took so much delight in punishing us.” While Abugrago described such punishments as “barbaric,” Taahiru described them as “senseless.” Next, I describe how participants related with the Catholic students.

Among those who expressed good interpersonal relationship with the Catholic students were 15 out of the total number of participants I studied. This finding confirmed those of Bauch (2014) who studied relationships within Catholic schools and found an atmosphere of respect and care coupled with feelings of mutual good will between the Catholic and the non-Catholic students. I present the viewpoints of these participants. Hamza indicated students showed no signs of discriminations regarding their religious differences. “The Catholic students interacted freely with us. Being a Muslim or a non-Catholic didn’t matter to them. We lived like a family.” Abugrago expressed the same cordial relationship that existed between the Catholic and the non-Catholic students. “The Catholic [students] didn’t see us to be different from them in any negative way. Not at all! We used to study together, hang out together. I must admit they were very good to us.” According to AB, there were no divisions among them. They saw each other as one and they engaged in things together. “For the Catholic students we saw ourselves to be one. Everything among us was done as peers. We interacted together; we ate together; we played games together; oh everything. There was no distinction.”

Likewise, Mahmoud expressed how cordial their relationship was with the Catholic students: “We felt welcome interacting with the Catholic students. We did everything together. So, there wasn’t any discrimination, for example between us the Muslim students and the Catholic students.” Engaging in every school activity together was what Taahiru also observed: “It was good. We used to eat together. We did everything together.” Similarly, Aloliga said, “I just felt I was the same family with them as with my Baptist family.” They never discriminated against us. Not at all, we were just one.” It was an opportunity for “us the non-Catholic students to share our faith with the Catholic students and to also learn from their faith experiences at the personal level,” Abanga explained. On the same note, Welaga felt their presence on campus was an opportunity for them to make clarification about their religious beliefs and practices for the Catholic students:

They always said our laws [as Jehovah Witnesses] are so strict. So, some of the Catholic [students] used to ask me questions concerning my beliefs. There were some questions I had answers readily available for them but there were other questions I had to go and inquire from my pastors. So, we were used to each other and there was no problem among us.

There was “free association between the Catholics and the non-Catholics students so I can say we related well,” Yinzor noted. Jamaal also noted that “in the face of the Catholic [students] I felt welcome.” The same good relationship was expressed by Abdul-Majeed: “Relating with the Catholic [students,] I had a good relationship with them.”

Others felt the Catholic students were good generally to the non-Catholic students but observed a few of them aligned themselves with the school administrators to report to them the misconduct of non-Catholic students: “A few of the Catholic students tried to win the heart of the [administrator] to themselves by going to [X] to lay complaints about us [the Muslim students] but

most of them were my friends. We shared jokes together.” Abu Bakar, likewise, did not only raise the same issue about some Catholic students aligning so much with the school administrator but went ahead to single out the persons who did so. “Relating with the Catholic students, it was lovely and awesome! They weren’t criticizing us. It was only [name of prefect deleted] who was always close to our [administrator]. Oh yes [this student] didn’t like Muslims,” Abdul-Kareem indicated. “They were just friendly. Most of them were my friends,” said Umar about the Catholic students. Other participants indicated they had friendly debates regarding which religion was better than the other. While the Catholic students said their religion was better, the Muslim students said Islam was better. Sadiq narrated their friendly debates:

Our interaction with the Catholic students was lovely. We used to argue in class about whose religion was better than the other. We said Islam was better, but they said the Catholic faith was better. At times we argued for several minutes. It was always interesting.

Other participants also raised concerns regarding their relationship with the Catholic students, which were centered on their religious differences. Four out of the 21 participants encountered problems relating well with the non-Catholic students. Abdullah expressed some sort of stigmatization living as a Muslim in a Catholic school with occasional derogatory remarks from the school administrator against non-Catholic students:

Sometimes, the Catholic [students] would come to clarify some of the perceptions about Islam. You see, some had the courage to come and verify. They wanted to clarify certain things they had heard about Islam including those the administrator often made, so to some extent, we experienced some kind of stigmatization.

Zaahid also observed the Catholic students were not too happy with the non-Catholic students because they tried to practice their faith in secret. To curtail this practice, the Catholic students reported the non-Catholic students to the school authorities for disciplinary measures to be taken against them:

Sometimes some of the Catholic students got angry with us because some of us tried to pray in the dormitories. Some even reported us to the school authorities. Others also felt badly about us praying and openly confronted us wanting to know why we came to a mission school if we didn't want to obey the school rules and regulations.

Other participants acknowledged the Catholic students "were so lovely" but made contrary observations about instances they were harsh especially towards the Muslim students who showed a lackadaisical attitude towards the Catholic rituals. Sulemana was one of those who made this observation:

There were so lovely! But sometimes they were hash because we were not of their religion. The time I used not to participate actively in the Mass and be the first to walk out [of the chapel] as soon as the service was over, they used to come to the dormitory and be criticizing saying that if you didn't want to attend Mass why then did you choose this school. The Catholic [students] didn't like the way we the Moslem students behaved.

Ahmed said the Catholic students gave them a bad example. They were not exemplary in practicing their faith as Catholic students, so the non-Catholic students used that as a steppingstone to also disobey the school rules and regulations:

We disobeyed some of the rules because some of the Catholic students themselves didn't obey them so why should we the Moslems obey? For example, anytime it was time for

Mass, some of the Catholic students wouldn't go. In the meantime, they expected us the Muslims to go for the Mass. No! We wouldn't go. We also used to dodge some of their programs.

The foregone descriptions indicate participants had challenges, but they also had some aspects of the school culture that motivated them to continue to pursue their educational goals in these Catholic schools. The factors participants found inspiring for their continuous enrollment constitute my next discussion.

Motivation for Continuous Enrollment

Despite the struggle participants experienced regarding the cultural and the religious life of the schools, positive factors also motivated their continuous enrollment. Three major factors accounted for participants' resilience to strive and achieve their educational goals—the excellent academics, high discipline, and the moral lessons derived from the liturgical celebrations, especially the Mass. I report first on those who saw academics as a motivation for their continuous enrollment.

In this category, 12 participants reported that the academic excellence impressed them and kept them moving forward. Hamza of BSHS said: “The academic aspect of the school was my motivation.” Likewise, another participant of BSHS, Aloliga also said “the quality of the teachers; the way they taught us; academically I liked the way the school was running.” Jamaal indicated they did not know what exactly motivated their continuous enrollment, but they knew clearly what the school would offer them in their final examination: “I don't know what motivated me but what I was concentrating on was the academics because I knew if I completed BSHS I would get good grades.” Participants from ZSHS also expressed the school's academic culture as a motivation for their continuous enrollment. Abdul-Kareem of ZSHS indicated the school's climate motivated

students to learn hard. “Their way of teaching was very good and when you are in that school, you don’t relax.”

Abu Bakar indicated the quality education inspired them to like the school. “We had good tutors who were always sacrificing their lives and time to make sure we achieved our goals. That was one important thing I liked about ZSHS and that kept me focused,” Abu Bakar explained. Welaga, also of ZSHS said the good tuition motivated their continuous enrollment but also indicated that their continuous enrollment was because of the difficulty in getting transfers to different schools as second year students.

It’s the quality of teaching that motivated me to stay [enrolled] because I wanted to succeed in life. Besides, if I left [ZSHS] let’s say in year two to go to a different school, which school was going to accept me as a second-year student? Welaga doubted.

Abugrago did not only acknowledge the goodness of the academic life of the school but praised the school for its good work. “The way the tuition went was very good and motivating, and I commend the school for that practice,” Abugrago expressed. “My motivation was the exceptional way the teachers taught us,” Abdul-Majeed indicated. Abdullah said: “The atmosphere was very good for learning and the tuition was also very good so that was a consolation to forge ahead. Teachers were punctual to class and also put up their best.” Yinzor expressed similar views for their continuous enrolment. “The academic aspect compensated for the other challenges we encountered so it was worth moving ahead.”

Other participants reported the good tuition constituted their motivation to strive ahead, but they also indicated that, to feel more comfortable, they posed as Catholic students: “Everything about the educational status was okay. The tuition was my motivation to endure the challenges, which we encountered only outside the classroom. Nonetheless, some of us posed as Catholic

students to be among the multitude,” Murtala explained. Taahiru also expressed similar sentiments about the tuition, which accordingly kept them moving forward. “Despite the challenges we faced regarding our inability to pray freely [on campus] we looked up to the good way the teachers taught us and that encouraged us to persevere,” Taahiru recounted.

Nine of the participants also reported the high discipline as a key factor for their desire to graduate rather than seek transfers to other schools. Kubaaza of BSHS recounted their experience of the school’s consciousness to time—an aspect of discipline. Kubaaza recounted: “With respect to time, the school respected time. If you were even a minute late for a program, you would pay for it and that was one thing I admired, and it motivated me to continue with my studies.” Abdul-Kareem of ZSHS also described the discipline of their school as very good and like Kubaaza, indicated the implications of running late for a program: “For discipline, number one! The school was so disciplined, and everything was done according to time. Any student who went late for a program accounted for it, so we all had to be punctual.” Other participants like Umar said Catholic schools were better off in terms of discipline than the public schools. This assessment inspired participants’ continuous enrollment with ZSHS. “Catholic schools are better places to study. They are more disciplined as compared to other schools. My [name of relative deleted] attended [name of public school deleted.] And they used to complain about the lack of discipline in their school,” Umar expressed.

Abdul-Majeed described “BSHS as outstanding both in its management and discipline and thus a better option for quality education,” Abdul-Majeed stated. Participants who were motivated to enroll in their schools to begin with, because of the discipline, decided to maintain their enrollment because the discipline was what they needed to succeed in life which they found in the Catholic school. Abugrago was one of them.

My desire to accomplish what I wanted in life motivated me. I knew what I wanted and with the discipline, which in the first place motivated me to choose the school, it strengthened me to keep moving. So, I said no matter how the going got tough, I was going to sail through, Abugrago recounted.

Likewise, Yinzor said they choose schools with discipline and thus, whatever was meant to instill order for them was part of the discipline. “The discipline inspired me to choose BSHS so for me whatever they asked me to do, I saw it as part of the discipline and I allowed it to motivate me rather than break me,” Yinzor narrated. Jamaal said, “I liked the order of the school. Everyone knew where to be and what to do and that spurred me on. Some people wouldn’t know what to do with their time if left to decide on their own.” Zaahid also said the “order in doing things was what motivated me to continue so we overlooked some of the challenges that came our way.” And for Sadiq, discipline is the key to success and since they wanted to “succeed in life, we had to give in to the discipline rather than run away from it.”

Still considering the positive things participants found engaging for their continuous enrollment in the schools, nine of them recounted the moral lessons they learned as they listened to the scriptures (at prayer meetings especially the Mass) and the homilies and the sermons of the religious leaders. This finding confirmed another finding of Bauch (2014), which indicated Catholic schools incorporated Catholic teachings into the school’s curriculum through which students were taught Catholic values for their faith development. Participants said they did not need to identify as members of the Catholic Church before they could gain insights participating in the liturgy especially the Mass. Abdullah said good is good no matter its source:

There were certain things that were good that you didn’t need to be a Catholic [member] before you could accept them. Knowledge is knowledge! Good is good! It doesn’t matter

whether you are a Muslim or a Christian. Will you say because the good is coming from a priest you will not take it, no! Sometimes we listened to the pieces of advice and the sermons and we got certain advice and it helped us a lot. Some of the sermons were helpful.

Learning to forgive one's neighbor was one of the lessons Abu Bakar learned at Mass in ZSHS. Actually, I benefited a lot. I learned how to forgive because whenever we went for Mass they always emphasized on forgiveness and I am sure it is the reason why they brought this sharing of grace [Kiss of Peace] so that you would forget about what your colleague has done to you then you move on.

Abugrago expressed learning the spirit of dedication and commitment from the entire Catholic community of BSHS, which helped them both in their spiritual life and in their academic work:

The things they used to do, the way they preached or delivered their sermons was very different. What I saw unique in the Catholic school was that they [members] were time conscious, and they were very dedicated and committed so that actually gave me that spirit of commitment and dedication not only in my spiritual life, but also in my studies.

Other participants of ZSHS recalled the specific lessons the school administration tried to instill in the students. "They taught us to be good, tolerant, disciplined and God fearing, and not to be disrespectful to the elderly. They made us see one another as one," Umar recounted. Welaga also said "the fact that everybody was asked to appear decent, well behaved and show respect at all times inspired many of them to desire to complete in that school." Similarly, Kubaaza noted: "The need to show respect to others and the morals of life in general were all inculcated in us in a special way and the specialty of it kept me focused."

Abdul-Kareem recounted similar experience of the moral training the school tried to instill in them and for which reason one could turn a blind eye to their struggles: “We were taught good manners and how to become morally good students so that alone was encouraging to endure the hardships.” Reflecting on the scripture texts and the sermons of the religious leaders, Hamza said: “The readings and the sermons made sense to me at some point. I reflected on the readings. They always had a moral lesson to teach me about life and the preaching was also helpful to keep me progressing.” Other participants said going for the religious programs at all times kept them in tuned with the divine. “I was always reminded about God; we had morning prayers, Mass, night prayers and other kinds of devotions so we were always conscious of God in our lives,” Aloliga indicated. Financial constraints constituted another reason why participants struggled to graduate rather than seek transfers to the public schools.

The participants who felt transferring to other schools was a bigger challenge for them were seven in number. Abu Bakr expressed challenge getting a school to begin with, and the financial implications if they eventually got admission into a different school:

If I had left, getting a different school would have been a problem because no school would have admitted me in the second year. And even if they admitted me, they would have placed me in the first year meaning the financial cost my family had incurred in me in my former school was wasted.

Zaahid gave the same financial burden as a reason for their continuous enrollment in ZSHS: “The only option for me was to comply with their rules and relations in order to complete because the school fees I paid were non-refundable had I left the school.” In fact, Zaahid reported to school a little late because the parents could not afford the school fees in good time. Zaahid explained: “I reported in the second term. I didn’t have money, so I took my admission in the

second term. It was in the second term I had money to pay my fees and to buy all the stuff I needed.” So, Zaahid wondered where the “parents were going to get money to pay fresh fees for admission into another school.” It was not only Zaahid’s parents who faced financial challenges. Some parents explicitly or implicitly asked their sons and daughters to endure whatever hardships they faced because they could not afford the costs in getting them into different schools. This was the perception Sadiq recounted about the nature of their father and his concern about money when I enquired to know why they had to endure the challenges rather than ask for transfers to different schools. “My father is a difficult man! With all the money he had already paid, if I were to complain to him that it is a Catholic school I wouldn’t attend he would have just ignored me,” Sadiq explained. It is not only Sadiq’s father who is a difficult man when it concerns spending money. Perhaps, other parents are more difficult. Hamza reported they feared talking to their father about seeking a transfer:

If I were to tell my father that I wanted to leave the school, he would have asked a lot of questions. Like why do I want to leave the school? Do I know the monetary cost involved? And no matter how I would have tried to explain, my father wouldn’t have listened to me, so I just had to accept the placement.

For the same financial constraints, Welaga did not even see the need to discuss with their parents about seeking a transfer to another school. Welaga explained: “with the financial cost involved, I didn’t even need to talk to my father about it. I accepted my placement in good faith.” Likewise, Murtala did not see the need to talk to their parents about seeking a transfer because they had already experienced the financial difficulties their parents encountered in getting them admission in the Catholic school. Murtala noted: “My parents struggled to pay my fees for ZSHS so to have asked them to transfer me to another school was placing a huge financial burden on

them, so I didn't even mention anything to them about not liking ZSHS." So also, Taahiru noted. "My father suffered to pay the fees for me and my [name of sibling deleted] who went to [name of public school deleted] so I didn't want to annoy him by asking him to get me another school." Participants also expressed the need to tread cautiously because there was no guarantee they would gain admission to the public schools upon quitting their enrollment with the Catholic schools.

In seeking transfers to the public schools, four participants indicated two major challenges: (1) the closure of admissions in the entire country shortly after the commencement of each academic year and (2) the likelihood of repeating a year as a transferred student in another school. Abdullah was one of those participants who expressed such fears. Abdullah reported the difficulty in seeking a transfer to another school because many of the schools had closed admissions by the time they got admission into BSHS. Abdullah recounted: "BSHS was one of the schools that admitted students late in 2014. Almost all the schools around had closed admissions for the year but we were still waiting." By implication, any participant who gained admission into either BSHS or ZSHS but wanted to seek a transfer to another school would have had to wait until the following academic year when fresh admissions would have been opened. Since half a loaf is better than none, participants found it expedient to maintain their current enrollment and at the same time learn to adapt to the school's culture and worship program while they reflected on the best possible options in the subsequent year.

It is worth noting that by the end of the first year, participants had made one full year in BSHS and ZSHS and due for promotion to the second year of the three-year secondary education program. What were the difficulties seeking a transfer to a public school to continue with one's education as a second-year student?

Welaga recounted the fear of losing one school year due to a transfer:

If I had sought transfer to another school, there would have been a problem. At our time they said if you wanted a transfer to another school, then you should be prepared to join your juniors in the first year. This means if you were in form two and you were going on a transfer to another school, then you were to join your juniors in form one. This was a waste of time for me.

Abu Bakr expressed the same fears of being repeated due to a transfer besides the financial cost involved:

If I had left ZSHS in my second year, getting a transfer to a different school would have been a problem because no school would have picked me as a second-year student. Even if any school picked me, they would have put me in form one but not form two and that meant what my parents had already invested in me would have been wasted. I didn't see any sense in seeking a transfer.

Another participant expressed the implications of the emotional trauma associated with transfers. Abanga noted:

If I had sought a transfer to another school, it would have had a negative impact on my academic performance because how was I going to convince people that I left the school on my own accord but not that they dismissed me? It was better to struggle and complete rather than go through 'shame' in another school.

Besides the academic record, the discipline, the moral lessons and the financial challenges and the other difficulties associated with transfers to the public schools, participants recounted as factors that motivated their continuous enrollment, two participants also said they were inspired by

the concern some masters had for students. Abanga and Abdullah expressed this viewpoint. Abanga noted: “The way [names of teachers deleted] rendered service and cared for the students to enable them pass [their examinations] and come out as responsible people in society was the element that also helped me to stay comfortably in BSHS.” Abdullah also indicated that, to overcome the challenges, they faced in the school to maintain their enrollment, they needed care and support which they got from one of the teachers: “We had [name of teacher deleted] who supported us a lot without whom some of us would have probably left BSHS. Truly, [X] cared for us as non-Catholic students.”

To examine only the factors that inspired participants to forge ahead in their education in BSHS and ZSHS without considering how they adapted to their schools would result in painting a poor picture of participants’ experiences. I next examine the various techniques participants used in adjusting to the Catholic school and its demands on the non-Catholic students/

Adaptation to the Catholic Culture and the Religious Program

Once participants chose to maintain their enrollment status with these Catholic schools, they had to find ways to adapt to the culture and the religious program of the school. I explain how they adapted. This finding constituted an extension of the review of the literature findings. The way participants adapted to the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program depended on their religious affiliations and background experiences. Muslim students (non-Catholic and non-Christian) adjusted in a slightly different way from the Christian (non-Catholic) students. I describe first the unique way the Muslim students tried to adapt, after which I would resume descriptions for all the participants without any distinctions on religious grounds.

The Muslim students in both Bernardodalini and Zumbadarana Senior High schools reported making consultations on the way forward to maintain their identity as Muslims upon

realizing provision was not made for them to practice their faith on campus. In both schools, they consulted with their colleague Muslim senior students, including the Muslim tutors for directions on how to practice their faith while on campus. Abdullah recounted consulting a senior Muslim student to learn their experience. “I searched everywhere in BSHS, but I didn’t see a mosque, so I met my senior Muslim students and asked how they prayed. I specifically spoke with [name of Muslim student deleted] who was my senior in JHS.” Participants in ZSHS also consulted with their senior Muslim students but they also discussed the issue with a Muslim teacher in the school. “We asked our seniors, the Muslim students on how they managed to pray but we also approached [name of teacher deleted] for advice on what to do,” Abdul-Kareem explained. Through the guidance and counselling of the senior students and tutors, they opted to practice their faith in secret.

Ten of the participants reported saying the five daily prayers and performing the other required Islamic devotions in a clandestine manner to avoid running into conflict with the school authorities. In order not to be seen, they prayed in corners and in other hiding places in the dormitories, including the forests. Regarding the tight schedule of the schools’ daily programs, participants woke up very early in the morning to make time for Fajr, the first prayer of the day. Jamaal stated: “I used to wake up very early, take my bath and pray and I made sure it didn’t affect my concentration in class.” Zaahid was among those who said their prayers before the rising bell: “In order not to be caught, we woke up somewhere around 5:00 A.M before the rising bell rung.”

As prayer was done in secret, Abdullah said they used to “leave the dormitory, find a good spot, pray and returned to the dormitories.” Unlike Abdullah who did not state the exact location of prayer, Abdul-Kareem indicated they used to “go to the forest, hide behind a thick shrub and pray.” Hamza did not only indicate praying in secret, but as well explained how they felt doing so:

“One of the problems we encountered concerned our faith, but most of us used to hide and pray but hiding and praying had its challenges. We experienced fear because if we were caught the consequences could be grave.” For the rest of the prayers, (Zhuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha’a) they combined some of them depending on the availability of time and space. Sadiq explained how they handled the rest of the prayers for the day: “Sometimes I went for their gathering [school programs] and after that I went back to the dormitory and combined all the prayers [in a single session] before coming out for the next program.” Abdul-Majeed noted the difficulty accepting the prohibition not to pray on campus and thus the need to hide and pray: “When they said we were not allowed to pray on campus, in fact, it was not easy. I couldn’t take it in good faith. So, what I did was to always hide and pray.” Participants did not only hide from the school authorities, but they also hid from the students for fear they could report them to the school authorities. “If the Catholic students saw us praying, they could report us to the school administration. Per that, we often left the dormitory, looked for a convenient spot and prayed,” Abdullah indicated. The participants also expressed how they tried to outwit both the authorities and the students following the advice of some of their teachers. Our teacher advised.

The [administrator] definitely could not follow us the whole day, neither could those [X] appointed to watch over us. So, we could excuse our colleagues of taking a stroll to the forest. Then in the forest, we could pray quickly and go back to study. After all, how many minutes did we need for prayer? Just a few minutes and we were done, Abdul-Kareem recounted.

