

# Journal of **Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies**



## **Faith Formation Programs and Young Catholic Adults' Vocation Choices in Ruaraka Deanery**

**Elizabeth M. Isingi, Dr. Chrispine Ouma, Nyandiwa & Sr.  
Dr. Bibiana Ngundo**

**ISSN: 2706-6622**

## Faith Formation Programs and Young Catholic Adults' Vocation Choices in Ruaraka Deanery

<sup>1\*</sup>Elizabeth M. Isingi, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Chrispine Ouma Nyandiwa & <sup>3</sup>Sr. Dr. Bibiana Ngundo

<sup>1\*</sup>Postgraduate student, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Department of Religious Studies, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi Kenya

Email: [chrisouma@cuea.edu](mailto:chrisouma@cuea.edu)

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Head of the Department, Department of Religious Studies, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi Kenya

\*Email of the Corresponding Author: [Ltizza.muu@gmail.com](mailto:Ltizza.muu@gmail.com)

*How to cite this article:* Isingi, E., M., Nyandiwa, C., O., & Ngundo, B. (2021). Faith Formation Programs and Young Catholic Adults' Vocation Choices in Ruaraka Deanery. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies*, 3(3), 24-42. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5002>

### Abstract

The study sought to explore the faith formation programs that inform vocation choices of Young Catholic Adults (YCA) in Ruaraka Deanery, Nairobi Archdiocese. The study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods. The target population included YCA group, moderators and chaplains from Ruaraka Deanery which is made of 10 parishes. The study employed convenience and census methods to sample 241 YCA participants. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis and presented using frequencies and percentages in tables. The qualitative data was analysed and presented thematically using summaries. The study findings indicated there is a positive and significant relationship between faith formation programs and vocation choices in Ruaraka deanery ( $\beta=.633$   $p=0.000$ ). The regression analysis showed that faith formation programs have a positive and statistically significant influence on vocation choices ( $R$  Square=0.395,  $P<0.000$ ). The study concluded there is no uniformity in the faith formation programs training in all the parishes. The study also concluded that reference resources according to YCA members and the moderators lean more on the church teachings rather than providing holistic formation to enable YCA address both their faith and vocation needs. The activities were found relevant for faith formation and vocation choices. The study further concluded that both family and the community of faith form the most influential faith formation agents in terms of training, mentoring and accompaniment. Based on the study's findings, it is

recommended that YCA groups across the Ruaraka deanery should be exposed to relevant faith formation programs that are capable of influencing vocation choices. The faith formation programs can include prayer, Bible reading and faith sharing, relationships, sub-topics on marriage, work, liturgy leading and participation. Moreover, it is recommended that there should be uniformity in the faith formation programs training in all the parishes.

**Keywords:** *Faith Formation Program, Vocation Choices, Young Catholic Adults, Ruaraka Deanery, Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya*

### 1.1 Introduction

Young Catholic adults' faith formation is a transitional journey of faith, meant to accompany them in their search for identity and purpose in life (Sons and daughters of Light, 1996). According to the Catholic teachings, God created human beings deliberately for a purpose: for them to know him, to love him, to serve him and finally to be united with him eternally (CCC, 1995, 1, Widmer, 2011). This purpose in life is realized in the three vocation levels: the universal vocation, the primary and the secondary level. The first level of vocation is the universal call to holiness which is a call to be Christ-like. The church teaches that Christians are called, each without exception in whichever state of life to respond faithfully to their call to holiness (*Lumen Gentium*, 1964, 40). To be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The primary calling is whereby individuals respond to God's call to serve in various states of life, either as married persons or as consecrated persons (in religious life or priesthood, or single life) and finally, the secondary calling concerns an individual's response to the service of God by use of the God's given talents and skills through work. According to the church teachings, human beings can accomplish the ultimate purpose for which they were created through work (Widmer, 2011). To live a fulfilled social and spiritual life and fulfil one's Christian vocation to charity, each person must value and appreciate work (Wojtyla, 1994). Each human being must discern their path of life to discover what they are best in and use those gifts in bearing witness in that path, rather than desperately copying other people's gifts. Gaudete et Exultate, 2018, 111). The three levels of vocations are hence interconnected in their realization, and each Christian is called to respond and bear witness to their faith in these three levels of vocations (Widmer 2011).