However, to the surprise of participants, the information leaked to the school administrator that some students were practicing their faith undercover on the school premises. Abu Bakr narrated how they felt in the ensuing discussion:

How [the administrator] got to know we were praying in secret came to us as a big surprise. We could not imagine how the information got to [X] ears that we were disobeying the school rules. The [administrator] called us and was very angry. In fact, [the administrator] was mad. We were told things like that were not allowed in a Catholic school. We were sternly warned to desist from it.

At some point, participants wondered why they had to worship God undercover. Sulemana was one of them: “As time went on I started feeling lazy in praying because it was something I could not freely do. Why should I hide to pray? Am I stealing or doing anything bad?.” Another participant, Taahiru, remarked: “It was very difficult hiding and praying.”

In one of the schools, the Muslim students wondered how long they were going to continue with this secretive behavior, coupled with the mental distractions associated with praying in secret. They negotiated with the school authorities who withdrew the prayer restriction and gave Muslim students a place to pray. However, because the school did not create room in its daily program to accommodate Islamic prayers, the Muslim students still had a hard time practicing their faith. Apart from this adaptive strategy unique to the Muslim students, all the participants had similar strategies of adjustment. The next adaptive strategy was through support and encouragement from senior students and tutors.

Participants looked for ways and means to resolve the challenges they faced on campus. However, they could not discuss these issues with the administration because in the first place they perceived the school administrators would not listen and secondly the participants themselves were afraid to initiate such conversations. Eight participants reported the only group of people they could turn to and who were prepared to listen to and give them the counsel they needed were senior students, teachers of the same religion and family members. These people gave them

encouragement and advice. “We had a master in our school we used to ask for his phone, then we would go to the bush far away from the school, call our parents and complain about the treatment we received from the school,” Sulemana explained. Other participants said they also got consolation and support from family members. Sadiq narrated: “Sometimes it was my mother who gave me the guidance. She often encouraged me to try and abide by their rules and regulations in order to complete.” Participants said they held meetings periodically and through such encounters they received the emotional support they needed. “In our meetings, our leaders often encouraged us to abide by the school rules and regulations. They said they came and met the rules so as juniors we should also try to follow the rules,” Hamza recounted.

Abdul-Majeed narrated getting the same support from their colleagues: “We had a Muslim group on campus so those who were our seniors provided the support we needed. We used to discuss religious issues within the group and our seniors were helpful to us.” Abdullah explained how some of their colleagues came to their assistance to pull them through their struggle in adjusting to the mandatory worship program: “After discussing with my senior, the difficulties I faced adjusting, I left then later they called me again after some time with one other Muslim student and they spoke to me in private.” Participants also indicated how they gained support from tutors. “We used to discuss our problems among ourselves first then we would delegate two students to go and meet with master [name of tutor deleted] for advice,” Taahiru indicated.

Zaahid described the support they gave to one another as Muslim students: “We the Muslim students used to gather and pray though we were not allowed to do so. So, at such gatherings, we learned from one another on how to pray individually so that we did not deviate from the religion.” Abdul-Kareem clearly indicated: “the only persons [they] could approach [on campus] to discuss religious matters were [name of tutor deleted] or our house master.”

Participants also felt there was no need to spend precious time on religious issues, so they had a different approach to the Catholic culture and the religious life which I turn to next.

Participants made up their minds to focus primarily on their academic work and not allow religious matters to distract their attention because for them, religion was not their focus as students. Besides, their presence on campus was temporal meaning it was a matter of time and they would get used to the new environment or they would be out of the school altogether. Moreover, a period of three years—from the start of school to graduation—was insignificant for the school to convert participants to the Catholic faith. They were deeply ingrained in their religious convictions and the schools' Catholic culture and religious program could not change those convictions. Seven of the participants held one or more of the aforementioned views. Abdullah narrated the temporality of their presence in the school and how the school could not change their religious convictions:

At a certain point in time, I felt with time I would definitely graduate and leave the school. I was not going to school there forever. Besides, three years in BSHS could not change me. Three years in BSHS could not make me deny my religion or forget of it. The religion is embedded in me and BSHS could not extract it. It was impossible!

Another participant, Abu Bakr expressed similar sentiments as those of Abdullah: “I didn't leave ZSHS because my enrollment there was only temporal. It wasn't permanent. My days were numbered. And I was only there to achieve something else [academics] not to become a Catholic.” Umar did not see the importance of attempting to openly express their dissatisfaction about the religious restrictions because others were mute about it and besides it was a matter of time and they would graduate and leave the school. “For me alone to go and complain, I didn't see its importance. I also kept quiet and endured it. I knew it was just for some time and after completion

I would get back to my normal way of life,” Omar explained. Zaahid also indicated facing the challenge of practicing two different religions at the same time with conflicting doctrines but they tried to cope because it was only temporal:

Whenever conflicting thoughts came to mind, I said to myself I came here [ZSHS] to learn so I should just comply with their rules and when I graduate no one will force me to go to church. I didn't feel comfortable anytime those conflicting thoughts came to mind, but what else could I do? I tried to go by the school rules in order not to be found wanting. I felt with time I would be able to do whatever I wanted.

Other participants also perceived they needed time to get used to the new system of education in a Catholic school.

Jamaal said at the beginning of their enrollment, they did not feel comfortable participating in the Catholic worship but as time went on they got used to it: “At first, bowing, making the sign of the cross were some of the things I didn't feel comfortable doing. I didn't really feel comfortable but as time went on it became normal.” Abdul-Majeed also indicated they didn't like the Catholic rituals, “but with time [they] got used to them so for me it was the question of time.” For Yinzor, it was a matter of “enduring the number of hours spent at prayer each day knowing with time it shall all be over.” Next, I examine how participants approached the celebrations as a way of adapting to the school environment.

Many of the participants adapted a lukewarm attitude towards the mandatory worship program of the school. They would avail themselves at these gatherings, but they would not recite the prayers or perform the liturgical gestures. Still, others dodged these ceremonies whenever it was possible and safe to do so without running into conflict with the school authorities. Seven of the participants reported being present in the celebrations without actively engaging in them or

dodging the ceremonies all together. Hamza recounted how they would avail themselves at the ceremonies just to comply but would not actively participate in reciting the prayers:

I felt badly [attending the ceremonies] but I had no option. We just had to do it, since we were already there [in the school] we just had to comply and get out of it. I made my way out by just trying to comply. We went for these programs just to make our presence felt. Just for the authorities to see us present but we would not say the prayers. If they took roll call and students were missing, then those students' names were written and later they were punished. Most often I didn't participate in the prayers.

On the rare occasions Hamza recited the prayers, it was not done as a matter of faith but to fulfill a condition: "Reciting the prayers was just like a normal thing. It was like saying an anthem. Even though we said some of the prayers, we did not believe in them. We said them for saying sake." Abanga indicated their passive engagement: "Sometimes I would appear at the setting, but I wouldn't participate actively; I wouldn't sing, I wouldn't pray or perform the [liturgical] gestures." Yinzor perceived the Catholic rituals as idol worship so they would be present, but they would not participate. "I felt what they were doing was wrong. It was idol worship that was my judgement so I would be present for the rituals, but I wouldn't participate." Another participant said they pretended to be participating only when they felt being watched. "Most at times I refused to say the prayers. But whenever I noticed [X] looking towards my direction, to avoid trouble I would just pretend to be participating," Abdullah explained. "I used not to concentrate in the religious program, so I really don't think it benefitted me" was the response of Ahmed when I enquired to know how the religious program impacted their life.

Instead of leaving the school, Welaga felt it was rather better to dodge these ceremonies whenever possible: "We don't bring images [into our church] because it is said that we shouldn't

worship idols. And because I didn't want to worship idols or be part of those who worship idols, I used to dodge." Dery also recounted being present but refused to participate in the rituals because they made no sense to them. "As a non-Catholic student, I saw it to be unnecessary participating in the Catholic worship but because it was compulsory to be part of the ceremonies, I went for them. I sat in them, but I did not participate." But how long could the participants either keep dodging the liturgy or pretend to be participating in these rituals? Personal study of the meaning of the rituals constituted another strategy for participants' adaptation. I examine how participants got to learn the meaning of some of the rituals.

Ten of the participants said they developed the interest in the rituals and made time at their personal levels to study the meaning behind the signs and the symbols in the liturgical celebrations. Abugrago said, "life is a continuous process and in life we need to learn new things, so I became interested in learning more about the Catholic [faith] because the way they celebrated their Mass and delivered their sermons was very different." Similarly, Aloliga also thought it was an opportunity to acquire new knowledge about Catholicism: "I just thought Catholics were also Christians and I should pass through them. I also thought it was a process of learning new things. It was a way of knowing more about the Catholic faith." Abdullah indicated they liked to learn and so they learned the Catholic way of life: "Learning is actually my passion. So, I had to learn the Catholic faith. It was also an interesting session being with them and learning their way of life and also their songs. Their songs were really interesting."

Although the Catholic worship program was mandatory, others found it an invitation and an opportunity to learn the Catholic way of worship.

If you invited me to your Church for a programme and I said I am a Jehovah Witness so I wouldn't show up, would I ever in life ask you to also come to my Church to experience life in my Church? So, for me, my presence in ZSHS was an invitation to come and see how members of the Catholic Church worship, Welaga explained.

The participants also engaged in reading Catholic textbooks, magazines and prayer books for a better understanding of the Catholic faith. Abanga narrated the readings they did and how that changed their perspective about the Catholic faith: "I read about the novena, the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and I got to realize that my [initial] understanding about the Catholic faith was wrong." This change of perspective helped Abanga to adapt to the Catholic culture and the religious life of the school.

Yinzor expressed getting to know the similarities between their religion and that of the Catholic faith. "I realized some of the Catholic doctrines and the Methodist doctrines are almost the same and that heightened my participation in the Catholic worship," Yinzor explained. The likely implications in getting caught praying undercover led others to abandon their faith and to learn the Catholic faith. Abdul-Majeed noted: "I started studying the Catholic ways of life when it became so difficult for me to keep praying in secret. I could be caught, and I didn't want to get into conflict with the authorities." By becoming more curious to learn the Catholic faith, they came to appreciate the Catholic worship and that further motivated their participation in the rituals and adaptation to the Catholic culture.

Besides, participants not only become aware the Catholic prayers were crafted from the *Bible*, the source of all Christian beliefs and practices, but they also found concrete similarities between the Catholic worship and other Christian denominational worship. This revelation further strengthened their desire to participate in the liturgical celebrations. Kubaaza upon a deeper

reflection about the Mass in particular learned to adapt to it because they felt by denying the wisdom in the Mass, they were doing harm to themselves but not to anyone:

I realized at some point I was doing myself harm because everything I heard in the chapel centered on God so why would I say there is no God in this Church or their way of worship is not right if basically it is the bible they preach; it is Jesus they preach? So, I came to another conclusion or another stance where I reframed my mind and involved myself in everything that was happening during Mass.

Kubaaza also observed that one of the prayer groups comprised many of the non-Catholic students including its executive board:

I personally realized that [name of group prayer deleted] though it is specific to the Catholic Church, it was dominated by non-Catholic students. Most of the students; about 95% of the students were non-Catholic; 99% of the executive board was made up of non-Catholic students which I happened to be one.

This observation buttresses the argument that many of the non-Catholic students became involved in some of the Catholic rituals, which they got to know were similar to their own way of worship in their respective denominations. Umar also laid emphasis on the similarities of the Catholic faith with other religions: “Most of the things the Catholic [members] practice are in line with Islam because their religion also teaches responsible ways of living.”

The non-Catholic students became much more involved in the Catholic rituals also because they found similarities with their own religion. The similarities deepened participants’ interests in the Catholic prayers especially the Mass to an extent that some started getting converted to the

Catholic faith. Sulemana expressed the challenges they faced with their colleagues of the same faith and their reaction when they made attempts to become members of the Catholic Church:

My friends criticized me when I started involving myself so much in the Mass. But I did not care about whatever my colleagues said about me because it was my own interest to divert from Islam to Christianity. Anytime I heard the Word of God I felt very excited. So anytime my colleagues talked ill of me, I made references to the teaching I heard in the Church. We were told people even said bad things about Jesus, so I took my friends' insults to be normal, Sulemana recounted.

Abdullah's expression of shock seeing some students convert to the Catholic faith confirmed the criticisms and the insults Sulemana indicated they received from their colleagues who felt converting to the Catholic faith was awkward. Abdullah indicated they were both shocked and sad to see some of their colleagues behave as though to gain favor from the administration by their deep involvement in the Catholic rituals.

In order to gain favor or be treated fairly, some students went to the extent of denying their faith, which was so distressful. Their behavior really shocked us. We kept in mind that oh, just three years could not influence us. If we really had our religion at heart, three years in the school could not influence us. So, seeing a friend convert to be comfortable or live with an equal opportunity or be treated fairly was really sad, Abdullah lamented.

Participants' deep involvement in the Catholic rituals led to the partial or total conversion of three of them to the Catholic faith. The three participants who expressed their conversion to the Catholic faith indicated doing so for various reasons. Abdul-Majeed narrated: "I started converting upon hearing the preaching. It influenced my life positively. But I didn't make it known on campus that the sermons were changing me but in reality they changed me. I got fully converted after I

completed.” Abanga who left the Catholic Church as a child also recounted going back to the Catholic faith through research on the Catholic worship, interacting with priests who visited the school and through personal reading. “I did some research; read and heard from visiting priests and I realized the view I initially held against the Catholic Church was unsubstantiated, so I decided to go back to my roots to establish myself.”

The third participant who “converted” to Catholicism indicated it was the only option to accomplish their dream of wanting to contest in a leadership position, which was reserved for only the Catholic students. “If you were not a Catholic [student] you couldn’t attain certain positions and that was the more reason why I had to get baptized. I learned the catechism and I got baptized so I became the [name deleted] prefect.”

Participants also used rationalization as a strategy to adapt to the Catholic culture and the religious program. They learned to explain away or interpret some of the rules and regulations in a way to make them feel comfortable fulfilling their obligations as students in a Catholic school. The strategy of interpreting things in their own way in order to feel at ease rather than complain to the school authorities formed part of the adaptive strategies. In the first place, participants were afraid of the outcome if they questioned the school rules and the regulations. Secondly, they felt the school authorities would not even listen to their complaints. Twelve participants reported using this method of rationalization in order to adapt and succeed in their studies. Out of the twelve, five of them relied on the saying: “When in Rome do as the Romans do” to make them feel more obliged to participate in the Catholic culture.

To become a little more committed to doing manual work, an activity many students in both schools disliked, Kubaaza gave a positive interpretation to it as an activity that prepared them to do things for themselves so that “they wouldn’t necessarily have to employ people to do certain

menial jobs for them later in life.” Kubaaza cited the following example: “If I have lawns in my house I can easily work at them without employing someone to do it for me.” Regarding the restrictions placed on non-Catholic students from contesting certain leadership positions in the school, Jamaal said the authorities were right in their decision:

Yeah! I think the [administrator] was right and there was nothing we could do to change the decision. It’s a Catholic school and all the authorities preferred to have the leadership of some positions occupied by Catholic students. The Senior Prefect had a lot of influence on us. I think being Catholic students, they promoted the faith. Apart from that, I didn’t expect a Muslim to become the Senior Prefect in a Catholic school. Somebody might feel badly about the decision but that is the fact.

Similarly, Kubaaza said the school authorities could not be blamed for their decision to reserve some leadership positions for only the Catholic students:

The school authorities were right! It is a Catholic school so how could a non-Catholic [student] rule Catholic students? As a non-Catholic [student] I didn’t know about the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Even before students could become the [names of positions deleted] they had to receive [the Sacrament of] Confirmation. They should have been full Catholic [students] so the school authorities were right. Catholic students should lead in those positions.

Abanga had a similar explanation like Kubaaza’s when I asked why they did not contest for the Senior Prefect’s position and whether the school gave that explanation why those leadership positions were reserved for only the Catholic students. Abanga explained:

No school authority explained why. This was my interpretation because this was what made me feel comfortable. Even if I went to the [name of school authority deleted] to file my nomination and it was detected that I was not a Catholic [student] they would have insulted me because basically I knew only Catholic students could contest those positions so they would have insulted me. They wouldn't have given me any explanation.

The injunction to do what the Romans do when in Rome was the explanation Aloliga used to justify their participation and adaptation to the school culture.

I just had to do it because I was in the midst of members of the Catholic Church, so I just had to do what they were doing. There is this saying that *when in Rome, you do what the Romans do* and that was the reason why during Mass I just had to follow whatever was required of the Catholic students.

The Catholic identity of the school, as indicated by Aloliga, was the same reason Dery used as a justification to obey the school rules and to adapt to its culture. "It is a Catholic institution so whatever they wanted the students to do, all of us had to be involved in it and there was no exception to the rule," Dery indicated:

The rest who used this same old adage to equally justify their participation and adaptation to the Catholic school environment were Zaahid, Abu Bakr, Welaga, and Kubaaza. Zaahid explained away the injunction from their religion which prohibits them from engaging in other religious beliefs and practices.

According to my religion I was not supposed to attend church services but because it was compulsory so, I had to do it. Besides, it is said *when in Rome, you do as the Romans do so* I had to attend all the celebrations, but my religion doesn't allow me to practice another's religion," Zaahid explained.

Similarly, Abu Bakr felt it would have been an affront to Islam if they refused to participate in whatever was expected of them on campus: "They say *when in Rome, you do as the Romans do*. ZSHS as an institution expected everybody to abide by its norms. If I said I wouldn't participate, then I would have been tarnishing the image of my religion." Welaga also said being in an institution requires abiding by its norms and standard of acceptable practice according to the Roman law. "*When in Rome, do as the Romans do so* when I got there I had to abide by their rules and regulations," Welaga indicated. Kubaaza felt it was not just enough to go by the letter of the Roman law but beyond the letter of the law, to the spirit of the law regarding the worship program of the school.

Let me say *when you go to Rome, you do as the Romans do* but not to just do it as a rule or a norm in the school but to see it as true worship. Worship as if you were worshipping in your own religion, Kubaaza explained.

Regarding the constitutional provision of freedom of worship, participants explained it away for the same reason of engaging in the Catholic worship and feeling comfortable. According to some of them, Ghana's Constitution also stipulates other rights and freedoms for its citizens but in reality, some institutions do not obey those constitutional provisions. The participants, therefore, held the view that Catholic schools were not doing anything exceptionally wrong by restricting the non-Catholic students from professing their faith on their campuses. In a way, they held the schools excused. Abdul-Majeed explained the disobedience many Ghanaians exhibit towards the

Constitution: “In real life you can follow a case and come to realize that what the constitution stipulates are not practiced. So, I wasn’t surprised the Constitution stipulates freedom of worship, yet it wasn’t the case in the school.”

To overcome the guilt feeling participants experienced, they passed the buck. Abdullah was among those who expressed guilt feeling in participating in the Catholic worship to the neglect of their own faith but had to hold themselves excused by indicating it was not a refusal or neglect on their part not to profess their faith, but circumstances prevented them from doing so. “I had to keep telling myself I was not refusing to pray but situations prevented me from practicing my faith even though I sincerely wanted to do it,” Abdullah narrated. Likewise, Taahiru relied on self-exoneration for their inability to practice their faith they would have wished to do: “I didn’t blame myself whenever I didn’t get time to pray. Something prevented me from praying, so I tried not to feel too guilty about it.”

Self-blame formed part of the strategies to adjust to the new environment. Some participants felt by choosing to enroll in Catholic schools, it was their fault for poorly enquiring about the school’s demands on non-Catholic students prior to their enrollment. Thus, they blamed themselves for putting “the rope around [their] necks” as Dery expressed. Likewise, Sadiq expressed powerlessness and blamed their predicament on themselves. “I had nothing to say. I accepted whatever the school wanted me to do. I had to accept because I was under their control. Besides, I went to the school by myself. They didn’t force me to come there,” Sadiq narrated.

The essence of religion as perceived by the participants inspired them to adjust rather than try to fight for their religious rights. Some participants think the essence of religion is to “create peace and to unite” people rather than serve as an instrument of “division and conflict.” So, for these participants, rather than defy the purpose of religion by fighting for their freedom to worship

in their own ways, they decided to let sleeping dogs lie. Abanga indicated why they did not protest the religious restrictions because they felt “the result would have been conflict and tension and that is not the aim of religion.” So, they decided to “appreciate whatever was happening [on campus] in order to achieve personally what religion is for, which is, unity and peace.”

Table 2

Participants’ Adaptive Strategies and Consequences

Adaptive strategies	Consequences
Consulted with seniors, tutors and family members	Felt relieved and found the way forward
Prayed in secret	Maintained their religious identities but feared being caught and perhaps penalized
Made up their minds to focus on academics rather than religious issues	Fostered academic growth and relieved from religious obsession
Made up their minds of their residential status in a Catholic school being temporal	Experienced relief and feelings of imminent graduation
Made up their minds of getting a adapted being a matter of time	Time truly heals. With time many became comfortable with the culture
Adapted lukewarm attitudes towards Catholic culture and rituals	Experienced fear of being penalized for non-compliance to the school rules. However, they felt relieved by avoiding Catholic rituals
Intellectual approach. Learned about the Catholic faith	They reframed their minds or understood the faith Changed perspective
Self-blame	Guilt feelings intensified
Rationalization	Participants felt comfortable participating in the liturgy and thus less guilty
Passed the buck	Temporally relieved of guilt and pain
Let sleeping dogs lie	The goal of religion (peace and harmony) achieved
Participated in those Catholic rituals closely related to their religious worship	Experienced relief and activated their religious identities

Similarly, Abdul-Kareem thought there was no need ‘fighting’ for their rights, so they made up their minds to keep peace and graduate in peace: “For me, as long as the school required of me to follow the Catholic worship, I did not find it necessary fighting over anything. I just tuned my mind to do whatever they wanted in order to graduate peacefully.” Table 2 indicates participants’ adaptive strategies and consequences. Whatever strategies participants used, as shown on the left column, resulted in a correspondent consequence as indicated on the right column. The consequence was either a positive or negative experience.

Concerns of Future Participation in Catholic Worship

The bone of contention between Catholic school administrators and the participants boiled down to the mandatory worship program. For a comprehensive understanding of participants’ experience of this phenomenon, I posed open ended questions to learn about participants’ experiences. Participants also raised issues about future participation of non-Catholic students in Catholic worship.

Another extension of the findings in my review of the literature concerned participants’ participation in the Catholic worship program. This constituted a major issue for participants. Three groups of participants emerged regarding their perspectives on non-Catholic students’ participation in the Catholic rituals—all students should participate in Catholic worship; Muslim students should be allowed to pray; or all students on Campus should be permitted to pray in their respective religions. I examine first the perspective of those who were of the view that all students should be permitted to pray as prescribed by their religions.

Three of the participants, Hamza; Aloliga; and Abdullah favored this view. They said each student has a way of communicating with his or her God so nobody should be denied the way he/she should pray. Hamza expressed freedom of worship for each student:

Even though BSHS is a Catholic institution, all the students should be given the freedom to practice their faith in the way they deem fit. Students have their individual ways of communicating with their God, so they should be permitted to pray in their own way.

Aloliga said removing the religious restrictions will enable students to learn from one another's religious beliefs and practices. "If we worship in our own ways as our individual religions require of us, we would learn a lot from our colleagues and they would also learn from us," Aloliga stated. Abdullah made a distinction between Muslims and Christians rather than Catholic and non-Catholic students and thus expressed permitting Muslims to worship in their own way:

I see all Christians as one so they could participate in the Catholic worship or allowed to pray in the same chapel but at different times and in their respective denominations. That shouldn't be so much of a big deal to pray at the same place but at different times.

Compared to Muslims, Islam is quite different from Christianity so providing a place for Muslim students would be appropriate.

Next, I examine the views of those who, felt Muslims should be given a place to pray on campus.

Eleven participants discussed the various reasons why the Muslim students should be given the chance to practice their faith on campus. These participants reported that some of the Muslim students did not take the Catholic worship seriously so they should be given a separate place to worship on their own. "In the chapel, I could see most of our Moslem brothers didn't take many of the things that were done in the chapel seriously. They wouldn't sing. They joked about most of the things we did in the chapel," Abugrago narrated. Zaahid also indicated that Muslim students should be permitted to pray but left free to decide whether or not to go for Mass: "I suggest they give the Muslims some chance to pray. And for the Mass, if it would be possible, they should give

them the chance to decide whether to go for Mass or not to go.” Aloliga perceived the school was too strict by preventing the Muslim students from praying in their religion: “I think the school was too strict. They should have given the Muslims the opportunity if not with the availability of a mosque but at least they should have been permitted to pray in the dormitories.”

Another participant advocated for a place for Muslim students to pray but for the other non-Catholic students, they could pray together. Abu Bakr, who advocated for a place for the Muslim students to pray but for the rest of the non-Catholic students to pray together with the Catholic students explained their position as follows: “They should allow the Muslim students to pray as Muslims. But with the Christians, they are all one, that’s why they call them Christians so they can pray together.” “The school should create an avenue for the Muslim students to also practise their own religion,” Jamaal also suggested. Abdullah suggested creating time in the school’s daily program to accommodate Islamic prayers emphasizing the need to satisfy the religious needs of both Catholic and non-Catholic students. “I suggest a place of worship should be created for the Muslim students to pray freely and at the right times. The school program should be scheduled in a way to favor both the Catholic and the non-Catholic students,” Abdullah narrated.

Likewise, Abdul-Kareem said, “equal opportunity should also be given to the Muslim students to freely profess their faith.” Out of fear the Muslims students might forget of their religious beliefs and practices, Sadiq said “the Muslim students need to constantly practice their faith if not, by the time of their graduation from the three-year school program, they may have forgotten of a good part of their religion.” “I would recommend to the school authorities, to give the Muslim students a chance to pray on campus,” Murtala recommended. Some participants also noted fasting during the month of Ramadan is a religious duty of all Muslims and so the school authorities should assist them to fulfill this religious duty. Sulemana was one of them: “I would say

the school should consider us both in our daily prayers and during the time for fasting because it is equally important for all Muslims to fast during the period dedicated for fasting,” they pleaded. Taahiru also pleaded on behalf of the Muslims “for an extension of the break periods to create enough time to pray before going for the next program on the schedule.” I discuss next the perspectives of those who think all students should participate in the Catholic worship program.

Ten participants advocated for all students to participate in the mandatory worship program of the school, and advanced various reasons why such a practice is better than creating room for all students to worship in their own ways. Kubaaza explained their viewpoint: “If all denominations are allowed to worship in their own ways, I think the Catholic standards would be brought down. Because permitting students to worship in their own ways might compromise the discipline.” Kubaaza further emphasized:

The Church is one so when you come to the Catholic Church, no matter what, we are one. And let me say when you go to Rome, you do what the Romans do but not just as a rule or a norm in the school but to see it as worship.

Yinzor did not only think of unity as a reason for all students to participate in the Catholic worship, but also wondered how the school would look like considering the complexity of the different religious practices:

It is better to continue with the current practice of all students participating in the Catholic way of worship. Assuming I am a Traditional Religious Believer, and I am permitted to worship in my own way, how would it look like if I also go and sit in front of the school and slaughter a fowl in sacrifice to the gods? For me, it wouldn't really make sense. I would prefer unity to everyone doing what [they] like.

Yinzor felt issues on religion would even become more complex and compromise the identity of the Catholic school when it comes to putting up structures for the different religious denominations on campus for worshippers:

The school is a Catholic school, and they should not build a mosque within a Catholic school. That wouldn't make it a Catholic school. They should not allow for the construction of a Buddhist shrine inside the school. That wouldn't make it a Catholic school. That is the difference between a Catholic school and a public school. If students don't want to compromise their faith then they should not attend a Catholic school.

Similarly, Umar also expressed oneness and unity as the basis for the need for all the non-Catholic students to participate in the Catholic faith. "The fact that the school did not separate the Muslims from the Christians, for me meant we were all one. As much as possible, the school tried to treat us as one. We were all one," Umar explained.

Participants also thought allowing all religious denomination on campus to worship in their own way would affect the discipline and the academic performance of the school because the order is the bedrock of the school's academic performance.

The academic performance of the school is based on the Catholic faith, and the discipline; being here on time and doing the same thing together at the same time. So, everyone trying to have [their] own time to go and do one thing or the other, would affect the discipline and the entire school program, Jamaal explained.

Welaga had a similar perspective regarding order and discipline which they felt would suffer as a result of allowing students to pray on campus in different ways:

If they allow students to worship in their own religions, the school would not be organised at all. Meaning Muslims would have their own way, Traditionalist would have their way, and then Christians would have their own way. And when you consider Christianity, there are different denominations. So, giving that freedom, the school would just be like some of the other schools.

Abu Bakar had the same perspective: “if they allow the religious denominations to practice their own faith you would see that, that kind of monitoring would no longer exist.” And talking about making it optional for students to choose whether or not to participate in the Catholic rituals, Murtala said making it optional would mean many would not attend the rituals:

I think if they make it optional, even the Christians would not use their time judiciously. So, it is okay to keep it compulsory. Others who are not even Moslems would say they are Moslems so they would not go for Mass or attend any of the Catholic rituals and may spend their time doing nothing productive. In addition, it is not bad if students experience the Catholic religion or the culture.

Abdul-Majeed noted it would help the non-Catholic students in their moral formation: “I think the current practice should continue because at the end of it all, the non-Catholic students would learn some lessons, for instance, from the Mass and that would help them in life.” Abdullah maintained their earlier submission that “a place should be provided for the Muslim students but for the rest of the non-Catholic students who are all called Christians, they could pray with the Catholic students or given a separate time to pray.” Abdul-Kareem recommended “forming a Scripture Union (SU) for the non-Catholic students to pray at recommended times but they should all join the Catholic students in the Catholic worship services.”

How did the Catholic culture and the religious program of both schools affect participants?

It had both positive and negative consequences on the 21 participants who participated in my study and it is onto this I now turn.

Overall Perspectives of Catholic Education on Participants

This section examines the overall impact of the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program on participants. After experiencing the phenomena of the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program, what did participants say were the results of their experiences? What were their final thoughts? How did they perceive Catholic education? What were their experiences of the religious program and the Catholic Culture in which they lived and pursued Catholic education for the three or the four years?

Participants reported Catholic education had both positive and negative impact on their lives. Their perception of Catholic education also indicated it had both positive and negative sides. Among the 21 participants studied, ten of them spoke highly on either the academics or the discipline or both. Fifteen out of the 21 participants shared broadly on their good experiences, eight attributed the quality of Catholic schools to the religions men and women being administrators, four indicated they graduated well formed, and six reported the Catholic education crippled their faith. First, I examine the experiences of the first group of participants who reported on either the academic training or the discipline or both.

The ten participants who reported on these two pillars of Catholic education indicated it had a positive impact on their life. Hamza was one of them: “The spirit of punctuality and respect for others were among the lot I acquired from Catholic education.” Kubaaza expressed acquiring the skill of self-regulation from his previous training in the Catholic school: “Respect and training in the right morals were inculcated in us. One thing I can boast of is my ability to manage my time

well.” Evaluating their academic work in their current school, Yinzor indicated their former school had adequately prepared them for their current good work. “My former school instilled in me an ability to plan my time well and that is helping me here in my current course work,” Yinzor acknowledged. So also, Abanga said their former school had instilled in them a high sense of discipline and so they obeyed the rules and regulations in their current school even if no one was watching them.

Abiding by the rules and regulations here in [name of current school deleted] is easy because as compared to my former school, the rules here are so relaxed. I ask for permission before I leave campus, but I can dodge out without the knowledge of the school authorities because they aren’t watchful, but I choose not to do that and I think my former school taught me to always do what is right, Abanga explained.

Abugrago expressed the same sentiments regarding the good training they received in their former school:

We were taught the habit of punctuality and to be dedicated in our studies and in our spiritual life and these have been part of me since I left my former school. At times my tutors make positive remarks about my sense of discipline, Abugrago indicated.

Participants observed many Catholic schools are single sex institutions, which they indicated helped them to come out with flying colors. Zaahid expressed their likeness “for Catholic schools because in Catholic schools no room is created for dating on campus, so it offered us the opportunity to concentrate on our studies and with the help of God we passed our examinations.” Similarly, Abdul-Kareem said, “the discipline made us who we are today even though we are still climbing the academic ladder.” Besides the discipline which participants attributed to their academic success, Abu Bakr also reported the dedicated services of their tutors contributed to their

success. “We had good tutors who always sacrificed their time and energy for us and that enabled us to achieve our [academic] goals,” Abu Bakr said. The teachers “worked hard so I can say I am who I am because of my teachers,” Umar noted. Sadiq explained: “if the famous saying that *discipline is the key to success* is true, then our [academic] success is attributed to the Catholic school we attended.” Participants also expressed overall varied good experiences. Next, I outline the good experiences participants reported.

Participants also reported on various good experiences, which they attributed to the training they received in their former school. Fifteen participants reported on varied positive experiences. Abanga was one of them who apportioned the highest percentage of the Catholic education’s impact on their lives. Abanga explained: “I think my former school has contributed 60 percent to who I am now even though I haven’t gone anywhere yet. My former school would have contributed about 60 % and my primary and JHS would have contributed 40%.” Another participant, Yinzor indicated they gained a deeper insight of their faith by their participation in the Catholic worship program:

I did not know of the “why” but only the “what” of the religious rituals in my Church.

The “why,” of some of the signs and symbols in my Church was learned in my former school and that alone was a great impact in my life.

Jamaal observed that by interacting with people of different faiths in BSHS had improved upon their relationship with people of different faiths in general. “My relationship with people of diverse faiths has improved. I no longer perceive religion as a barrier to interacting with people because of how I lived with students of different religions in BSHS,” Jamaal reported. Similarly, Abu Bakr expressed a heightened ability now to live with people of different faiths in whatever country they visit based on their interaction with Christians in ZSHS. “If I ever find myself in a

Christian country, I wouldn't be isolated because I know I can live with them. I had lived with, interacted with and learnt from Christians," Abu Bakar narrated. Likewise, Mahmoud expressed acquiring a deeper knowledge of how Catholic members worship by attending a Catholic high school. "I benefited a lot from the school because growing up as a Muslim, I didn't know much about Christianity especially about the Catholic services but once I got to the school, I got to know the Catholic faith better," Mahmoud indicated. Commenting on the school climate Taahiru indicated it was conducive for both rest and work:

The school had a good atmosphere for academic work; the silence at preps time was commendable. Silence and lights out for all students to sleep after a hard day's work was great. By that we were able to wake up early the next morning and that should be improved upon in the school. It helped me to study well, Taahiru expressed.

"Generally, it was a good experience living and studying in my former school," Hamza said but reiterated their earlier submission on the need to have given Muslim students an opportunity to freely exercise their faith. Abugrago expressed the need to have given non-Catholic students an opportunity to practice their faith while on campus, but they nonetheless acknowledged: "the school offered them some opportunity to develop their spiritual life with the Catholic students, so we were often conscious of God's presence in our lives."

Participants at times preferred to summarize in a few words, their overall perspective of the goodness of the school's education program. Kubaaza was one of those who liked to give a broad description of their overall experience of the school. Kubaaza said: "The training was superb, marvelous and outstanding. I don't think I would have received, such a training in other schools. So, the training in the Catholic school was commendable." Likewise, Abdul-Majeed acknowledged in generic terms the goodness of faith-based schools especially the Catholic schools

which they have experienced. “I think schools owned by religious denominations offer good education but with the Catholic education which I have experienced, I testify they are indeed good schools that offer quality education,” Abdul-Majeed indicated. “We had challenges, but we also had interesting times too like playing games and participating in other activities as a community,” Abdullah acknowledged. Dery like other participants, expressed pride making it through a Catholic high school because not all who got enrolled graduated. Others dropped along the line. “I feel proud completing my studies in a Catholic high school. Not everyone who enrolled with us completed ZSHS. Some students were dismissed because they couldn’t cope with the academic and the extracurricular activities of the school,” Dery explained. Sadiq learned coping skills in their former school and these skills accordingly are helping them “able to sit and work in one particular spot for hours without easily getting tired but I could not do so at my JHS level.”

“The spirit of personal and environmental cleanliness is a quality I learned from my former school. We were always under supervision to ensure our uniforms and dormitories were neat and orderly and it has become part and parcel of me,” Murtala indicated. Like Murtala, Taahiru stated “the school taught me how to behave as an adult, speak and eat in public, speak to the elderly including my mom and to look neat.” Participants also said Catholic schools are good because of their identity as Catholic schools. Besides, the priests who run these schools as administrators ensure quality work is done. Regarding what made the priests and religious unique in making Catholic education impact positively on participants’ lives is what I describe next.

The number of participants who expressed this view of priests and nuns as administrators enhancing the quality of Catholic education were eight in number. Murtala was one of those participants. Murtala observed priests and religious have ample time to be committed as school

administrators because they are not married and besides, their training makes them capable of instilling discipline in students:

The layperson has so many other activities as compared to the [title of administrator deleted] whose whole life revolved around the school. A married person, for example, wouldn't have that time. For me I think the school should be headed by the [title of administrator deleted] alone. That would help a lot because they also have a certain strict or principled life so with that they are consistent. With students, one needs consistency in instilling discipline in them and if the head is not principled it would be hard to get students to follow the laid down rules and principles of the school, Murtala explained.

Hamza like Murtala said Catholic religious leaders exercise a kind of disciplined life but indicated it is not all of them who are disciplined.

I don't think the school would have been the way it is if it were handled by a layperson. I don't think so because mostly, should I say, most of the religious leaders, though not all, are principled. They always have some kind of principles, but for the laypeople, majority of them lack this quality so I don't think the school would be the way it is if it were headed by a layperson, Hamza reported.

But Hamza also acknowledged a personal limitation in assessing the priests and the religious.

“There is something about the priests and the Rev. Sisters that makes them distinct from the lay people, but I can't best tell what it is.” Dery said the Catholic schools are good “because the Rev. Fathers and the Rev. Sisters are disciplined, and you know in every institution where there is, discipline things work out well.

Kubaaza cited a concrete example of one school, which was initially handled by a Catholic administrator but when that leader left and a layperson took over, according to Kubaaza, the standards fell. “In [name of school deleted] a [title of administrator deleted] left and a layperson or someone who is not a [title of administrator deleted] took over and it seems the standards went down. Yeah! The standards went low!”

Sadiq had the same impression that because priests and religious are not married, they have the time to commit to their work as administrators:

I heard that the [title of administrator deleted] are not married and they don't also have children. If a different person handles the institution; if that person is married, they would not have time for the students. All their time would be on their children and family.

Because the [title of administrator deleted] are not married, and do not have any children of their own, all their time and mind are vested on the students and that makes the difference.

Another participant Welaga attributed the quality work of Catholic schools to the leadership of the Catholic priests or religious because their first and foremost commitment, according to Welaga is to God not to any human being:

The leaders of Catholic schools are usually [priests or religious] and as Catholic [priests or religious] they would ensure quality work is done. So, the quality work is always done because of the fear that we do this in favour of God not in favour of man.

Similarly, Abdul-Majeed attributed the quality education in Catholic schools to the leadership of the priests or religious, but Abdul-Majeed goes beyond Catholic schools to include faith-based schools but only cited the Catholic school as an example because of their experience attending a Catholic school:

The issue is that, schools owned by religious denominations, for example the Catholic Church, the performance is always outstanding as compared to other schools. The management of these schools is always outstanding, and discipline is always high.

Umar attributed the high quality of Catholic education to the education of students at all levels in Catholic schools: “Unlike in other schools where education is limited to the classroom, we were taught in class, outside of class and in the chapel through the preaching.”

Still on the positive comments on Catholic education, four indicated they felt well trained by the school. “It made us a new creation. We were transformed from our own ways of doing things to the right ways of doing things,” Abugrago expressed. Abugrago concluded a long narration of how BSHS impacted their life by saying: “I always say I went to BSHS as a kid and left as an adult, so I thank BSHS for that.” Another participant, Aloliga remarked: “I think I can boldly say the way I am today is due to the way I was trained in BSHS.”

Reflecting on physical appearance and attitude towards the elderly, Welaga said they were trained to appear decent and neat as well as be respectful towards the elderly in ZSHS and that has remained a part of their life. “We were all expected to dress well and I can say I still dress well. And when it comes to respect for others especially the elderly and making time for God, those virtues have been instilled in me.” Yinzor also indicated that teachers in their current schools commend them for “being well behaved as compared to students from other schools” who were not privileged to have received the training they got. Participants also indicated the Catholic culture and the religious program had an overall negative impact on their lives. Next, I describe the negative impact the Catholic education had on participants.

Among those who mentioned the positive things that impacted their lives, six of them also noted the Catholic education had a negative impact on their lives as well. They explained that the

overall culture crippled their own faith as it had made them rather cultivate a lackadaisical attitude towards their religion. Zaahid appeared among their colleagues as the odd one anytime they discussed issues about their faith. Zaahid noted they could not contribute to some religious discussions because they had not been practicing their faith due to their enrolment in a Catholic school.

Whenever we met and we were talking about our religion it looked like I was the odd one among them because they had gained knowledge about our religion because they attended public schools, so they teased me that my religion was fading away, Zaahid stated.

Another participant, Dery expressed the same feeling of being left out in similar discussions:

My friends learned a lot about Scripture Union (SU) and other things concerning the Assemblies of God Church in their campuses. For me, it seems I was always left out because I didn't know anything about what was discussed because in my school SU did not exist to have afforded us that training my colleagues had in their schools.

Abdullah explained their enrolment in a Catholic school delayed their completion in reading the Qur'an and besides, it also reduced their zeal of practicing their faith off campus: "It didn't actually affect me much. But it reduced the pace at which I wanted to complete my study of the Qur'an. When I entered BSHS, I couldn't easily practise my faith. So, it delayed me in completing the Quran." Abdullah continued, "sometimes it would be time for prayer, and I would still be sitting down. I wondered what had come over me. All those adamancies were as a result of my inability to freely pray on campus."

Jamaal expressed some regret attending a Catholic school rather than an Islamic school.

Jamaal noted:

The three years I spent in the Catholic school would have been used to learn a lot about my own religion if I had gone to an Islamic school. I rather tried to learn the Catholic faith, which I didn't even take seriously. I didn't take the Catholic teachings seriously. I think if I had gone to an Islamic school it would have helped me in my faith.

Hamza expressed similar sentiments. "After my experience in BSHS any time I came home I felt reluctant to pray. How I used to perform my prayers, I realized it had changed. I would say BSHS has crippled my faith a little bit. Another participant, Sulemana recounted how hiding to pray affected their faith:

As time went on I started feeling lazy in praying because why should I hide to pray as if I was stealing or doing something bad. At times I prayed only once in a week, but I was expected to pray five times in a day in accordance with the Islamic tradition.

In summary, among the 21 participants I interviewed, 14 participants reported only positive experiences about their overall experience of Catholic education, six reported both positive and negative experiences and one indicated overall negative experiences.

This participant said from the overall perspective the school did not instill anything positive in X. This was the explanation X gave for learning nothing in the school:

No! I didn't pick anything from their school, not even their style of dressing, because I am a Moslem so I can't dress as they do. And we used not to listen to whatever was going on, whatever the father was saying we were not listening. We used to stay at the back of the chapel and sometimes we slept.

All but one of the participants said they were willing to return to their alma mater to contribute their quota to enhance Catholic education. The one participant indicted learning nothing

from the school because of their Muslim identity. Participants' appreciation of Catholic education also affirmed earlier studies as discussed in my literature review findings.

Figure 2

Graphical Representation of Data Analysis.