The young adult's knowledge and understanding gained from their formation informs their choices and decisions in various aspects of life (Amidel, Merhaut & Roberto, 2014). Faith knowledge and growth inspire individuals to participate in God's work of grace in their lives (Avenant, 2018). The faith formation program is made successful through committed families and life-giving faith communities (Amering, 2014). The family and community of faith provide a conducive environment through which life in Christ is learned, celebrated and shared, as members they pray and serve each other (Amidel, Merhaut and Roberto, 2014). Faith formation requires a strategy that would allow the program to achieve its goal. These strategies are essential in faith formation because they provide; a model for the faith formation process, inform content dissemination, influence personal faith ownership and practices and inspire the best faith accompaniment. The term vocation, in a secular perspective is understood as one's work, career, or occupation. In Christians' view however, vocation means a calling from God (USCCB, 2010; Synod of Bishops on Young People Faith and Vocational Discernment, 2019), hereafter, (YPFVD). Francis describes vocation as a path that guides an individual's efforts and actions towards the service of God and others (Christus Vivit, 2019, 255).

Different researchers have attributed the existing problems of the three levels of vocation to a variety of causes. For instance, in marriage, Hiranmaya and Chaudhury (2020) explored the

increasing patterns and major variations in divorce and separation in India. The findings of the study associated the challenge to education levels. Marriages of highly educated people were found to be more stable than those with lower education levels. Brown and Wright (2019) study on the increased cohabitation in the USA is considered a replacement of divorce and remarriage. The increased divorce and cohabitation causes a new challenge of the stability of families and the challenge of sustaining the aged parties. Gender violence is considered higher among Catholic women than Protestants, according to Simister and Kowalewska (2016) study. The cause of gender violence is blamed on the fact that the Catholic Church does not allow divorce, which traps many women in abusive marriages.

Similarly, the vocation to the priesthood and consecrated life are not exempted from crisis of instability. Dressing, Dolling, Hermann, Horten, Kruse, Schmitt and Salize (2017) posited that sexual abuse against children remains a global problem among the priests, religious as well as lay people. Those in priesthood and religious life are struggling with the demands of their vow of celibacy and the evangelical counsels, poverty, chastity and obedience (Cornelio 2012). Some have not been able to live according to the expected demands of their vocations. This is especially, concerning the love and service to God and neighbour and being good stewards of those entrusted to them. According to Kubi and Korash (2020), this has been worsened by families and cultural pressures to fulfil family obligations, especially in Africa. Ahiokhai (2019) on the same, cites the current cases of abuse associated with the chief shepherds in the church, especially the cardinals, bishops and priests of the day. In most abuse cases, the culprits were young people, aged between 25-35 years. Ahiokhai (2019) further notes that most of the abuses took place in the seminaries and the church premises including the confessional spaces. As a way of intervention John Paul II proposed holistic formation that would address physical, psychic and spiritual elements in a person (Pastores Dabo Vobis, 1992, 44).

Research has discussed the challenges brought about by wrong choices in the three levels of vocation. Some of the consequences of the choices have undermined human dignity and crushed down the growth and development of society. Some of the choices made by individuals are against Christian moral values and ethics. One, therefore, wonders whether faith formation can inform or influence young Catholic adults to make the right choices and decisions concerning their call to holiness, marriage and work and sustain the will to bear witness to their Christian faith. The preceding discussions show that the three levels of vocations are experiencing challenges among the rich and the poor, educated and uneducated, employed and unemployed, in the rural and urban areas, not only in Africa as the background of this study has demonstrated but globally.

Although there is evidence of a faith formation program for YCA in Ruaraka deanery, the three vocations persist. The question is what makes faith formation fail to achieve its goal of individual transformation: owning the faith and making the right choices, the vocation to love God and neighbour and living by its teaching of greatest commandment of love of God and neighbor. Or How can YCA faith knowledge and understanding challenge the young Catholic Adults to rise above the mere conformism of the adopted societal immoral ideologies to personally reflected faith convictions that enable them to discover the meaning of their search for identity, relationships, work and spiritual life and make informed choices as per God's plan? The study aim was to discover to what extent faith formation can influence young Catholic adult's vocation choices and their sustenance in Ruaraka Deanery.



## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The three levels of vocation especially the call to holiness, marriage and work are faced with complex crises of all kinds. Young adults are running away from the church due to poor faith formations (Roberto & Hayes, 2007, Oliver, 2015, Karei, 2019). Marriages among the young couples are highest in the world, with South Africa leading, (Mohlatlole, Sithole & Shirindi, 2018). Marriages of the young adults between 18-35 years of age are likely to end with divorce, (Oosthuzen, 2014), the rate of those between the age of 25-29 double those of older adults in divorce, (Bezuidenhout, 2017). Those in marriage are divorcing shortly after marriage, (Runcan and Ricu, 2019; Isingi 2019b; Okeyo, 2020, while those in religious life, both young and old are quitting (New Wine in New Wineskins Document 2018, 12). Similarly, those in the priesthood are faced with various crimes, abuse of office, church funds, abuse of children while various professions or careers are faced with challenges, ranging, absenteeism from work for no good reason, bribes, nepotism, corruption of all kinds so many cases of teachers abuse of children and office, doctors mishandling patients, in political careers corruption, irresponsibility among others (YPFVD, 2019; 53; Kimanthi, 2017; Kirya, 2019). Most of the empirical studies reviewed present the crisis experienced in all vocations indicating lack of witness that cuts across the three levels of vocations. Scholars have associated these issues with economic, cultural, social problems but not faith formation and vocation choice in these three levels (Izang and Yusufu, 2020; Ngong, 2020, Hope, 2012). However, Isingi (2019b) associates the current challenges facing young couples with poor faith formation but not vocation choices.