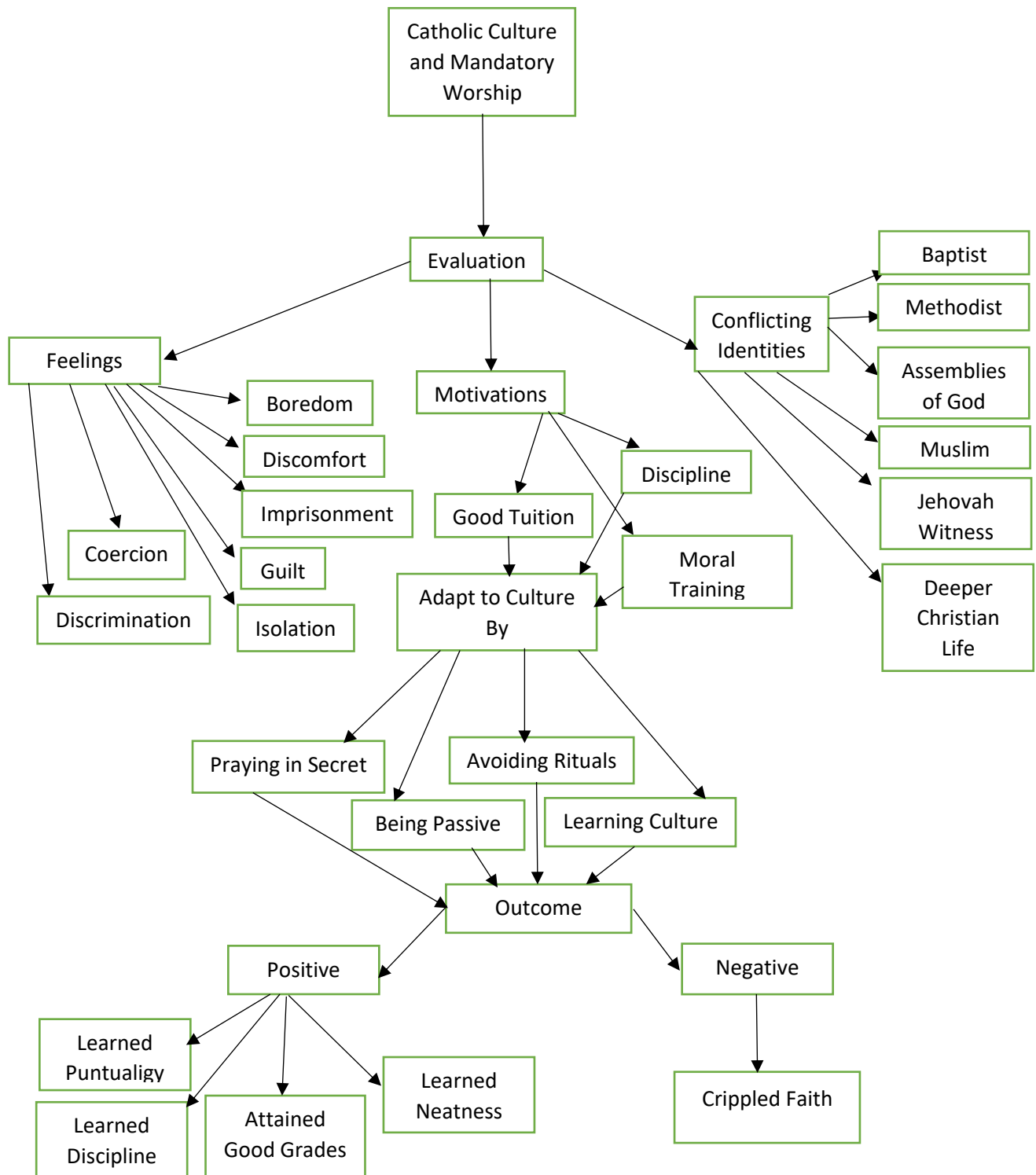


Figure 2 summarizes the entire analysis of the data chapter. Participants evaluated the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program upon their experience of this phenomenon. Their experience triggered in them, emotional reactions and feelings of a sense of conflict between them as non-Catholic students (Baptists, Methodists, Assemblies of God, Muslims, Jehovah Witnesses and Deeper Christian Life) and that of the Catholic identity of the school. Despite the emotional distress and conflict of identities and duties, participants also found elements in the Catholic culture, which motivated their continuous enrollment (the moral formation, the good tuition and the discipline). Based on the motivational factors, participants decided to maintain their enrollment with these Catholic schools thus, they fashioned some strategies (praying in secret, being passive, avoiding Catholic rituals, learning the culture) to help them adapt to the culture and the worship program. The adaptive measures yielded both positive and negative results, which constituted the overall perspectives of the participants. While the majority reported positive outcomes, a few indicated an overall negative impact of the Catholic culture and religious program on their lives.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I adopted Identity Theory (Stets & Burke, 2003, 2014; Striker & Burke, 2000; Striker, 1980) and Cultural Theory (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Smircich, 1983) to analyze the cultural and the religious experiences of the 21 graduates regarding their experiences as non-Catholic students enrolled in a Catholic high school. First, I provide a description of identity theory and then use identity theory to analyze how participants' identities differed from the Catholic identity of the schools as well as the emotional challenges participants faced living and participating in the schools' programs. I used identity theory to analyze the conflict of roles due to the differences in religious beliefs and the emotional challenges participants experienced while attending a Catholic school.

To further interpret my findings, I also adopted cultural theory, including its emphasis on how the social environment shapes the lives of individuals. Participants lacked precise knowledge of the schools' cultural and religious expectations required of all students prior to their admission. My findings revealed how school administrators' insufficient support regarding their full inclusion in school life worsened participants' adjustment to the Catholic culture. Cultural theory allowed me to interpret the struggles participants experienced in adapting to the schools' Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program. Identity and cultural theory complement each other by providing interpretive insight on the cultural and the religious experiences of non-Catholic students attending Catholic high schools. The analysis of participants' experiences including their recommendations exposed the gap between their identities as non-Catholic students and the Catholic identity of the schools. Participants' exposure to their school environment may raise the awareness of Catholic school administrators to the plight of non-Catholic students. This understanding may help to fashion an alternative means of education to care for both the Catholic

students as well as the non-Catholic students who enroll in Catholic high schools.

Identity Theory

Stryker and Burke (2000) defined identity as “parts of a self-composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies” (p. 284). They described how identities form and individuals value them. An identity consists of internally stored information and meanings. This stored information guides and shapes an individual’s behavior. The goal of Stryker’s (1980) theoretical research study, described as “structural symbolic interactionism,” was to “understand and explain how social structures affect self and how self affects social behavior” (as cited in Stryker and Burke, 2000).

Stryker and Burke (2000) viewed identity as creations by individuals to explain their role in society. The “nature of the self and what individuals do depend to a large extent on the society within which they live” (Stets & Burke, 2003, p. 1). In general, the theory asserts that role choices reflect peoples’ identities and an individual’s identities are arranged in order of importance (Stryker & Burke, 2000). A person’s identities represent a hierarchy as an organizational principle in society. The identities at the top of the hierarchy are often more valued than those at the bottom. The construction of identity serves as a framework to interpret one’s experiences. Identity theorists contend that the higher the importance of an identity relative to other identities within the self, the greater the likelihood that the behavior people adopt would resonate with the expectations they attach to their identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). In other words, the most valued identity exerts the greatest influence and determines the behavior the individual would most likely adopt to perform the role.

Identity theory also underscores a connection between behavior and commitment (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Commitment is defined as the “degree to which a person’s relationship to others

in their networks depend on possessing a particular identity and role” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). People are more likely to commit themselves in playing a role with a group they identify with than perform the role in a group where their identity is not valued. The cost involved in losing meaningful relations with others in the event of forgoing an identity is the way commitment is measured: The higher the cost, the higher the commitment. The conceptions of identity and identity salience portray stability in identities and their importance across time and situations (Stets & Burke, 2014). Individuals do not immediately change their identities when they move from one location to another. Rather, they look for ways and means to maintain their identities while in the new place. When the needs of individuals are fulfilled, their structured selves remain stable. However, changes in their identities occur when they are unable to find or make use of present opportunities similar to their previous experiences.

Another principle of identity theory is the perceptual control system (Stets & Burke, 2014). Central to the perceptual control system is that “it is the meaning that is important not the behavior itself, and meaning is subject to social confirmation” (p. 62). In this regard, perceived meanings and the meanings held in the identity standard must correspond to achieve identity verification. Conversely, a mismatch results in identity non-verification. The idea here is that people do not just act in ways that resonate with their identities.

People use feedback from others and their own direct appraisals to understand the meanings of the behaviors in which they engage (Stets & Burke, 2014). Based on this kind of assessment, individuals change their behaviors to make their perceptions of the meaning mirror the meanings in their identity standard (Stets & Burke, 2014). The extent to which a mismatch between perceptions and identity standards exist, causes an emotional reaction consistent with the value of the identity and ultimately causes individuals to adopt behaviors in an attempt to correct

the situation (Stets & Burke, 2014). Non-Catholic high school students experienced many threats to maintaining their most valued identities due to the religious identity of the school as well as their commitment to maintain their faith as non-Catholic students. Identity theory helped me interpret why non-Catholic students struggled to maintain their identity in a Catholic high school.

Conflict of Identities and Roles

The religious identity of the schools as Catholic institutions differed from the religious identities of the 21 participants studied. Participants identified their religious preference as either Muslim or Pentecostal (Christian but non-Catholic). Those from the Pentecostal Churches identified as Baptist, Jehovah Witness, Methodist, Assemblies of God, and Deeper Christian Life Ministry. These religious denominations, including the Catholic Church, recognize themselves as Christians. However, the doctrinal differences or emphasis on some articles of faith over others explain their differences, giving each denomination and its followers a unique identity. The Jehovah witnesses for instance, do not tolerate images like statues of saints in their churches because they consider bowing to icons as idol worship. Welaga, who identified as a Jehovah Witness, explained their belief regarding icons in their religion and thus, the reason why they avoided the Catholic Mass:

Like the images I talked about, we don't erect statues in our Church. We don't do that!

Because the Bible says we shouldn't worship idols, I didn't want to practice idol worship, so I used to dodge the Mass.

On the other hand, members of the Catholic Church venerate the statues of the saints, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Crucifix. The two Catholic schools studied had either the crucifix, or a picture of Mary or both in the classrooms and in other public places within the school premises. Another example of a doctrinal difference between Islam and the Catholic Church is the position

of Jesus Christ. Muslims do not consider Jesus as God, although they recognize him as a prophet. Conversely, members of the Catholic Church recognize Jesus as true God and true man.

Abu Bakr recounted the contradiction regarding the position of Jesus in Islam and Catholicism and wondered whether engaging in the Catholic worship was a sin against Islam: “I asked myself whether I was committing a sin. I have a God I worship. I know He is God. But in my former school, they told me Jesus is God. I felt like I was committing a sin.” Participants possessed another identity different from their religious identities. Nonetheless, this second identity did not absolve them of the conflicts they encountered. Rather, it complicated the tensions they experienced in playing out their roles in relation to this identity.

By virtue of participants’ enrollment in the schools, they identified as students of these institutions. Their enrollment with the schools certified their membership with the institution and thus qualified them to be called students of BSHS or ZSHS. How did participants’ student and religious identities pose challenges to their residence within the Catholic school community? I explain the struggles participants experienced, at least in the initial stages of their enrollment, using identity theory.

Identity theory asserts that the role choices people make in life reflect their identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The choices individuals make fulfill and reinforce those identities. The participants whose religious identities comprised Muslim, Baptist, Jehovah Witness, Methodist, members of the Assemblies of God Church and Deeper Christian Life Ministry needed to make choices consistent with their religious identities to achieve identity verification. Participants, however, could not make these choices as long as they contradicted the schools’ Catholic identity. To maintain its identity as a Catholic institution, the school in the first place forbade non-Catholic students from professing their faith on campus. Secondly, the school required all students to

participate in the Catholic rituals irrespective of their religious identities. These rituals neither resonated with participants' belief systems, nor were participants given the freedom to choose whether or not to engage in these practices. As non-Catholic students, they struggled with the assigned role of a Catholic student. Because their religious identities differed from the Catholic identity of BSHS and ZSHS, their role choices conflicted with the valued school identity. The school required them to practice a faith different from their own. Participants, therefore, experienced a conflict of duty, responsibility and commitment.

Conflicting Roles

The conflict of roles between the participants and the schools was magnified by participants' student identity. Participants' student identity required them to abide by all the school rules and regulations. They accepted the rules concerning their admission to fulfil the demands of the school on them. They signed an agreement to follow the rules on their admission form despite the difference in faith.

However, the non-Catholic students' attempt to pay allegiance to the schools (which required of them to deny their faith, at least while on campus), contradicted their religious identities and practices. For example, Muslim students are required to pray five times in a day. Identity theory contends that individuals' role choices fulfill and reinforce their identities. In fulfilment of their religious identities, participants had to find a way out to remain committed to their faith and at the same time satisfy or avoid the demands on their identity as students. The way forward was not an easy task to accomplish as it aroused negative feelings in participants. Participants had to choose either to become disloyal to the school (which they previously promised in writing to abide by its rules and regulations) or to temporally set aside their faith. Next, I explain

how participants navigated the dilemma of fulfilling their role identities as students and at the same time as Muslims and Pentecostals.

The attempts participants made to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as Muslims and Pentecostals, led to the breaking of the school rules and regulations contrary to the very reason for the mandatory worship services—to instill discipline. Ten participants defied the school rules to profess their faith in fulfillment of and in commitment to their respective faiths and religious identities. Umar was one of them who said breaking the school rules was the only option to remain committed to their religious convictions:

I felt badly because we were not allowed to also perform our religious rites on campus.

Without this restriction there wouldn't have been the need to break the school rules and regulations. We were not given that opportunity to practice our faith, so the only option was to defy some of the school rules.

Participants knew worshiping on campus in any way other than the Catholic way was intolerable behavior. Conversely, failure to worship in their respective religions meant denying their very selves as Muslims or Pentecostals. Non-Catholic students were committed to remain faithful to their religious beliefs and practices irrespective of their geographical locations. However, to profess their faith without any confrontation with school authorities meant they had to do so in secret. Abdul-Majeed was among those participants who prayed in private. Abdul-Majeed noted the difficulties in accepting the school requirements and their inability to fulfill their religious obligations on campus: “When they said we were not allowed to pray on campus, in fact, it was not easy. I couldn't take it in good faith. So, what I did was to always hide and pray.” Other participants sought advice from their teachers, which ultimately resulted in accomplishing their religious duties undercover. Abdul-Kareem paraphrased the advice a tutor gave them to help them

avoid any confrontation with school authorities or student leaders and at the same time manage the conflicts.

The [administrator] definitely could not follow us the whole day, neither could those the[administrator] appointed to watch over us. So, we could excuse our colleagues of taking a stroll to the forest. Then in the forest, we could pray quickly and go back to study. After all, how many minutes did we need for prayer? Just a few minutes and we were done, Abdul-Kareem recounted.

Identity theory also contends that the most valued identity often exerts the greatest influence on a person over the less valued ones (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The theory states that an identity relative to other identities within the self, the greater the likelihood the behavior people adopt resonates with the expectations they attach to their identities. The hierarchical structure of identities helps to understand participants' loyalty towards their religious identities as compared to their student identity.

Practicing Religious Beliefs “Undercover”

Participants' identities as Muslims or Pentecostals exerted a greater influence on their behavior than the imposed Catholic student identity. This explained participants' enthusiasm to go the extra mile to remain faithful to their faith despite the strict rules against religious multiplicity on campus. The theory also shows a correlation between commitment and cost. Participants weighed the cost they would have incurred in the event they were caught practicing their faith undercover against the cost involved in relinquishing their faith. They found it a higher cost to relinquish their faith and embrace Catholicism. Commitment to their responsibilities as Muslims or Pentecostals far outweighed their commitment as students of a Catholic school. This practice

correlates with one of the tenets of identity theory—the higher the identity salient, the deeper the commitment (Stryker & Burke, 2000). How did participants remain so resilient?

Stets and Burke (2014) stated that the conceptions of identity and identity salience show stability in identities and their significance across time and situations. The enduring nature of identities and their significance explained participants' resilience. Many participants refused to temporally set aside their faith despite the obstacles they encountered. Rather, they found other avenues to continue to practice their faith even if doing so behind closed doors was the only option. They exercised their religious duties in private to maintain their religious identities.

Similarly, the conflict between the Catholic school and the participants was based on their respective identities and individual commitment to protecting these identities. While the Catholic school is committed to defending its identity as an institution entrusted with the responsibility of propagating the Catholic faith, the participants were committed to maintaining their respective religious identities despite their enrollment in Catholic schools – even though they were restricted from freely practicing their faith as Muslims or Pentecostals. The conflict in identities and roles caused participants to experience emotional difficulties. The emotional struggle participants experienced is the issue I turn to next.

Emotional Challenges in Adapting to the Catholic Culture

Almost all the participants experienced emotional challenges adapting to the school's Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program. While some felt guilty or coerced or bored or uncomfortable, others felt isolated and discriminated against. Among those who expressed feelings of discrimination regarding the reservation of some leadership roles for only Catholic students were Abugrago and Abdullah. Abugrago expressed their feelings of discrimination and powerlessness as follows:

There was this practice [which] I would say was a bias way of treating students especially the non-Catholic students. One could see that the Catholic students in the school were given privileges and opportunities that outweighed those for the non-Catholic students. A clear example to this was the policy that only the baptized Catholic [students] could contest for the Senior Prefect's position.

Abdullah indicated the same feelings of discrimination and unfair treatment.

Even though it wasn't our school, giving certain positions like the Senior Prefect's position to only Catholic [students,] in fact, Communicants, was unfair. As students of the school, I think equal opportunity should have been given to every student to contest for any position. So, limiting certain students and giving certain students an upper hand wasn't fair at all.

The participants who said they felt uncomfortable related their feelings to participating in the Catholic worship, which was not only new to them, but also contrary to their faith. Aloliga and Abdul-Majeed were among the participants who expressed feeling of discomfort by their mere presence in the chapel where most of the rituals took place or by simply listening to their colleague students recite the Catholic prayers. Aloliga highlighted their feelings and the differences in doctrine as the cause of the discomfort:

There were times I wasn't comfortable performing some of the rites because my faith only talks about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Even though Mary is important, we don't give much attention to her but in the Catholic faith most of the things centered on Mary. So sometimes I felt uncomfortable participating in the prayers.

The feelings of discomfort as Abdul-Majeed expressed, related to the crucifix of Jesus and the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I reflected on the images in the Chapel and compared them with portions of the Quran that condemn idol worship. Besides, the Bible also says: “Thou shall not worship other gods except me” So initially I used to dodge the Mass because I wasn’t comfortable participating in idol worship which God clearly forbids, Abdul-Majeed recounted.

The use of identity theory aids understanding of participants’ emotional struggle and reaction. Identity theory holds that when there is a mismatch between perceptions and identity standards, it results in a degree of emotional reaction and ultimately to behavior in an attempt to correct the situation (Stets & Burke, 2014). This principle of identity theory explained participants’ emotions. Their engagement in religious worship was inconsistent with their religious beliefs and practices. The mismatch evoked negative emotions. Participants’ emotional feelings of boredom, discomfort and powerlessness resulted in a correspondent behavior to change the situation. For some participants, practicing their faith in private was the only option to change the situation.

In addition, Stet and Burke (2000) viewed personal identity as a “categorization of the self as a unique entity, distinct from other individuals. The individual acts in terms of his or her own goals and desires rather than as a member of a group or category” (p. 228). This categorization of the self that indicates identity, primarily, is a choice. In other words, individuals choose either to identify as Muslim, Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist. In my study, participants did not choose to identify as Catholic nor did they freely choose to participate in the Catholic religious worship. Moreover, the school administrators did not address participants’ nagging questions, such as: “Am I committing a sin by involving myself in Catholic worship?” “Will I reach Jannah [heaven] when I die?” Similar doubts experienced by others evoked emotional pain in participants.

Participants also expressed feelings of coercion. To begin with, participants had no clear information on the rigorous religious program of the school prior to their enrollment. Moreover, the schools' bond and undertaking forms, which spell out the expectations of all students on campus, did not categorically state that non-Catholic students would not be permitted to profess their faith as long as they maintained their student status with the school and resided on campus. When participants arrived on campus and realized they could not freely profess their faith, they felt deceived or misled. The school asked participants to engage in a rigorous religious worship without adequate psychological preparation. Participants' feelings of coercion affected their emotions and behavior. Participants did not also identify with the Catholic culture in addition to the required participation in religious worship.

Despite participants' enrollment in these Catholic schools, they did not fully identify with the schools' Catholic culture. This lack of identification with the schools' culture was implicit but at other instances it manifested itself in varied ways. Implicitly, participants knew in their minds they did not belong to the Catholic Church, which owns the schools. They saw themselves as students who were only passing through these Catholic institutions to achieve their academic goals.

Explicitly, there were instances the school administrators restricted the participants from participating in some Catholic celebrations, which took place off campus for no other reason but for their non-Catholic identity. The question is, how could participants submit themselves whole heartedly to the Catholic culture to shape them when the administrator made it explicitly clear to them that they did not truly belong? The school tried to shape participants in a culture they knew the students did not own, evoking their resistance, at least in the initial stages of their enrollment. The experience triggered their emotional pain. In summary, participants did not totally believe in

or value Catholic worship nor did they totally share in the schools' Catholic culture. The disparity in belief and value systems as well as the schools' continuous effort to socialize them into the Catholic culture, triggered their resistance and traumatic experiences.

Identity theory also holds that changes in people's identities occur when they are unable to find or make use of present opportunities similar to their previous experiences (Stets & Burke, 2014). This tenet of the theory may explain why three of the participants got converted to the Catholic faith. Participants resided on campus for months without freely engaging in their religious practices except during holidays. Moreover, switching from Catholicism to their religion during vacation also evoked some emotional pain. With no room created for participants to freely practice their faith on campus for months, coupled with the emotional struggle switching religions, some participants decided among other reasons to convert to the Catholic Church. How did the Catholic culture contribute to participants' emotional struggle? I provide the answer to this question by first describing cultural theory and its influence on student identity and behavior.

Cultural Theory

I also adopted cultural theory to help me understand how organizations operate and influence people's lives (Smircich, 1983). Cultural theory explains the behavior of groups of people, but like identity theory, it also reveals how culture shapes behavior and fosters group identity. I first define culture and show how its key concepts prove useful for interpreting student experiences, and then explain organizational behavior and its effects on participants. Smircich (1983) described culture as the social norms that bind an organization as a whole. Culture embodies the values, and beliefs a group of people or an organization shares, which are manifested in symbolic ways such as myths, rituals, stories, legends and specialized language (Smircich, 1983). Schein, (1992) defined culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group

learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 263).

Culture perceived as shared salient values and beliefs, accomplish four important functions (Smircich, 1983). First, Culture provides a sense of identity to group members or organization. Second, Culture fosters a commitment to something larger than the self. Third, Culture facilitates the stability of the social system of the organization, and fourth, Culture plays the role of meaning making to guide and shape behavior (Smircich, 1983).

Culture is also conceived of as a worldview that is, organized patterns of thought that group members perceive as something that constitutes adequate knowledge and legitimates behavior (Smircich, 1983). Culture understood from this perspective helps us comprehend the behavior of groups of people and organizations. Smircich, (1983) argued that because people identify with their own culture, they find it difficult to live in that cultural context and at the same time question its value. How this theory explains participants’ experiences is the issue I turn to next.

Inadequate Administrative Support

Out of the 21 participants interviewed, 11 of them raised concerns regarding their relationship with the school administrator. While some participants expressed difficulties approaching the administrator because of fear, others lamented over the derogatory remarks some administrators made against their faith. Still, others said the administrator simply had no listening ear to students’ grievances, yet care began with paying attention and being curious about what went on in students’ life especially the newcomers. Among the responsibilities of the Catholic school administrator is to nurture the Catholic ethos of the school.

This explains why Catholic schools in Ghana are often headed by priests or nuns; these individuals generally possess the requisite knowledge and skills for this kind of job. One of the qualities an administrator should possess to accomplish this task of promoting a serene Catholic atmosphere consists in good interpersonal relationships with students and teachers. Unfortunately, some of the administrators severely lacked this quality, making it extremely difficult for participants to approach them for assistance to navigate the difficulties associated with adapting to the Catholic culture.

I provide a few examples on participants' perspectives of their administrators' relationship with students. Talking about participants approaching some administrators to discuss pertinent issues regarding challenges they faced, some said there was no need for it. For participants, administrators at best would not listen and at worse, would get angry for approaching them. Abdul-Majeed was one of those who held this viewpoint:

If you had a problem, the [administrator] wouldn't listen to you. At times the [administrator] didn't give a fair hearing to all parties. The [administrator] could just hear something, maybe for the first time about something going on and all of a sudden [X] would just explode using abusive language. This very much concerned students' poor academic performance and misconduct.

Other participants said some of the teachers were even afraid of the administrators. One of the administrators, accordingly, had sent a teacher away from the school for sympathizing with students for their inability to freely practice their faith. Sadiq indicated: "Even the teachers were afraid of the administrator. During our first year, they said one teacher was transferred to another school for carrying the grievances of the non-Catholic students to the school administrator."

Abugrago perceived the administrator was their spiritual parent, but lamented over the fact that they found it very difficult to approach X for any meaningful discussion:

Before you could approach [X] and talk with [X] you were already worn out and that shouldn't have been the case because we saw [X] as our spiritual parent. As the head of the school we should have been free to cry out or pour our grievances to [X.]

How does Cultural theory help explain the inadequacies of the school administrators in rendering the needed services to participants? Culture embodies the values, and beliefs a group of people or an organization shares, manifested in symbolic ways such as myths, rituals, stories, legends and specialized language (Smircich, 1983). Catholic schools possess cultures, which embody their values and beliefs which they manifest in symbolic ways such as in the Mass, the Way of the Cross, rosary prayers and in other rituals. Like culture in general, the Catholic culture is conceived of as a world view that is, organized patterns of thought that Catholic institutions uphold as adequate knowledge and legitimates behavior. It plays the role of meaning making, guiding, and shaping behavior.

Catholic schools see their culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions they have learned over the years as they solved their problems of external adaptation and integration. Having worked well enough to be considered valid, Catholic school administrators think these values must be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those same or similar problems. This perception explains why Catholic schools ensure new members are socialized to think, feel and behave "in the right way" within the school premises and at times beyond. Thus, for a government to ask Catholic schools to change their tested and validly found assumptions for the sake of religious freedom to accommodate non-Catholic students sounds

ridiculous to the Catholic school administrator who is charged with the responsibility of promoting the Catholic culture of the school.

The resistance of Catholic school administrators to adjust the Catholic cultures of their schools, mirrors Smircich's (1983) argument of the difficulty for people who identify with their own culture, to live in that cultural context and at the same time question its value. Culture understood from the perspective of cultural theory as something that constitutes adequate knowledge and legitimizes behavior functions as an instrument for measuring right and wrong conduct. Legitimate behavior in a Catholic school means all students must abide by the school's Catholic culture. Therefore, any participants who blatantly refused to comply with the Catholic norms either by dodging the ceremonies or praying in secret were perceived as disobedient students.

To restore sanity and in defense of the school's Catholic culture, some Catholic teachers and administrators strongly resisted participants' noncompliant and nonconforming behavior. This strong resistance might explain the physical abuse some participants reported of some Catholic teachers. The intentional or unintentional silence of administrators to the occasional physical abuses meted against participants suggested administrators showed little concern for the wellbeing of participants.

Moreover, administrators' verbal abuses and deafness to participants' complaints, aggravated their predicament. The verbal abuses and the derogatory remarks of these religious leaders against the beliefs and practices of non-Catholic students contributed to the negative perceptions some people, including students, perceived about other religions. This might explain the feelings of stigmatization as expressed by some of the participants. If the administrator is

supposed to play the role of a loving parent yet participants did not see their administrators fulfill this role, then whom else within campus could they turn to for healing, care and love?

Culture, perceived as a glue that holds an organization, such as a Catholic school together, sheds more light on this finding. Administrators perhaps, perceived the emotional resistance of participants to the new culture as an attempt to weaken the adhesive component of the glue that held the school together rather than a normal way of reacting to a new culture. Such an interpretation could result in administrators' strong counter reaction to enforce compliance rather than support to ensure a smooth transition. Similarly, if the administrators perceived the participants' reactionary behavior as an attempt to destabilize the social system of the organization, rather than a cry for assistance, then that explained the administrators' strong resistance characterized by verbal abuses and deafness to participants' complaints. Perhaps, if before participants' enrollment, they knew of the schools' expectations on non-Catholic students, the transition might have been different. Next, I discuss participants' knowledge of the schools' Catholic culture prior to their enrollment.

Insufficient Knowledge of the Expectations of Catholic Schools

The 21 participants reported they possessed no clear knowledge regarding the robust religious program of the schools prior to their enrollment. They said they had read and appended their signatures on the school's bond or undertaking forms in acceptance to participate in all school gatherings. Participants did not anticipate the rigorous religious program they experienced upon stepping foot on campus. Zaahid expressed their doubts as follows:

I did not know the school was even a Catholic school. I only knew it was a single sex school. So, with regard to the religious program, I only had an idea from what I read on my admission letter and I did not think it would be so difficult until I got to the school.

Fourteen expressed knowledge about getting enrolled in Catholic schools but they had no precise understanding on what Catholic schools would require of them as non-Catholic students.

Abdullah expressed their lack of knowledge of Catholic education as follows:

Honestly, I had no knowledge about how Catholic institutions work. I didn't take into consideration the school's religious background. I knew it was a Catholic school, but I did not know there was more to it apart from just knowing it was a Catholic school.

Similarly, seven of the participants knew nothing about these schools prior to their enrollment and had indeed not chosen these schools at the JHS level. Ahmed recounted their experience of getting to know the school only upon admission:

I didn't know it was a Catholic school. [Then how did you choose it, I queried] No! I didn't choose it! When I checked [on the internet] for my placement, I noticed they had changed the schools we chose and ZSHS was given to me and I didn't even know where it was located so I had to trace it. Only then, I got to know it was a Catholic school.

Because participants did not know ahead of time about the rigorous religious program expected of them, they were not prepared psychologically to embrace the challenges they were finally confronted with. Participants were taken aback with the demands the school made of them without proper prior warning. I used Cultural theory to help explain how participants' imprecise knowledge of the Catholic school's expectation on non-Catholic students, negatively affected their residence on campus.

If culture is perceived as validly tested assumptions that must be taught to new members of a community, then potential members of the community, to begin with, must first accept to be taught in these values as a precondition for their admission into the community. This information

must be given in a clear and concise language and in good time prior to admission. The schools perhaps had taken it for granted that non-Catholic students already knew about what would be expected of them and did not make certain cultural demands explicitly clear to participants prior to their enrollment. Admittedly, one of the schools stated clearly that “all students irrespective of their religion” (Undertaking form) would be required to attend Masses and how often. The other school did indicate students would be required to attend all “spiritual exercises” (Bond form) while resident in the school. However, does the expression “spiritual exercises” make it clear enough for potential students to know its content? How often would these spiritual exercises be conducted in a day, and in a week? This lack of clarity might explain participants’ emotional struggles adjusting to the Catholic culture of the school.

In addition, none of the schools indicated clearly, perhaps, not even vaguely, that non-Catholic students would not be permitted to practice their respective faiths while on campus. If the school administration did not explicitly provide this information, from where did they expect students to access it? Both schools summarily indicated they required all students, including participants, to obey “all the school rules and regulations.” How many students could ever conceive of the prohibition not to practice their faith on campus as one of the school rules and regulations? Is it surprising then, that participants were taken aback when upon their arrival on campus they were asked to say Catholic prayers every day and deprived of practicing their own faith? Culture depicts a specialized language and this tenet of cultural theory helps in my understanding of participants’ challenges in making meaning of the Catholic rituals.

Culture embodies the values, and beliefs a group of people or an organization shares, which are manifested in symbolic ways such as myths, rituals, stories, legends and specialized language (Smircich, 1983). The Catholic rituals, for instance, the Mass and the Way of the Cross serve as

symbolic representations of the values and the beliefs of the school as a Catholic institution. As symbolic language, it requires decoding to make it comprehensible for outsiders who may not be knowledgeable in the Catechism of the Catholic Church—the tool for interpreting the Catholic liturgy. Participants were of different religions and that explained the difficulties they faced in understanding and appreciating the Catholic worship. To understand the Mass, for example, participants made conscious efforts in learning it as part of an adaptive strategy. Participants' transition to the Catholic culture would have most likely been easy if they had a good administrative support properly coordinated by the school administrator. The failure of participants to make meaning out of these rituals leads to another tenet of Cultural theory, which sheds more light on participants' conduct.

Smircich (1983) contended that culture plays the role of meaning making to guide and shape behavior. For any organized patterns of thought to qualify as adequate knowledge valid enough to legitimize behavior in others, it must first make sense to the recipients. If the recipients do not validate this knowledge purported to model their behavior, then it is equivalent to pouring water on a rock in an attempt to soften it.

Linking this analogy to the Catholic school's efforts to enculturate the participants helps to explain their resistance. In the first place, the Catholic culture did not make sense to the participants. They could not interpret the symbolic language of the liturgy through which the school's values were communicated. Moreover, their efforts, at least in the initial stages, to make meaning of the Catholic worship proved futile due to the refusal of the school administrators to pay attention to their grievances. Yet, the same administrators expected them to validate the Catholic culture and conform to its norms. What a contradiction! Participants' resistance and

school authorities' counter resistance not only made life somewhat difficult for the participants, but it also threatened the stability of the social system of the school.

Culture facilitates the stability of the social system of an organization (Smircich, 1983). Within the dominant Catholic culture existed a hidden minority culture created by those who prayed in secret. While the dominant culture tried to assimilate the minority culture, the latter resisted. This resistance, though a silent one, was nonetheless a resistance. This explained the sudden outburst of anger of some administrators describing non-Catholic students as "stubborn" as participants reported. School administrators' fear of non-Catholic students destabilizing the social system of the institution by their blatant refusal to abide by the norms and values of the school evoked a counter resistance to enforce compliance. This silent push and pull negatively affected participants' adaptation to the Catholic culture. What are the implications of my findings for Catholic school administrators and other policy makers regarding the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools in Ghana and perhaps elsewhere? I provide the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I provide a brief summary of my study. Next, I highlight the implications of my findings on non-Catholic students; Catholic schools; the Catholic Church; and the State. I then present my recommendations including those participants offered for Catholic school administrators and other policy makers to consider in improving upon the plight of non-Catholic students enrolled in Catholic high schools. A summary of my study follows.

I conducted a qualitative study using a phenomenological approach in investigating the cultural and the religious experiences of non-Catholic students attending Catholic high schools in Ghana. To guide my study, I asked two fundamental research questions. How do non-Catholic students attending a Catholic school experience and make meaning of the role and expectations of all students attending a Catholic high school? And how do non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience the Catholic culture in which they live and study?

First, I reviewed the academic literature on the subject of inclusion. Though the literature offered great insights on the topic, I found some gaps which necessitated my research study. Through analysis of documents; observations of two high schools; and interviews of 21 graduates, a number of themes emerged, which I presented in chapter four. I also used Identity Theory (Stets & Burke, 2003, 2014; Striker & Burke, 2000; Striker, 1980) and Cultural Theory (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Smircich, 1983) to interpret my findings. The interpretation further deepened my understanding of the phenomenon of inclusion bringing to the limelight the study's implications, which I highlight in the following four themes: insufficient knowledge of the school mission, culture and school rules; culture shock and emotional distress at entry and continuing; suppression of an authentic identity and practicing religion in secret; and tension between a government-

assisted Catholic high school and the state. Next, I describe the implications beginning with insufficient knowledge of the school Mission, culture and school rules.

Implications

Theme One: Insufficient Knowledge of the School Mission, Culture and School Rules

The participants who chose to enroll in Catholic schools without sufficient knowledge of the mission, culture, rules and regulations of these schools to begin with, perhaps made wrong choices. In other words, if the participants had sufficient knowledge of the schools' restriction of non-Catholic students from professing their faith while on campus, they might not have chosen Catholic schools in the first place. Secondly, if the school bond and undertaking forms clearly stated that non-Catholic students would not be permitted to worship in their own way, participants might not have accepted the admission by appending their signatures on these forms. Moreover, with no precise knowledge of what to expect, many of them did not adequately prepare themselves psychologically to embrace the Catholic culture. Thus, it makes sense to accept participants' report that because they did not possess the right frame of mind regarding the expectations of Catholic schools on non-Catholic students, they experienced emotional difficulties adapting to schools' Catholic culture. Failure on the part of the schools to provide fully, this information ahead of time and in clear and concise language resulted in participants' struggle to adjust to the way of life in the schools.

When potential students are provided with the relevant information regarding the mission, culture, rules and regulations of Catholic schools, they might still choose to enroll in these institutions. This likely choice is because as human beings, each of us at any point in time may require giving up or at least setting aside something precious of ourselves in order to accomplish other goals. For instance, though a Catholic priest ordained for the Universal Church, meaning I

am licensed to celebrate Masses anywhere in the Catholic world provided I am in good standing with the Church, I had to abide by the immigration laws which prohibited me from celebrating Masses outside the University of St. Thomas. I could only celebrate private Masses or preside or concelebrate in those Masses organized within the campus as long as I wanted to stay and study in the United States of America. From this experience, it is relevant to make explicitly clear and accessible to potential students, the information regarding the rules and regulations of Catholic schools to enable them make an informed decision prior to entry. What are the likely implications of withholding vital information from potential students?

By implication, students enrolled in Catholic schools will continue to face unexpected challenges, which are more difficult to handle than those they may freely choose to accept. Students may continue to experience hardships if Catholic schools withhold from potential students, the vital information they need to know to aid their decision whether or not to enroll in these institutions. Without sufficient information, potential students may continue to make wrong as well as regrettable choices by enrolling in Catholic schools against their wish. And once they get enrolled in these institutions, then the emotional struggles become inevitable which I turn to next.

Theme Two: Culture Shock and Emotional Distress at Entry and Continuing

Students would likely experience culture shock when suddenly, they are confronted with an aspect of a culture not only foreign to them, but also least anticipated. Likewise, students would experience emotional disturbances when asked to engage in a religious ceremony contrary to their faith. The entire Catholic culture or parts of it appeared different from participants' cultural and religious backgrounds. What are the likely implications of students engaging in a religious worship against their will? Pope Paul VI (1965) in his promulgation on religious freedom, offered us the

clue to answer this question. He explained in *Dignitatis Humanae* as follows: “The exercise of religion, of its very nature, consists before all else in those internal, voluntary and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God” (Paul VI, 1965, para. 3). In answer to the likely implications, a Catholic school that repeatedly engages students in a religious activity they have not freely chosen to participate in, may not only trouble their individual consciences, but it may make them become emotionally distressed. In fact, it is a disorienting experience to redirect a person’s internal, voluntary and free acts by which he/she sets the course of his/her life directly toward God, in ways contrary to his/her will. Thus, Pope Paul VI (1965) clearly described any religious restriction as causing harm to man’s dignity and God’s own design. He stated: “Injury therefore is done to the human person and to the very order established by God for human life, if the free exercise of religion is denied in society, provided just public order is observed” (para. 3).

The disorienting and distressful situations participants experienced might not have resulted only in the emotional struggles they reported. Perhaps, they had gone through other traumatic experiences for the same reasons but could not simply report on all their experiences. The need for participants to make decisions on a daily basis whether to reject their religious convictions in order to remain loyal to the school and pay allegiance to it or break the promise they had hitherto made in writing to obey all the school rules constituted enough stress for participants.

As I indicated in the previous chapters, religious activities permeated the entire school environment. The school program right from rising till bedtime each day was interlaced with religious rituals requiring all students to participate in them irrespective of their religious affiliations and convictions. This meant in each day, participants had to make hard decisions whether to dodge or rather to attend these ceremonies without actively engaging in them. The reason behind these difficult decisions on a daily basis is, patronizing the Catholic worship

program was an abnormal thing for the non-Catholic students. Therefore, engaging in these activities was hard rather than natural and easy for them to follow.

If no alternative solutions are provided by policy makers (including the school administrators), it might mean students will continue to experience emotional and psychological struggle. They may experience emotional pain in adjusting to the school environment and at the same time trying to cope with the demands of the academic life including the school's extra-curricular activities, which in no small way are also demanding. Students may suffer silently, giving school authorities the false impression that everything is well and under control. In the meantime, when they become over suppressed to a point they can no longer contain it, they may explode in anger causing damage to property and threat to human life as exemplified in some schools though for different reasons. Next I examine the likely implications of the suppression of their identity as non-Catholic students.

Theme Three: Suppression of an Authentic Identity and Practicing Religion in Secret

The tension between non-Catholic high school students and the Catholic school administrators is as a result of their differences in identities and their commitment to protecting those identities. Whilst participants remained resilient in maintaining their respective religious identities as Muslim; Baptist; Jehovah Witness; Methodist; Assemblies of God; and Deeper Christian Life Ministry, BSHS and ZSHS strengthened their commitment to safeguard their identity as Catholic schools irrespective of the numbers of non-Catholic students present on their campuses. If non-Catholic students and the Catholic Schools must continue to defend their respective identities and commit themselves to playing their respective roles, then by implication, a lasting resolution of this tension might never be found.

A failure to resolve the conflict might also mean non-Catholic students present in Catholic high schools would continue to experience emotional struggle. To alleviate the psychological pain might also lead to non-Catholic students persistently breaking the school rules as the only option to maintain their identities as Muslims or Pentecostals. In the meantime, school authorities would be vigilant to apprehend and perhaps penalize offenders of the school rules and regulations.

If the punitive measures do not become effective enough to bring about the desired behavioral change in students, they could become contumacious. Thus, students repeatedly breaking school rules and getting punished repeatedly by school authorities could metamorphose into a vicious cycle requiring more effort to break the cycle. On the other hand, if students succeed in outwitting school authorities, then by implication, they would be learning and becoming more sophisticated in using illegitimate means rather than dialogue to accomplish their desires. Yet students ought to learn to use dialogue right from the onset not only as a means for solving problems in school, but also as a tool required for any democratic society.

To create a democratic society, students ought to be guided to find their individual voices and to use those voices with others to make decisions and solve problems. As an educational institution, and especially a Catholic school, needless to say vices should not be encouraged. Ironically, if school administrators refuse to dialogue with students, are they not by that refusal indirectly teaching students to use unacceptable means to achieve their objectives? To counteract this implicit teaching and learning of bad behavior, administrators need to go beyond merely discouraging wrongdoing to detecting and nipping in the bud any wayward behavior. But more importantly, administrators need to be conscious of the implications of school policies and their own behavior which could indirectly promote student misconduct and reinforce indiscipline. What

are the likely implications of administrators' hurtful remarks against non-Catholic students and their religious convictions?

Generally, a derogatory remark against a person's religion is indeed painful but more excruciating when made by religious leaders who command some knowledge of other religions. Hence, uncensored or direct insults to other religions by Catholic school administrators could send a wrong signal to non-Catholic students. Non-Catholic students may misconstrue Catholic schools and perhaps the entire Catholic Church as an institution insensitive to religious differences. This perception may lead to a counter reaction from non-Catholic students leading to an intolerable behavior towards the Catholic faith and perhaps its extension to other religions. Yet many Church documents such as *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Redemptor Hominis* clearly indicate the Catholic Church is a defender of religious pluralism and liberty. The Catholic Church had reflected on *Dignitatis Humanae* on communicating religious truth and placed emphasis on dialogue as opposed to any other means.

Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue, in the course of which men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest for truth. (Paul VI, 1965, para. 3)

If dialogue is missing in Catholic schools regarding the sharing of the Catholic faith with non-Catholic students, then not only might some Catholic schools be acting contrarily to the Church's teaching, but they might also be creating room for non-Catholic students to accuse the Catholic Church of religious intolerance.

The same document acknowledges the right and freedom of religious institutions to teach and to witness to their faith. However, it admonished these institutions to exercise caution in spreading their faith.

Religious communities also have the right not to be hindered in their public teaching and witness to their faith, whether by the spoken or by the written word. However, in spreading religious faith and in introducing religious practices everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which might seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable or unworthy, especially when dealing with poor or uneducated people. Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's right and a violation of the right of others. (Paul VI, 1965, para. 4)

The document declared: "It is one of the major tenets of Catholic doctrine that man's response to God in faith must be free: no one therefore is to be forced to embrace the Christian faith against his own will" (para. 10). Likewise, Pope John Paul II (1979) did not only encourage dialogue in seeking Christian unity but also indicated that, dialogue does not mean the Church is relinquishing its primary role of evangelization. He expressed:

True ecumenical activity means openness, drawing closer, availability for dialogue, and a shared investigation of the truth in the full evangelical and Christian sense; but in no way does it or can it mean giving up or in any way diminishing the treasures of divine truth that the Church has constantly confessed and taught. (John Paul II, 1979, para. 6)

These two documents and others, indicate the Catholic Church respects religious freedom. The use of dialogue is core in the Church's mission. The use of dialogue, therefore, does not in any way relinquish or even diminish the Church's role of evangelization and thus evangelizers should not think otherwise of its usage.

Theme Four: Tension Between a Government-Assisted Catholic High School and the State

The different perceptions of values between the State and some of the government assisted Catholic high schools in Ghana constituted the root cause of the problem I investigated. The silent debate between the Ghana government and the Catholic school administrators is centered on the highest value for non-Catholic students enrolled in Catholic high schools with particular reference to their faith expression. This conflict of values is primarily based on their respective identities as a State and as representatives of the Catholic Church and their commitment to maintaining those identities. While the government is committed to promoting its identity as a primary protector of its citizens, the Catholic school is committed to safeguarding its identity and defending its primary mission of evangelization entrusted to it by the Church. What are the likely implications if both parties decide to stick to their guns?

If the government and the assisted Catholic schools take entrenched positions regarding the protection and defense of their respective identities and roles, then there is the likelihood no apparent resolution of the conflict would be found. By implication, non-Catholic students would continue to experience emotional and psychological pain.

Additionally, if two moral giants as the Church and the State cannot amicably resolve a conflict of values through dialogue, then one wonders what moral training these two giants might be instilling in the youth especially in an educational institution. The questions one might ask are, does the Catholic school only preach dialogue and practice something else? And how about the government; does the government only speak of democracy but cannot engage a Catholic school in dialogue as a practical demonstration of its expectations on citizens? In fact, the conflict, if not addressed, might even degenerate into a bitter one in the event that a student takes a Catholic school administrator to court for religiously “abusing” them. And this is not new. I stated in

previous chapters of the phenomenon of inclusion posing a problem for the Church and the State in many countries as part of my concerns for investigating this issue in Ghana. I developed a graphic to represent a summary of my findings (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

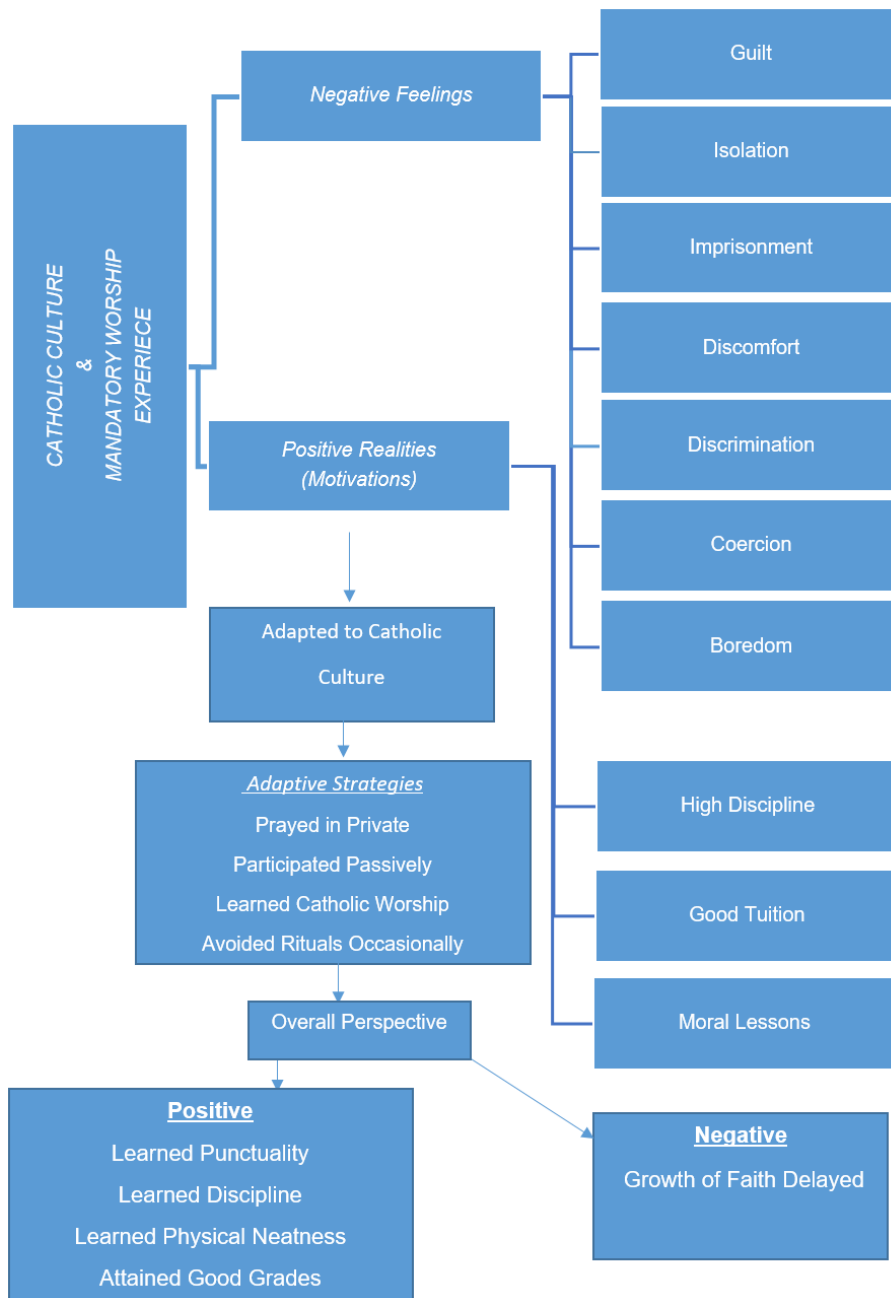
Summary of Findings

Figure 3 portrays the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program as core factors that evoked the negative (guilt feeling, isolation, imprisonment, discomfort, discrimination, coercion and boredom) and positive (high discipline, good tuition, and moral lessons) experiences

as described by participants. The positive experiences inspired participants to adapt (praying in secret, passive participation in the rituals, avoiding these rituals at times, and learning to understand the Catholic worship) to the Catholic culture of the school. These adaptive strategies enabled participants to strive till they graduated. The overall outcome of participants' experiences were both positive and negatives. On the positive side, they learned punctuality, discipline, physical neatness and they as well attained good grades. On the negative side, the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program delayed growth in their respective faiths. I discuss next, the strengths and possible remedies to the problems as described by the participants.

To promote dialogue, improve upon teaching and learning, and to alleviate the plight of non-Catholic students enrolled in Catholic high schools, I provide my recommendations including those of the participants. These general recommendations from the 21 participants were sent through WhatsApp to a core group of seven of them individually. I identified these seven individuals as those among my major informants. They reviewed and shaped the general recommendations into five key recommendations preceded by a few observations.

Recommendations

All the participants observed Catholic schools have a good academic reputation and they highly commended Catholic education. They believe Catholic schools have over the years contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of Ghana and beyond. Catholic schools accomplish this task by the academic and the moral training they give to students who later work in various offices and in different capacities in the country and in other parts of the world. They commended the teachers for the great sacrifices they make as well as their commitment and dedication to ensure students' overall success in life. They equally commended all those who work behind the scenes to ensure that discipline is maintained.

All the participants except one of them said they were willing to return to their alma mater to contribute their quota to further enhance Catholic education. Based on these observations, they indicated it would be unwise to *throw the baby out with the bath water* by condemning Catholic school education due to the challenges they faced. They believe, including myself, with suitable alterations in the Catholic culture and the mandatory worship program, Catholic schools would better serve the needs of their students especially the non-Catholic students and advance the human resource base in Ghana and abroad. What are those suitable alterations? To enable potential students, make an informed decision whether or not to choose to enroll in Catholic schools, participants recommended a clear distinction be made between public and Catholic schools on the list of schools for selection.

Proper Categorization of Catholic Schools Required

Catholic schools have always been placed on the same category with the public schools for selection at the basic school level. Participants indicated this placement creates confusion. To dissolve this confusion and to give candidates a better idea of Catholic schools, they should be placed on a separate category with their rules and regulations spelled out. This would enable students at the basic level to know ahead of time the expectations of Catholic schools and thus to make an informed decision whether or not to choose to enroll in these institutions. Students often get to know of each Catholic school's requirements only upon the reception of the admission letter. This time is virtually too late for students who are already posted by the CSSPS to decide whether or not to accept the admission based on the content of the bond and undertaking forms attached to the admission letters. Students at this point find it extremely difficult to decide differently.

The danger of not getting another school in which to enroll after turning down the first one is high. Moreover, it is even more difficult to decide when important requirements on students are

either vaguely stated or not stated at all on the admission letters. So, in addition to this recommendation, I suggest the current bond and undertaking forms should be rewritten in clear and concise language and included in them a detailed list expectation placed on students. Also, non-Catholic students need ample time to study and digest the expectations of Catholic schools prior to their enrollment. So, for the students at the basic level to know in advance the demands of Catholic schools, each school should create a website to inform potential students and parents. The detailed rules and regulations could be posted on this site and made easily accessible to the general public. With this publicity, potential students including their parents/guardians could get to know and perhaps, make follow ups to the schools for further inquiries for a better understanding of the demands of Catholic schools. Regarding interpersonal relationship, participants identified a strong need for a good relationship between students and administrators as a categorical imperative.

Improved Administrator-Student Relationship Required

No matter the quality of school policies regarding inclusion and entry requirements, the administrator who runs the school on a daily basis is a key instrument in creating a conducive atmosphere for all students including teachers to engage in effective teaching and learning. In line with this observation, participants expressed strong feelings for a better relationship between students and teachers but most especially between students and school administrators who double as religious leaders exercising God's authority. Participants would like to see their administrators become more approachable, friendly and ready to listen to the concerns and grievances of all students but most especially those of the non-Catholic students. They should renounce all forms of derogatory and hurtful remarks especially those directed towards the religious beliefs and practices of non-Catholic students. They should act as instruments of unity, peace and love; become more open-minded to students' diverse cultures and religious backgrounds, participants reiterated.

To buttress this recommendation, I wish to include that a priest or a nun who heads a Catholic school is also a religious leader not only for those who fellowship with the Catholic Church, but also for the Muslim and the Pentecostal students in the school. This leadership responsibility is by virtue of their role as administrators of schools with multi-religious populations. In this regard, Catholic school administrators should see themselves as interfaith leaders who must exercise interfaith leadership in the Catholic school in which they serve. Patel (2016) defined interfaith leaders as “people who cause other people to change their attitudes and actions with respect to religious diversity” (p. 13). This is the kind of leadership administrators must nurture in students to better prepare them for our modern world which is yearning for religious tolerance and respect for religious diversity. A priest, or a Religious brother or sister who openly manifests an inability to respect other religions may not be assigned such a serious responsibility of training young men and women especially in a Catholic school. Such a religious leader is a potential threat to religious unity and peace and should not be given the chance to sow a seed of religious discord among students.

The participants also suggested administrators should by themselves or through their delegates, teach the Catholic liturgy to all the students but most especially to the non-Catholic students. This could be done during orientations for first year students and they should include all other programs that affect students’ life on campus so as to better prepare them psychologically for a smooth transition into the Catholic culture. Reflecting on the mandatory worship services, participants offered various recommendations.

All Participate in Catholic Worship but Exceptions for Muslim Students

Participants said permitting all the religious denominations on campus to worship the way they do in their respective religions or to allow students to choose whether or not to participate in

the Catholic worship program would neither benefit the school nor the students themselves. They were of the view that, not only would this disrupt the school program, but it would also diminish discipline—the pillar of Catholic education. They suspect a blow to this pillar might adversely affect the academic performance of the schools which is deeply rooted in discipline. In that regard, they recommended the Catholic schools should create Scripture Unions (SU) to cater for all the other Christian denominations. SU, they indicated, accommodates all the different Christian denominations. Besides, it offers its members an opportunity to pray the way they do in their respective denominations.

Regarding the Muslim students, they should be permitted to pray which implies each school should adjust its daily program to enable them to practice their faith freely. That notwithstanding, for the sake of discipline and to ensure order, all students should participate in the Catholic worship program. All students participating in the Catholic worship program would indeed promote discipline and at the same time benefit the non-Catholic students who stand to gain from the moral lessons contained in these ceremonies, they reiterated. Participants did not undermine the discipline and the physical training the schools give to students. However, they expressed reservations about some punishments and manual work.

Discard Hard Punishments

Participants said hard punishments meant to instill discipline in students should be discarded. Rather, each school's Guidance and Counselling Team (GCT) should step up its efforts to change the consciences of deviant students. Regarding manual work, which is aimed at instilling the spirit of hard work in students, participants argued it should be maintained but the school laborers should shoulder a bigger portion of it so as to reduce the physical burden it places on students. When students become too tired either through engagement in manual work, or hard

punishments it could adversely affect their academic performance, the participants explained. Reflecting on the importance of the flow of communication between students and school authorities, participants recommended a suggestion box.

Provision of a Suggestion Box Required

According to the participants, a suggestion box should be placed at a vantage point within the school premises to enable students to drop in their concerns and grievances. A committee should then be delegated to periodically review the views students have expressed for consideration and possible redress. Additionally, symposiums should be organized periodically between the students and the school authorities in an atmosphere of peace and openness for fruitful deliberations. To this recommendation, I provide an extension to it. Catholic school authorities could occasionally conduct a survey with a particular year group of past students to learn their candid perspective about how they experienced the school while they were students. This strategy would serve as a way to evaluate how the school functions as an organization with regard to inclusion. Religious conflicts in the past and in the present call for a sober reflection on religious diversity especially in our education centers.

Dialogue and Uniformity of School Policies Required

Religious intolerance and religious extremism have caused serious conflicts in the past and in recent times resulting in the loss of human life and property. The aftermath of these conflicts calls for a heightened sensitivity to religious differences especially in schools where education focuses on nurturing values in the youth. The danger of unconsciously nurturing undesired habits in students, demands constantly evaluating school policies. Catholic school administrators, including administrators of all faith-based schools ought to tread cautiously when formulating policies on religious issues. The involvement of many stakeholders in the formulation of religious

policies is relevant. Not only because *two heads are better than one*, but also because two heads have a greater potential to reduce arbitrary decisions by some school administrators. In the light of this assessment, I recommend an open dialogue between the Church officials and those of the government including parents and teachers geared towards ensuring religious freedom for non-Catholic students. This freedom for non-Catholic students should not in any way undermine the Catholic identity of Catholic schools and the discipline they cherish. Official mandates from the Catholic hierarchy and uniformity in policies across Catholic schools within the country is of paramount importance in halting arbitrary decisions of some school administrators and undue agitations by non-Catholic students for justice.

When major decisions are arrived at following a dialogue among stakeholders, I would recommend uniform policies for either all the government-assisted Catholic high schools in the Country or within each ecclesiastical province or diocese. If there is the need for a nationwide policy, then I recommend the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference (GCBC) should formulate and communicate them or by the head of each ecclesiastical province if they are provincial, or by the Bishop if they are local. The recommendation for major policies to come from above does not in any way undermine the unique cases and situations of each Catholic school in the country.

But it is important to note that major decisions should not be left onto the discretion of Catholic school administrators. Administrators should not decide the question on whether non-Catholic students should be permitted to worship on campus or not. Unilateral decisions could be poorly thought through creating severe injustices and unfairness. Additionally, the lack of uniformity in policies especially within schools located in the same geographical area magnifies students' agitations for justice. Non- Catholic students, for instance, in Catholic school A, would

find it very difficult to understand why they are restricted from practicing their faith while in Catholic school B, located a few blocks away, have no problems professing their faith.

Self-Examination in a Spirit of Humility Needed

Smircich, (1983) stated that because people identify with their own culture, they find it difficult to live in that cultural context and at the same time question its value. Likewise, an institution or an individual who identifies as an agent of moral authority would find it a challenge to question his/her own moral actions and behavior. The Catholic school, identified as an agent of moral authority for both students and staff, and whose accomplishments have been outstanding over the years, may find it difficult to question its own policies regarding inclusion. The difficulty might even be more pronounced for not just any administrators but Catholic school administrators who represent a moral giant—the Catholic Church—to question their individual conduct with students. Yet, it is in a spirit of humility and a sincere desire to practice the Church’s own teaching on self-examination of conscience would the common good be attained. Catholic school officials, therefore, may have to exercise the spirit of Naaman. Though a renowned army commander, he paid attention to the gentle voices of his servants, which earned him a miraculous cure. Likewise, government officials might require the guidance of the principle of subsidiarity—decisions affecting others should at least be given a hearing by those affected by it.

Limitations of the Study

My study focused on learning the cultural and religious experiences of non-Catholic students who had attended a Catholic high school. I set out to investigate how non-Catholic students experienced and made meaning of the role and expectations of all students attending a Catholic high school. I also wanted to find out how they experienced the Catholic culture in which

they lived and studied. Recruiting and selecting only non-Catholic students for my investigation turned out to be a limitation of my study despite the great insights my study yielded.

During my investigation, some of the participants reported complaining about the mandatory worship program to their parents. Their complaint was about their involvement in the Catholic worship program against their will. Others also indicated their parents raised concerns at PTA meetings regarding the restriction of their sons and daughters from practicing their faith on campus. Perhaps, it would have been an added advantage to my study if my investigation included interviews of parents/guardians of participants to learn their perspective.

How did parents/guardians experience and handle these complaints from their sons and daughters? And how did they observe and make meaning of the switching of their sons and daughters from Catholicism to the Islamic faith or to Pentecostalism when at home? If I had included parents/guardians in my study to learn the viewpoint of the above questions, the findings would have augmented my study and given it a broader understanding hence the limitation of my study. That notwithstanding, the student participants I interviewed gave me the maximum cooperation I needed to accomplish my study and to gain a better insight on the phenomenon of inclusion.

Gratitude and Final Thoughts

I wish to acknowledge at this point, my sincere and profound gratitude to all the 21 participants who contributed to my study. The sacrifices of their time and energy in providing me with the information I needed to answer my research questions and to accomplish my study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), is very much appreciated. I wish to also acknowledge an aspect of the interviews that inspired me and contributed significantly to the study.

As I mentioned earlier in the methodology section, prior to my study, I envisaged the power imbalance between participants and me. I suspected as a leader in the Catholic Church planning to interview non-Catholic students who are far younger than I am in age, they might exercise extreme reticence in sharing especially the negative side of their stories with me. To counteract this obstacle, I recruited two research assistants (a Muslim and a Christian, but non-Catholic) to help me. Although I had confidence in these research assistants, I still entertained some doubts regarding how open participants would be in recounting their experiences.

Contrary to my suspicion, participants exhibited high interest in my topic and were more than open to share with me the negative and the positive sides of their experiences. It was therefore not surprising when some of the interview sessions lasted over an hour. Participants told their stories with great enthusiasm.

I introduced each interview session by inviting the participant to share with me on their experiences as a Baptist, or a Methodist or a Muslim attending BSHS or ZSHS depending on the participant's former school. Anytime I made this introduction before each participant, I noticed immediately it was a topic, participants had been yearning to discuss. I also noticed participants narrated their experiences with such great memory as if they experienced the phenomenon of inclusion the night before the interview but not a few years ago. Besides, I could see some were still angry at some of the things they experienced. This I observed in their gestures and facial expressions. The choice of words also indicated participants' openness to give credit where it belonged and to gnash their teeth where they experienced gross dissatisfaction.

Participants did not hesitate to express their joy and happiness and to give credit where it was due. Neither did they mince their words whenever they were sharing the negative side of their stories. This contradicted my suspicion they might become uncommunicative of the negative side

of their stories in an attempt to please me. For instance, in their narrations, participants used these words and phrases: “friendly,” “awesome,” “so lovely,” “hard working,” to express the relationships and the perceptions they had about the Catholic teachers and students. Likewise, they did not also hesitate to employ the following words: “fearsome”, “barbaric”, “unfriendly”, “senseless”, “too strict” to describe their perceptions of some of the administrators and certain happenings on campus which they abhorred.

At the end of each session, I thanked participants for their time and energy. Many also thanked me for giving them “the opportunity to share” their experience which further buttressed their long-awaited desire to voice their concerns with no one else but with an official of the Catholic Church whom they envisaged would relay their grievances to the appropriate headquarters. In summary, participants were balanced, open, and sincere in their reportage. This great encounter with participants left me with a lot of lessons to learn from but I share only two at this point.

One of the things participants reported so surprising to me was when they indicated professing their faith undercover to remain committed to their religious identities. I served in a Catholic high school and I know how authorities monitor the whereabouts and behavior of students during the day and at night. I am also aware of the severity of some of the disciplinary measures, including expulsion from school. Catholic schools employ these measures to curb student misconduct. I was so surprised the monitoring and the likely sanctions against wrongdoing did not deter students from practicing their faith, knowing they could be caught and perhaps penalized. This resilience coupled with my experience listening to participants share on this aspect of their experiences speaks a lot about religious influence. I gathered a human being is capable of doing anything in the name of religion.

The experience confirmed and reinforced my perspective about how people relate to their religious beliefs and practices. Some people attach so much emotion to their religious beliefs and convictions. Perhaps, that explains why people can perform wonderful things in the name of religion and in the name of the same religion commit very serious atrocities. The lesson I have learned through this experience is simple. Not to obey one's conscience especially in religious matters is comparable to suicide. As a religious leader, therefore, I have learned to tread cautiously when dealing with people and their religious beliefs and practices. But on the other hand, I am challenged as an educator on how to channel the religious energy in the youth to better serve the needs of humanity and for the common good.

I have also come to learn through this study about the need to treat people with integrity no matter their ages. Students will not remain kids forever. They will become responsible adults someday, capable of analyzing their past experiences. In hindsight, they will critically examine how their teachers and administrators related to them and will give credit where it is due but will not mince their words where they think they were mishandled.

The question I ask myself is, what will I like my students to remember me for? My answer to this question will serve as a guiding principle from now onwards in the way I relate to my students. I borrowed the words of Preskill and Brookfield's (2009) as a summary to my overall learning from this study and how it might guide my leadership praxis as an educator. They observed the following in their discourse on the leadership practices that support the growth of others: "Practices that are particularly helpful in this regard are listening, staying curious about others, asking constructive questions, learning the stories of co-workers, and championing follower goals" (p. 62).

Preskill and Brookfield (2009) noted: “Leaders who publicly model their own commitment to, and engagement in, these activities can have a powerful effect on their communities of practice” (p. 62). I became curious to know how non-Catholic students experienced Catholic education. I asked questions, and listened to and learned from participants’ stories. I hope to not only champion their goals, but also to allow these virtues to guide my profession as an educator and a religious leader now and always.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A**UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS****Institutional Review Board****Grants and Research Office****Application for Initial Review****Version 1.4****Please read carefully before completing the application:**

The University has assured federal regulatory agencies that the institution will review all research studies that meet the federal definition for human subjects research. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures the safety and wellbeing of research study participants and determines whether a research study is ethical. All studies that meet the federal definition for human subjects research must obtain IRB approval *prior to any contact with participants*. Contact with any human subjects may not begin until you receive notification of approval from the IRB.

Please read through directions carefully and provide specific, detailed answers in complete sentences. Once you have completed the application, review your work for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. Applications with significant errors will be sent back to the investigator. It is recommended that you type long responses in a separate Word document, spell check, and then copy and paste it to the application.

You are encouraged to contact the IRB office at (651) 962-6035 or Sarah Muenster-Blakley, director of the Institutional Review Board, at muen0526@stthomas.edu with questions at any time.

A. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION**1. Level of Review**

For more information on levels of review, please contact the IRB office.

Exempt Expedited Full

2. IRBNet Tracking #: [1197791-1]

3. Are you submitting an exempt or expedited application for review as a classroom protocol?

Instructors may submit one application for review that covers most human subjects research assigned to undergraduate or graduate students in the same course. There are exclusions; contact the IRB for more detail. Do not check if you are an investigator planning to conduct research in a classroom.

[] Yes [X] No

4. Estimated Project Completion Date

February 1, to April 30, 2019.

5. Project Title

Non-Catholic Students' Cultural and Religious Experiences Attending Catholic High Schools.

6. Principal Investigator Research Category

Graduate Student Research

If you selected *other*, please specify:

7. Principal Investigator

Name: Soabil, Yinwaat Solomon

Status Type: Graduate Student

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School: School of Education

Phone (please include area code): 612 707 6631.

Email Address: soab0001@stthomas.edu

8. Co-Investigator(s)

Include a separate sheet with additional co-investigators if necessary and include it in your IRBNet project package. All co-investigator and advisor contact information must be included in the Application for Initial Review.

Name:

Status Type: Click to Select

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School:

Phone (please include area code):

Email Address:

Name:

Status Type: Click to Select

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School:

Phone (please include area code):

Email Address:

9. Research Advisor(s) Undergraduate and Graduate Students Only

Include a separate sheet with additional research advisors if necessary and include it in your IRBNet project package. All co-investigator and advisor contact information must be included in the Application for Initial Review.

Name: Dr. Sarah Noonan

Status Type: Faculty

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School: School of Educational

Phone (please include area code): 651 962 4897

Email Address: sjnoonan@stthomas.edu

Name:

Status Type: Click to Select

If you selected *other*, please specify:

Department or School:

Phone (please include area code):

Email Address:

10. Research Project Funding

Private Funding

If you selected *other*, please specify:

B. RESEARCH SUMMARY AND METHODOLOGY

1. Abstract/Research Summary

Describe your research study in clear language so a person who is unfamiliar with your field of study will understand your proposal. Please avoid jargon and provide definitions for study-specific terms.

a. In one or two paragraphs (500 words or less), describe the purpose of your research. Indicate how it fits in with previous research in the same field and why it is important.

The purpose of my study is to investigate the meaning that non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school ascribe to their experiences attending a Catholic high school and participating in all activities of the school as expected of all students attending a Catholic high school, and the meaning they as well ascribe to the Catholic culture in which they live and study.

A review of the literature indicated that research has been done on the phenomenon of inclusion. However, no study has directly investigated non-Catholic students' experiences of the Catholic worship program, the Catholic culture in which they live and study and its impact on their lives. This study, therefore, is not only situated on previous research but it also builds on and fits into it.

This study is important because it will describe the phenomenon that may expose the effects of the worship requirement on non-Catholic students. The findings may, therefore, better inform school authorities' decisions regarding the worship policy and campus life in general. Their experiences

may as well, help Catholic school authorities fashion an alternative model of Catholic education to ensure the evangelization of the Catholic students and at the same time take into account the presence of the non-Catholic students who do not profess the Catholic faith. The findings may help Catholic school administrators appreciate how their perspective might be different from the perspective of non-Catholic high school students, and whose experiences may, as well, help these authorities serve them better.

b. Provide a one or two paragraph (500 words or less) literature review with in-text citations to show existing information in your field of study that supports your research project.

A review of the academic literature on the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools offers great insights on the phenomenon. A study conducted on the experiences of Catholic students and teachers and how Catholics students relate with non-Catholic students found out that inclusion has a positive impact on both Catholic teachers and students (Donlevy, 2003). Another study which investigated the way non-Catholic students impacted on Catholic teachers revealed a deepening of the Catholic teachers' faith and knowledge of the Catholic doctrine (Donlevy, 2007). Additionally, a study conducted by Clark (2005) which investigated the identity of two Catholic schools found out that their identity aligned with previously recognized definitions of Catholic school identity: (a) Policy and Mission, (b) Faith Development, (c) School Environment, and (d) Curriculum and Instruction. However, each school had its unique identity based on each school's unique response to the non-Catholic students whose backgrounds are rarely duplicated in any other school. Though insightful as the literature review portrayed, I found no study conducted directly with non-Catholic students, including their experiences of the Catholic worship and the culture in which they live and study. Yet, the growing numbers of non-Catholic students attending Catholic high schools require a better understanding of their experiences and the meaning they make of their experiences. My study is an attempt to add to the existing body of knowledge on this phenomenon of inclusion and thus the existing literature constitute a foundation to my research project.

c. Provide your research question(s).

I formulated the following primary research question to guide my study. "How do non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience and make meaning of the role and

expectations of all students attending a Catholic high school. How do non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience the Catholic culture in which they live and study?"

d. Provide your research hypotheses, if applicable.

e. Describe the method (s) you will use to address your research question(s).

My research question is geared toward discovering the meaning that non-Catholic students ascribe to their experiences attending a Catholic high school. I adapt a qualitative phenomenological methods' approach for my study. I describe briefly these two approaches beginning with the qualitative method.

A qualitative research method illuminates meaning and helps explain how human phenomena unfold and how things work (Patton, 2015). A qualitative design strategy entails a naturalistic inquiry which demands meeting and interacting with participants in their natural environment and freedom from manipulative or controlling tendencies so as to allow for the reality to unfold naturally (Patton, 2015). Qualitative methods allow for a detailed report of studies, such as my mine, to be established by engaging in direct conversation with participants by meeting them at their homes or work places and allowing them to narrate their stories unencumbered by what the researchers might anticipate or might have read in the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 45). Additionally, this method of study which requires researchers to engage participants in their natural setting is relevant because "we cannot always separate what people say from the place where they say it" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 46). Thus, to gain in-depth insights on the experiences of the graduate students requires using a qualitative method's approach. This approach will reveal how the schools which I have chosen as the sites to conduct my study, function as organizations because the ways systems function have an impact on people's lives (Patton, 2015). This knowledge will provide Catholic school administrators and policy makers the insights regarding their decisions on the worship policy of Catholic schools and their cultural practices. To elicit participants' experiences requires a phenomenological method which suits my study.

A "phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The objective of phenomenology "is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also supported this methodological approach - the "phenomenological

approach is well suited to studying affective, and often intense human experiences” (p. 28). Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2018) also point out how the “constructivist worldview manifest in phenomenological studies, in which individuals describe their experiences” (p. 25). Knowledge, from the constructivist's perspective, is a social construct and to access people's experiences, phenomenology is required as a tool to explore the meaning individuals make of their experiences. The phenomenological method requires that researchers ask participants to describe “how they perceive [the phenomenon,] describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2015, p. 115). This approach means that in-depth interviews and observations constitute part of the methods that I adapt for gathering the data relevant to answer my research question.

2. Is this study a continuation of a preliminary study?

Yes No

Revised 08/24/2016

If yes, are there any preliminary results that will be used in this study?

Yes No

If yes, please explain.

3. Will you analyze existing data, such as education records, medical records, specimens, or other data? *If you are applying for IRB approval to access existing data **only**, please complete the Application for Accessing Existing Data instead of the Application for Initial Review.*

Yes No

If yes, please explain the source and type of the data and how and where you will access it.

Who has custody of the data (who is the person who must provide permission for you to access the data)?

C. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

1. Target Participant Population and Participant Eligibility

a. Describe the population you plan to deliberately target for your research. *For example, University of St. Thomas undergraduate students taking psychology courses.*

My research study targets the non-Catholic students who have graduated from Bernardodalini Senior High School and Zumbadarana Senior High School and are 18 years of age or above.

b. State why you selected this population for your research study.

The selected population satisfies the conditions for my study. The study focuses on investigating the experiences of non-Catholic students who have attended Catholic high schools. The selected group constitutes a non-Catholic population drawn from Bernardodalini Senior High Schools and Zumbadarana Senior High School which are Catholic schools. Participants, therefore, have experienced the phenomenon of attending a Catholic high school. They have also participated in the Catholic worship programs of their respective schools and have as well, experienced the Catholic culture in which they lived and studied. Besides, I have selected this group because I think as students who have graduated from these schools and are no longer under the schools' authorities, they would be more open to share with me their experiences on the topic as compared to the current students who are still under the Schools' administration. They may feel insecure and thus may exercise extreme reticence. Furthermore, they may not have gained much experience of the schools' religious programs and Catholic culture. This limited knowledge might affect the quality of my study.

c. Describe eligibility requirements for participants. That is, what criteria must participants meet to be included in the study?

The anticipated outcome of my study partly determines who qualifies to participate in it. Since the study focuses on learning the meaning of participants' in depth experiences of attending a Catholic high school, each participant must have had a complete three/four year formation in a Catholic high school. This means each participant must have begun his/her high school education in Bernardodalini Senior High School, or in Zumbadarana Senior High School; the sites I have chosen for my study, from the first year through to the final year and must have graduated. This category excludes transferred students and those who did not complete either because they were withdrawn or perhaps, left by their own free will. Participants must also be at least 18 years of age because my study excludes children.

2. How many participants do you plan to recruit?

I plan to recruit 20 participants from both schools but since I adapt a qualitative approach for my study which is exploratory and emergent, I might adjust the sample size depending on when I attain data saturation.

3. Vulnerable Populations *(Requires full review)*

Please check the appropriate box (es) for any vulnerable populations that you plan to deliberately target for recruitment as participants in your research. The following populations are determined 'vulnerable' by federal regulation:

Children (minors—under the age of 18)

Pregnant women

Prisoners (any individual involuntarily confined or detained in a penal institution)

Adults lacking capacity to consent and/or adults with diminished capacity to consent including, but not limited to, those with acute medical conditions, psychiatric disorders, neurologic disorders, developmental disorders, and behavioral disorders

Economically disadvantaged persons (any individual determined as low-income by the Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines)

Educationally disadvantaged persons (any individual who requires special services or assistance to enable them to succeed in educational activities or an individual who has lacked access to normal education rights and services)

4. Other Populations

Please check the appropriate box (es) for any special (non-vulnerable) populations that you plan to deliberately target for recruitment as participants in your research.

Elderly/aged persons (individuals age 65 or older) Hospital or clinic patients (in- or out-patient)

Non-English speaking persons

Students (age 18 or older)

UST employees

Other (Please describe):

5. If recruiting children (persons under the age of 18) to participate in your study, please indicate the specific age range of the anticipated participants:

years old to years old

6. Demographic Population

a. If you are purposefully excluding women or minorities in your study, explain why. If you are not purposefully excluding women or minorities, provide a statement that indicates this.

I am not excluding women in my study. While one Senior High School is boys school, the other grants admission to only women so I plan to recruit and select women participants as well for my study.

b. Will gender, race, and ethnicity of your participants be proportionate to the general population in the United States?

Yes No

If not, state what demographic you anticipate your participant population to be representative of. *For example, if you are recruiting only UST students, indicate that the participant demographics will be representative of the population at UST.*

I am recruiting participants from two schools in Ghana. Additionally, my study is qualitative not quantitative which requires that the participants recruited must represent the total population of the target group. That notwithstanding, for the sake of multiple perspectives and with due consideration for the composition and numbers of my target group which indicate a higher population of the Pentecostals over that of the Muslim group, I plan to consider the different populations sizes in my recruitment.

7. Existing Relationships

Do you, the investigator, have any existing relationships with potential participants or organizations?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

The schools that I have chosen for my investigation are Catholic institutions and as a Catholic priest I am either directly or indirectly connected to these schools. Besides, I have ever served in a Catholic school in which I observed the non-Catholic students struggle with the Catholic worship program and that motivates me to learn more about their experiences but from a broader perspective. Since I am a Catholic priest representing the Catholic Church, and older than them, they might feel obliged to engage in the study for the respect due me. Moreover, the participants may feel uncomfortable providing honest information if it is negative in nature. I plan therefore, to ask a research assistant to help me collect data from these participants.

8. Conflicts of Interest

a. Identify any conflicts of interest in this study. A conflict of interest is any circumstance that could result in undue influence or coercion. For example, the potential for coercion exists if research participants are also students, employees, colleagues, or subordinates of the investigator, or if a power relationship exists.

The context in which the study takes place creates some power dynamics, but I do not foresee any potential coercion in those dynamics. A power relationship exists in the ages between participants and me. The age gap is wide so my status as an elder coupled with my position as an educator commands their respect from the perspective of the African culture. Participants' consciousness of my position may cause them to exercise excessive reticence and thus constitute a challenge. For example, they might think that sharing the negative side of their experiences would offend me. Additionally, my own biases about the participants' experiences of the phenomenon I explore might unduly influence me to focus so much on their negative experiences so as to neglect their good ones.

b. If a conflict of interest exists, provide a management plan to eliminate or minimize undue influence or coercion.

My awareness of the potential limitations to the study constitutes a potential solution to these hinges because they draw my attention to the measures to put in place for quality outcome. To mitigate these potential drawbacks demands devising strategies to address them. Prior to the interviews, I will attempt to set aside my preconceived ideas about participants' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). In other words, I plan to step aside and objectively look at participants' experiences with an open mind to allow for their subjective meanings to

emerge. In addition, I intend to establish good rapport with the participants throughout the study to win their trust and confidence. I will, as well, endeavor to be approachable and initiate dialogue throughout the entire study.

9. Expectations of Participants

Provide detailed information to describe expectations of participants.

a. What will each participant be asked to do?

The study employs interviews and observations to elicit the relevant information from participants to answer my primary research question. In this regard, each participant will be asked to share with me his/her experiences as a non- Catholic student who attended either Bernardodalini (Catholic) Senior High School or Zumbadarana Senior High School. I will require each participant to share with me the meaning he/she ascribed to his/her experiences participating in the Catholic worship program of the school, as well as, his/her experiences of the Catholic culture in which he lived and studied. Each participant will also be required to read and sign the consent form prior to the interview.

b. What is the total time commitment of each participant?

I plan to interview participants for the first round and if need be, to make follow-ups for clarifications and for them to comment on whether or not my themes and descriptions constitute a true reflection of their experiences. So approximately, it may take two hours in all but an hour or less in each session. To establish rapport with participants, I plan to spend ten to fifteen minutes visiting with each participant before the actual interview which will last forty-five minutes or longer. However, in order not to do anything that might translate into coercing or unduly influencing participants' participation, which is entirely voluntary, the total time commitment depends on each participant's flexibility so I plan to pay attention to how the interviews unfold and I will exercise prudent judgment on how each participant as a unique individual responds to me as the instrument of data collection.

c. Where will the study take place?

The sites to which the participants are affiliated are in Badasarki in Africa so the study will take place precisely in Ghana because that is the country in which I can locate and recruit participants for my study.

d. Indicate whether you will follow up with participants at any point and how you will determine whether or not follow up is necessary.

I intend to follow up with participants where necessary. The necessity to follow up with participants depends on whether after listening to the audio recordings, there would be doubts I need to clarify, or to deepen my understanding of their experiences. Additionally, to validate my findings, I plan to make a follow up to share my theme descriptions with them. The intent is to cross check with participants whether or not what I captured constitute a true reflection of their experience of the phenomenon of attending a Catholic high school as non-Catholic students and the meaning they ascribed to the schools' religious programs and the Catholic culture in which they lived and studied.

D. RISKS AND BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS

1. Risks to Participants

a. Consider any potential risks to participants in your study. Read through each listed risk carefully, consider the risk in terms of your study, and check each risk involved in the study, even if it seems like minimal risk:

Possible violation of privacy of subjects

Privacy is having control over the extent, timing, and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviorally, or intellectually). For example, some potential participants may view certain recruitment methods as a violation of their privacy. Check if there is any possibility invasion of privacy above what would be reasonably expected by participants.

Possibility of confidentiality of data breach

Confidentiality is the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the informed consent) without permission. For example, data collected from participants should be secured in a manner that maintains confidentiality. Check if a data breach may cause additional risks or harms to the subjects.

Possible emotional distress

Recalling traumatic or distressing events

Social or economic risk

Check if employability or reputation of any participant are at risk.

Physical harm

Including minor pain, physical discomfort, or possibility of injury.

Use of deception as part of experimental method

If your research design uses deception, complete the debriefing statement in the Use of Deception section (D.3) of this form.

Any probing for personal or sensitive information in surveys or interviews

Participation in measurement scales that may lead a participant to self-diagnose any symptom or disorder

A sense of mental fatigue or embarrassment

Manipulation of psychological or social variables such as sensory deprivation, social isolation, or psychological stresses

Risks associated with allergies, phobias, or environmental sensitivities

For example, would this study harm someone who is allergic to peanuts or who is frightened by heights?

Other (please be specific):

None of the above

b. Describe each risk that you checked as it relates to your study. Include all potential risks, not just those listed above.

Participants may share confidential information with me based on trust but would not share the same information with others. Divulging such information to others, other than those a participant might approve of, may create tension and perhaps physical harm to participants or their loved ones. For instance, in the event that a participant tells a story of how he/she caused damage to the property of Catholic students or teachers as a protest for his/her dislike for the Catholic culture or the religious program of the school, when this information leaks to the Catholic teachers or students involved, they might seek a revenge that might result in physical harm to participants or their loved ones. Regarding emotional distress, because participants are required to share their

experiences, there is the likelihood that some of them might have had bitter or traumatic experiences with staff or colleague students and in recounting such experiences, they could become emotionally stressed resulting in emotional outburst. Similarly, probing to learn more about participants' experience may as well, spark emotional distress. However, probing questions will not concern seeking personal information not relevant to the topic under study.

c. Describe the precautions and safeguards you will use to minimize each risk. Please be specific.

Part of the recruitment process requires making explicit to potential participants, what they will be required to do in the study and the potential risks inherent in them. As captured in the consent forms for participants, I will assure participants of safety. I plan to replace participants' full names with pseudonyms and avoid including descriptions of them that might reveal their identity to others.

To mitigate undue emotional distress, I will let participants know that in the event of any feelings of discomfort or emotional stress, they are free and encouraged to get up and walk around or stretch a little to calm down and I will pause or postpone an interview if I detect emotional stress in any participants in order to allow time for them to recover. I intend to let participants know that they are free to discontinue with the interview if the stress becomes unbearable and no one will lose anything or suffer any consequences for discontinuing the advantage of the support when the need arises.

2. Potential Coercion

Participation in research must be voluntary. Coercion can occur if a participant feels they must participate or cannot withdraw for any reason. Identify any source of coercion that may exist in your study and indicate how you will eliminate or minimize undue influence or coercion on participants.

I do not foresee any participant feeling coerced to participate in the study. However, what I suspect which is very minimal is that participants might feel "obliged" to participate in the study as a sign of respect for me as an elder, and my status as a religious leader and an educator. So, to counteract this thought that some participants might harbor during the recruitment process would be to make it explicitly clear to participants that participation is entirely voluntary before and throughout the study and the decision whether or not to participate entirely rests on them. I will let them know I

will not feel disrespected, neither will I begrudge any of them if they decide not to engage in the study. I will reiterate the voluntary nature of the study by stating categorically clear that throughout the study, they are free to withdraw at any time they feel they can no longer continue. During the course of the interviews, therefore, if I detect any emotional distress in participants, I would propose a short break to allow them to recover but on the other hand I would find out if they feel comfortable to continue with the study if not, they are free to withdraw at no cost. Additionally, to mitigate coercion and promote honesty in reporting their experiences, I plan to engage a non-Catholic research assistant to help me access data from participants.

3. Use of Deception

Only complete this section if your research design utilizes deception.

If this study is designed to use deception as part of the experimental method, include a debriefing statement and explain the debriefing procedure that will be followed once the study is complete or if a participant withdraws from the study. This statement must explain your study in truth and detail, discussing what elements of the study were changed or left out on purpose and why. All participants must be given another opportunity to withdraw from the study upon debriefing.

4. Benefits to Participants

List any direct benefits to research participants. If there are no direct benefits, please state “None.”

Please note that benefits to society, such as adding to existing knowledge, are not a benefit to participants. Direct payments or other forms of remuneration offered to potential subjects as an incentive or reward for participation should not be considered a benefit to be gained from research. An example of direct benefits are medical, psychological, or social benefits for participants receiving treatment or therapy as part of a research study.

None

5. Participant Compensation

Will the participants receive direct payments or other forms of remuneration as an incentive or reward for participation?

Yes

No

If yes, describe these payments, incentives, or rewards. Describe the procedure for giving these to participants. At what point in the study will payment be given?

Please note that payments and rewards cannot be held until the study is completed or only provided when a participant completes the study. Plan to provide any payments or remuneration if a participant withdraws at any point in the study.

In order that no incentive is used to lure, induce or even coerce participants, I would remunerate participants after each interview session but in the event that a participant withdraws, I would still thank that participant no matter how insignificant the time and energy he might have spent in the process. In fact, the "thank you" is not just about participants' time and energy spent, but it includes their acceptance and readiness to participate. Their actual participation is definitely important but secondary.

E. RECRUITMENT

1. Recruitment of Participants

*Please note that if subjects are recruited through an agency or institution other than the University of St. Thomas, you must submit written documentation of permission from each agency or institution you wish to recruit through. Written permission must be in the form of a **signed letter on agency letterhead** with enough information to demonstrate that the agency or institution understands your research project and grants permission for you to work with and recruit through their organization.*

a. Identify where participants will be recruited. Use organization or location names and include city, state, and country. *For example, if you are recruiting at UST, include University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN, United States.*

Bernardodalini Senior High School and Zumbadarana Senior High School, Ghana, /West/Africa.

b. Identify how you will recruit participants and indicate whether you will recruit using flyers, advertisements, social media, phone calls, email, or other forms of contact.

All recruitment materials, such as flyers and advertisements, must be uploaded to IRBNet and approved by the IRB prior to use.

I will first contact research assistants and a teacher in each of the two schools for the contact information of potential participants who have graduated from the schools. Since there are no regulations, restrictions or legal implications in Ghana regarding asking friends, family members or known people for the contact information of others, both teachers will not be in potential trouble at all for providing me with either the email addresses or phone numbers of the graduate students or even directing me to the houses in which they live. So how I will get in touch with these potential participants primarily would depend on the contact information I get from the teachers. But most likely, they will supply me with phone numbers, email addresses or directions to the homes in which they live or their workplaces. I also intend to send them a recruitment script before I meet up with them for the face to face discussions.

2. Will you use existing records in order to recruit?

[] Yes [X] No

If yes, where are the records located?

If yes, describe the type of records you will access.

If yes, provide the name of the person giving permission for you to access existing records. You must submit written documentation of permission from each agency or institution through which you will obtain records.

3. Recruitment Script

a. Provide a recruitment script you will use as you contact potential participants. What will you say to potential participants to describe the study and ask whether they would like to participate? Include any information that you think is necessary for an individual to make an informed decision about whether or not to continue with the recruitment process.

Please note that the recruitment communication is not informed consent. If significant risk has been identified, risks must be described in the recruitment communication.

Provide an email or telephone script that includes the following:

- 1) An invitation to participate in your study;
- 2) Information about your research;

- 3) Why the individual you are contacting is eligible as a potential participant;
- 4) The expectations of subjects if they decide to participate (what will they do?); and
- 5) Instructions for a potential participant to contact the investigator if they are interested in the study.

Confer supplementary documents in IRB package

b. Provide a script you will use to follow-up with participants, if applicable.

4. Costs to Participate

Will there be any costs participants must cover if they choose to participate in the study?

Yes No

If yes, describe what those costs are.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

1. Identifying Information

a. Will personal identifiers be collected?

Personal identifiers include names, initials, postal or home address, email address, phone numbers, birth date, social security numbers, demographic information, photographs or videos of participants, etc.

Yes No

If yes, describe what identifying information will be collected.

I plan to take down names of participants, their ages, phone numbers and their specific religious denominations.

b. Why is it necessary for these identifiers to be collected and maintained?

The entry point to knowing and meaningful interacting with someone is by first knowing the person's name. So I need to know their names in the first place to begin the rapport with each participant. Knowing their ages would help me not interview participants who may be below 18, and for follow up purposes, I need their phone numbers to re-contact them. Knowing each

Photographs, paper format (*requires special permission from participant via the Photography and Video Recording Permission Form*)

Video recordings (*requires special permission from participant via the Photography and Video Recording Permission Form*)

Other:

3. Data Access

Indicate who will have access to the specific types of data you checked above.

With the exception of the consent forms which participants would sign and be given a copy each, the rest of the data checked above will be kept by me with access to only my research assistant and my chair. However, when it becomes necessary to seek helpers to transcribe the recorded data, I will ensure transcribers sign the confidentiality forms and in that regard, they too would have access to the audio-recorded data and will be given copies of the transcriber confidentiality agreement forms they have signed for their personal records.

4. Data Transcription

Will information from audio-recorded interviews or other data be transcribed?

Yes No

If yes, explain who will transcribe data and whether the audio recordings will be deleted upon transcription. If the transcriber is not a project investigator, complete the **Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement** and include it with this application.

When it becomes necessary to seek assistance to transcribe the audio-recorded interviews, I would recruit one or two persons who speak English and can use the computer. It is not every adult in Ghana who is literate and or can efficiently use a computer. The audio-recordings will be deleted for confidentiality sake as soon as the transcriptions are done.

5. Data Storage

Give the specific location where you will store all forms of data that you checked above. If data formats will be kept in different places, indicate this (i.e. digital files kept on a computer and paper files kept in a filing cabinet). Specify if passwords, codes, or locks will be used and provide the

location for storage. If you will be traveling while conducting research, say how you will maintain confidentiality while traveling and at your home or office.

All hard copies would be stored in a filing cabinet and under lock and key. Digital files would be stored in a password protected computer to prevent anyone from gaining access to them. As I travel from one place to another interviewing participants, I will ensure that all documents, including computers, storage devices pertaining to the research work are locked up in my vehicle.

6. Data Retention

Federal regulations require that consent forms and any significant new findings shared with research participants be retained for a minimum of three years after completion of the research study. You may choose to keep records indefinitely, but any records that are kept indefinitely must be de-identified and participants must be made aware of this retention choice in the consent form. Some high-risk data may be required to be destroyed after a certain date by the IRB. **Photography and Video-Recording Permission forms** should be retained for as long as you will keep the photographs and videos collected.

If you plan to de-identify your research data, please specify how you will do so and maintain data anonymity in the Identifying Information section.

Provide an estimated date when you will destroy each type of data marked in the Data Formats section.

I will destroy a data within six months after I successfully defend my dissertation except the signed consent forms which will be kept for a minimum of three upon completion of the study. By estimation, I should have successfully defended my dissertation by December 2020.

G. INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSENT PROCESS

Exempt review applicants who are not required to obtain consent may skip this section—

please proceed to Additional Forms

Please read carefully:

Informed consent is an ongoing discussion between the investigator and participant(s). Simply giving a participant the consent form is not informed consent. Prior to asking the participant(s) to

sign the consent form, the investigator is responsible for having a conversation with each participant individually (or in groups in approved settings) to discuss the required elements of informed consent (your consent form). A list of required informed consent elements can be found on the IRB website.

In the case of electronic surveys, the consent form is often a cover sheet or the first page of the survey which clearly informs the participant that continuing with the survey means they consent to participating in the study.

CONSENT WITH ADULT PARTICIPANTS AND LEGALLY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES

1. Consent Discussion

State at what point you and participants will have a conversation about informed consent.

The potential participant must first consent to participate in the study before the interviews can begin so the conversation about informed consent precedes the interviews.

2. Informed Consent Discussion

Describe how you will start an informed consent discussion with your participant(s). What information in the consent form will you highlight in your discussion?

The purpose of the consent discussion is to let the potential participants know what will be expected of them, what they will be required to do, and the probable risks involved participating in the study. This information is relevant to help potential participants make an informed decision regarding whether or not to volunteer in the study. So from that view point, I would give information about the purpose of the study, what makes the participant qualify to participate in the study, what is expected of each participant and the likely risks to participants involved in the study. The aspects in the consent form I would highlight include the likely risks involved of participating in the study and its voluntary nature before and throughout the interviews. I will let participants know that they are free to withdraw their consent anytime they feel uncomfortable continuing in the study and in that case their information would not form part of the study. In fact, I will delete their information right away. Besides, I plan to let participants know that their decision either to participate or not to participate will not affect their current or future relationship with the school and nothing will be taken against them if they agree to participate and later on decide to withdraw.

3. Informed Consent Questions for Participants

Investigators should ask participants open-ended questions upon ending the informed consent discussion. The participants' answers to these questions will help the investigator assess whether the participant truly understands the research project, risks, the voluntary nature of the study, and what they will be expected to do.

Please provide 3-4 questions to ask participants (e.g. what should you do if you wish to withdraw from this study? What are the risks if you choose to participate? How will these risks be managed?). These questions should not be yes-no questions; rather, they should require participants to answer in full sentences so that you can more adequately gauge their understanding of the study.

What should you do if during the course of the interviews you feel you can no longer participate in the study?

What did I say are the risks involved in this study?

Briefly explain to me the extent to which you agree or disagree with me that the risk factors can or cannot be managed.

ASSENT WITH CHILDREN

Complete only if targeted participant population includes persons under the age of 18.

Please read carefully:

Under state law, participants under 18 years of age cannot consent to participate. Once you have received parent or guardian consent for child participation, the investigator must also have a discussion about the study with each minor participant. In this discussion, the investigator is asking minor participants whether they agree to participate in the study, after their parents or guardians have given their permission for their child to participate. The agreement of the minor participant is called *assent*.

4. Informed Assent Script

Include a sample conversation you may use to have an informed assent discussion with child participants. The conversation must summarize information provided in the assent form.

Please be aware of language used in your script; it is important to use appropriate language for the population. You do not need to read this script verbatim to participants under the age of 18, but you should be familiar with the information so you can have a conversation with them about your study.

5. Informed Assent Questions for Children

Investigators must ask child participants open-ended questions upon ending the informed assent discussion. The participants' answers to these questions will help the investigator assess whether the child truly understands the research project, risks, the voluntary nature of the study, and what they will be expected to do.

Please provide 3-4 questions to ask child participants in an appropriate language level (e.g. what should you do if you do not want to answer my questions?) These questions cannot be yes-no questions; rather, they must require participants to answer in full sentences so that you can more adequately gauge their understanding of the study.

Please be aware of the language used in your questions; it is important to use appropriate language for your population.

H. ADDITIONAL FORMS

If required, include the following forms in your IRBNet project package. Applications missing forms will not be reviewed until all necessary forms have been uploaded to IRBNet. If you need assistance to determine which consent form is right for your project, please contact the IRB office. Check which forms will be included in your project package:

1. Consent Forms—Required

General consent form, *required for most studies that do not involve children or adults who cannot consent*

Parent or guardian consent form, *if children are participants*

Child assent form (ages 7-12), *if children ages 7-12 are participants*

Child assent form (ages 13-17), *if children ages 13-17 are participants*

2. Surveys/Questions/Instruments—*Required*

Upload a copy of all surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, or other research instruments that will be used in the study.

Surveys, if applicable

Interview Questions, if applicable

Other research instruments used (e.g. psychological measurements, questionnaires, etc.), if applicable

3. Recruitment Materials

Flyers, newspaper or print advertisements, sound recordings, TV advertisements, etc., if applicable

4. Confidentiality Agreements

Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement, if applicable

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement, if applicable

5. Other Permissions

Photography and Video Recording Permission form, if applicable

Organization, agency, or institution letters of permission to obtain existing data or recruit through the institution, if applicable

I. SIGNATURES

Thank you for completing the Application for Initial Review. Once you have completed this application, upload all necessary application forms to your IRBNet project package. It is important to review all application materials for clarity, consistency, spelling, punctuation, and grammar prior to signing and submitting the package. Applications with significant spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors will be sent back to the investigator.

Project review will not be initiated until all electronic signatures are received on IRBNet. Electronic signatures can be added to your IRBNet project package by clicking “Sign this Package.” By electronically signing the IRBNet project package, you confirm that:

The information provided in this application is true and accurate.

All contact with human subjects will not be initiated until final approval has been granted by the IRB.

All investigators and research advisors agree to contact the IRB within 24 hours of becoming aware of any adverse events or problems associated with this research project.

All consent forms and records required by the IRB will be retained for a minimum of three years upon completion of the study.

The investigator agrees to contact the IRB and seek approval prior to any amendments to this research proposal, including changes in procedures.

The following electronic signatures are required for new project submissions:

Principal Investigator

All co-investigators

All research advisors

J. CITI Program Education Requirement

All investigators are responsible for safeguarding the respect and welfare of every research participant. In compliance with federal regulations, the University of St. Thomas asks all investigators to fulfill an education requirement by completing online training via the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program *prior to approval of their project by the IRB*. Once an investigator completes the education requirement, he/she will receive a certificate that is active for four years. Upon expiration, a refresher course must be completed to renew the certification. More information about the CITI Program course and instructions for completing the requirement are available at <http://www.stthomas.edu/irb/citiprogrameducationrequirement/>.

APPENDIX B**LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS**

Address:

Date:

Dear Name:

I am a doctoral student of the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, in the United States. I intend to conduct a study and I write to explain my study to you as a potential participant and to request your participation in it.

In partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Education, I am required to conduct a research study in the form of a dissertation. As part of the preliminary considerations for the research process, I had successfully defended and gained approval for my dissertation proposal in November 12, 2018 with Dr. Sarah Noonan as chair. My study concerns the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic high schools. I intend to investigate the meaning that non-Catholic students ascribe to their experiences attending a Catholic high school and the Catholic culture in which they live and study. To guide my study, I proposed the following research question: “How do non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience and make meaning of the role and expectations of all students attending a Catholic high school. How do non-Catholic students experience and make meaning of the Catholic culture in which they live and study?” To elicit the relevant data to answer my research question, I plan to interview students who have graduated from Bernardodalini Senior High School and Zumbadarana Senior High School to learn their experiences. The rationale for choosing students who have graduated as participants in the study is that, since they have spent at least three years in the school, they are likely more experienced than those still in the school. Moreover, as graduates, I guess they would feel more comfortable to share their experiences with me than those still under the school authority and so

may exhibit extreme reticence. You qualify to participate in the study because you are a past student of the school under investigation and I think you may also like to contribute to the topic.

Would you agree to participate in this study? If yes, like any other participant, you would be required to go through an interview process to enable you share your experiences. In that case, your responses will form part of the data set for the dissertation analysis. I plan to interview 20 graduate students but as this study is emergent, I might adjust the sample size depending on when I achieve data saturation. Each interview session may take about one hour or less. Before the commencement of the interview, I will ask you to sign a consent form. I will also require your permission to audio-record the interview for transcription. As your participation in the study is entirely voluntary, you are free to withdraw your consent anytime during the course of the study and your responses would not form part of the study. To ensure confidentiality, I plan to replace your real names with pseudonyms and as well avoid any descriptions of you that might reveal your identity to anyone. All data collected would be stored in a password protected computer and transcribed copies of the data would be locked up in a filing cabinet with no access to anyone except me and my dissertation chair. But as soon as I successfully defend my dissertation, I will destroy all data.

I will get in touch with you as soon as possible with more information on the study if you agree to continue in the recruitment process. You may phone or email me through my contact information provided below. Thank you so much for your anticipated assistance.

Sincerely,

Solomon, Y. Soabil

[Email: soab0001@stthomas.edu](mailto:soab0001@stthomas.edu)

Cell Phone: 0241566615.

APPENDIX C
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
CONSENT FORM

[1197791-1] Title: Non-Catholic Students' Cultural and Religious Experience Attending a Catholic High School.

You are invited to participate in a research study about the inclusion of non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school. You were selected as a possible participant because of your potential to provide rich information for the topic I intend to investigate. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are a non-Catholic who has attended a Catholic high school. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not you would like to participate. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Solomon Soabil as the principal investigator. The advisory committee of this study include Dr. Sarah Noonan (Chair), Dr. Jean-Pierre Bongila (member) and Dr. Aura Wharton-Beck (member) all faculty members of the School of Education of the University of St. Thomas. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to learn how non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience and make meaning of participating in all the Catholic worship program of the school as expected of all students attending a Catholic high school and their experiences of the Catholic culture in which they live and study. The primary research question is: "How do non-Catholic students attending a Catholic high school experience and make meaning of the role and expectations of all students attending a Catholic high school and what meaning do they ascribe to the Catholic culture in which they live and study?" In depth interviews and observations constitute the methods of data collection.

The study envisages that through the non-Catholic students' description of the phenomenon, it will expose the effects of the worship requirement on them. The study's findings may, therefore, better inform school authorities' decisions regarding the worship policy and campus life in general. Their experiences may as well, help the school authorities fashion an alternative model of Catholic education to ensure the evangelization of the Catholic students and at the same time take into account the presence of the non-Catholic students who do not profess the Catholic faith. It may also help Catholic school administrators appreciate how their perspective might be different from the perspective of non-Catholic high school students. This knowledge may help Catholic school administrators provide non-Catholic students with higher quality service.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things: You will be required to sign the consent form prior to the interview and a copy of it will be given to you for your personal records. Your responses, therefore, will form part of the data for analysis. But if you withdraw from the study at any moment, your responses will be deleted. An interview will last forty-five minutes at any location convenient for you but of course at a serene environment free from distractions to ensure a fruitful discussion. I plan to recruit 20 participants but as the study depends on when I gain sufficient data to answer my research question, I may adjust the sample size as the enquiry deepens. I intend to audio-record you and the rest of the interviewees for transcription. I plan to follow up with further questions for clarifications if need be and also to show you my findings so that you can comment on whether or not they constitute a true reflection of your experiences.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

The study has risks. Participants may experience emotional distress if they recall any traumatic experiences. In that respect, I plan to employ the services of a counsellor and I will encourage participants to take advantage of the service if it becomes necessary. I anticipate, though very unlikely, a potential risk involved in divulging any confidential information. For instance, in the event that a participant tells a story of how he caused damage to the property of some Catholic students or teachers as a protest for whatever reasons, when this information leaks to the Catholic teachers or students involved, they might seek a revenge that might result in physical harm to participants or their loved ones. I will ensure all precautionary measures are taken to forestall any breach of confidentiality by ensuring that besides those measures I will observe in the confidentiality section, data will be stored in a password protected computer and hard copies locked up in a filing cabinet without access to anyone. However, I cannot prevent participants from sharing information with “outsiders” which could spread beyond control and perhaps, cause harm to participants and others.

The direct benefits you will receive for participating are: There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. Neither do I intend to pay participants for volunteering in the study. I do not plan on offering compensation because of its potential influence on the “voluntary” nature of their participation, but I intend to thank participants for their time and share the results of my study with them. Any participant who withdraws before the end of an interview session will equally receive my gratitude.

In the event that this research activity results in an injury, emergency treatment will be available. The University of St. Thomas is not able to offer financial compensation nor absorb the costs of medical treatment should you be injured as a result of participating in this research.

Privacy and Confidentiality

As the nature of participation in the study is voluntary, participants' privacy must be respected. The time, duration and location of interviews would be negotiated with participants. So I plan to discuss with participants the convenient time and places to engage them in the interviews so that their participation in the study is well incorporated into their private life and work.

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any sort of report, I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. The types of records I will create include field notes, audio recordings and transcripts. Data will be stored in a password protected computer and hard copies locked up in a filing cabinet without access to anyone except my dissertation chair who will have access to them from time to time. As I travel from place to place interviewing participants, I will ensure that all data, computers and recorders are securely locked in my car. I will destroy all data as soon as I successfully defend my dissertation.

All signed consent forms will be kept for a minimum of three years upon completion of the study. Institutional Review Board officials at the University of St. Thomas reserve the right to inspect all research records to ensure compliance.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with any individuals or Dambayi Senior High School or Bernardodalini Senior High School or the University of St. Thomas. There are no penalties or consequences if you choose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will not form part of the study. You can withdraw by calling me on phone or sending me a text message to let me know you can no longer volunteer in the study. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask.

Contacts and Questions

My name is Solomon Soabil. You may ask any questions you have now and any time during or after the research procedures. If you have questions later, you may contact me at + (233) 2415 666 15 or through soab0001@stthomas.edu. Dr. Sarah Noonan is my advisor whose contact information I provide as follows: Tel number: +1(651) 962 4897; email address: sjnoonan@stthomas.edu. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-6035 or muen0526@stthomas.edu with any questions or concerns.

Statement of Consent

I have had a conversation with the researcher about this study and have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age. I give permission to be audio recorded during this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Print Name of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX D
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
Institutional Review Board
Grants and Research Office
Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

A. INSTRUCTIONS

Please read through the entirety of this form carefully before signing.

Electronic signatures are not valid for this form. After completing the required fields, please print and sign this form in blue or black ink. After this form has been signed by the transcriber, it should be given to the principal investigator of the research study for submission. After receiving the *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement*, the principal investigator should scan and upload the signed form to their IRBNet project package.

The transcriber should keep a copy of the *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement* for their records.

This agreement is for transcribers only. However, if your duties as a research assistant include transcription, you will need to review, sign, and submit the *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement* as well as the *Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement*. Confidentiality agreements can be found in the document library in IRBNet.

B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF A RESEARCH STUDY:

Confidentiality is the treatment and maintenance of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the consent form) without permission. Confidential information relating to human subjects in a research study may include, but is not limited to:

- Name, date of birth, age, sex, address, and contact information;
- Current contact details of family, guardian, etc.;
- Medical or educational history and/or records;
- Sexual lifestyle;
- Personal care issues;
- Service records and progress notes;
- Assessments or reports;
- Ethnic or racial origin;

- Political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs.

As a transcriber you will have access to research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that include confidential information. Many participants have only revealed information to investigators because principal investigators have assured participants that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. That is why it is of the utmost importance to maintain full confidentiality when conducting your duties as a transcriber during a research study. *Below is a list of expectations you will be required to adhere to as a transcriber. Please carefully review these expectations before signing this form. 2*

C. EXPECTATIONS FOR A TRANSCRIBER

In order to maintain confidentiality, I agree to:

1. Keep all research information that is shared with me (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) confidential by not discussing or sharing this information verbally or in any format with anyone other than the principal investigator of this study;
2. Ensure the security of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) while it is in my possession. This includes:
 - Using closed headphones when transcribing audio taped interviews;
 - Keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews on a password protected computer with password-protected files;
 - Closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
 - Keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet;
 - Permanently deleting any digital communication containing the data.
3. Not make copies of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) unless specifically instructed to do so by the principal investigator;
4. Give all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) and research participant information, back to the principal investigator upon completion of my duties as a transcriber;
5. After discussing it with the principal investigator, erase or destroy all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that cannot be returned to the principal investigator upon completion of my duties as a transcriber.

Name of Transcriber:

IRBNet Tracking Number:

Title of Research Study:

Name of Principal Investigator:

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to adhere to the expectations for a transcriber described above. I agree to maintain confidentiality while performing my duties as a transcriber and recognize that failure to comply with these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Signature of Transcriber

Date

Print Name

APPENDIX E**UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS****Institutional Review Board****Grants and Research Office****Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement****A. INSTRUCTIONS**

Please read through the entirety of this form carefully before signing.

Electronic signatures are not valid for this form. After completing the required fields, please print and sign this form in blue or black ink. After this form has been signed by the research assistant, it should be given to the principal investigator of the research study for submission. After receiving the *Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement*, the principal investigator should scan and upload the signed form to their IRBNet project package.

The research assistant should keep a copy of the *Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement* for their records.

This agreement is for research assistants only. If you are a transcriber, please fill out the *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement*. If your duties as a research assistant include transcription, you will also need to review, sign, and submit a *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement* in addition to the *Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement*. Confidentiality agreements can be found in the document library in IRBNet.

B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF A RESEARCH STUDY:

Confidentiality is the treatment and maintenance of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the consent form) without permission. Confidential information relating to human subjects in a research study may include, but is not limited to:

- Name, date of birth, age, sex, address, and contact information;
- Current contact details of family, guardian etc.;
- Medical or educational history and/or records;
- Sexual lifestyle;
- Personal care issues;
- Service records and progress notes;
- Assessments or reports;
- Ethnic or racial origin;
- Political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs.

As a research assistant you will have access to confidential information pertaining to the research study. Many participants have only revealed information to investigators because principal investigators have assured participants that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. That is why it is of the utmost importance to maintain full confidentiality when conducting a research study. *Below is a list of expectations you will be required to adhere to as a research assistant. Please carefully review these expectations before signing this form.* 2

C. EXPECTATIONS FOR A RESEARCH ASSISTANT

In order to maintain confidentiality, I agree to:

1. Keep all research information that is shared with me (e.g. flash drives, notes, transcripts, data, etc.) confidential by not discussing or sharing this information verbally or in any format with anyone other than the principal investigator of this study;
 2. Ensure the security of research information while it is in my possession. This may include:
 - Keeping all documents and/or data related to the research study on a password protected computer with password protected files;
 - Closing any programs, documents, or data files related to the research study when away from the computer;
 - Keeping any printed documents and/or data related to the research study in a secure location such as a locked filing cabinet;
 - Permanently deleting any digital communication containing documents and/or data related to the research study.
 3. Not make copies of documents and/or data related to the research study unless specifically instructed to do so by the principal investigator;
 4. Give all research information/data and research participant information/data back to the principal investigator upon completion of my duties as a research assistant;
 5. After discussing it with the principal investigator, erase or destroy all research information that cannot be returned to the principal investigator upon completion of my duties as a research assistant.
-

Name of Research Assistant:

IRBNet Tracking Number:

Title of Research Study:

Name of Principal Investigator:

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to adhere to the expectations for a research assistant described above. I agree to maintain confidentiality

while performing my duties as a research assistant and recognize that failure to comply with these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Signature of Research Assistant

Date

Print Name