The church teaches that, in each conscience a law of God is inscribed, inviting each to do good and avoid evil. Faith is therefore, anticipated to stir individual's conscience to discern to make the right judgement about important choices and decisions related to their calling (CCC, 1777-1778). Faith also invites Christians to believe in God and freely commitment to doing what he commands. This means living the faith, professing it, and bearing witness in individual's life (CCC, 1814-1816). From the literature reviewed however, faith knowledge does not seem to effectively impact on YCA vocation to holiness, marriage and work. Instead, what is witnessed in the young Catholic adult's vocations globally, regionally and locally are crises evidenced by the restlessness and uncertainty of the future of these three levels of the vocations as the background of the study shows. This has been supported by the inability of the young adults to sustain their vocation to holiness, and witness faith in marriage their marriages and work. The main aim of this study therefore, is to find out, to what extent faith formation inform the vocation choices of the young Catholic adults in Ruaraka deanery so that they can discover, make choices or decisions concerning their call to holiness, marriage and work and sustain them.

## **1.3 Research Objective**

The research objective was to explore the faith formation programs that inform young Catholic adults' vocation choices in Ruaraka deanery

## **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis guided the study

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between faith formation programs and vocation choice on young Catholic adults in Ruaraka deanery

## **2.0 Literature Review**

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study was based on four stage theory. The four stage theory was developed by John Westerhoff in 1976. This theory is about the growth and development of faith. Westerhoff proposes that faith develops through four progressive stages of experience, affiliation, searching and owned faith. The theory states that faith grows like the rings of a tree, with each ring building on that which has grown before without eliminating it, so long as a favourable environment is provided. Otherwise, the growth is arrested. Each tree grows on its own, presenting its distinctive features. Similarly, each individual progresses from one stage of faith to another through participative experiences and interactions availed by the community of faith only if a proper setting is provided. If not, faith growth can get arrested at any given stage (Westerhoff, 1976). This is the leading theory in which this study was anchored because its proponents inform Young adult faith formation and vocation choice. It provides a link between independent and dependent variables. The YCA faith formation is a transitional journey of faith characterized by new life experiences and affiliation into various realities of life-related to their purpose in life.

Westerhoff also looks at the family and the community as the main transmitters of the faith; in this case, the YCA faith formation is channelled through these two institutions. Westerhoff also brings in the idea of the strategies for effectively growing faith, which he refers to as principles that guide adults in their Christian lives. This means that is the context in which they learn to apply or witness their faith. One of the principles proposes going to meet them where they make moral decisions and act on them and educate them to make decisions guided by their Christian faith. Some of the places where YCA are found are in their professions/work, marriage life, and church. The YCA are in various professions and in marriage or discerning to get married. The second principle is having a homogeneous group, people sharing the same questions, problems and needs. This is the nature of the YCA group; they share similar needs, which helps them understand each other well. The third principle is being conscious of their time by avoiding engaging them for long periods, which requires commitment, due to their busy schedules, in the church, at home, and work. The fourth is starting their engagement from where they are in their problems. And the last principle is working towards practical actions. Some of the practical actions in YCA are engagement in faith development activities, learning core teachings of faith, the social teachings of the church, development of faith through participation in faith activities, planning for their marriages, and engagement in their professions and Christian service (Westerhoff, 1967:125).

However, the theory was not developed for African context needs or culturally diverse communities but Western cultural contexts and homogeneous communities. The theory does not also cover all aspects of life like social, economic, political education. The theory is, however, adopted for this study because the majority of its proponents informs the YCA faith formation and personal decision about one's life choices after attainment of faith ownership and independence. Despite some weaknesses, the theory is relevant to the current study. Westerhoff theory has been used to develop curriculum and strategies for teaching and learning by Kreider (1996) who has critiqued that it does not cover carefully all the aspects of life. Then Niekerk and Breed (2018) also used part of the theory in their study on the role of parents in the development of faith from birth to seven years. Davis (2019) also used Westerhoff theory in a qualitative study to explore how childhood experiences influence adult spirituality. The four stage theory enculturation model recognises the value of the community's unique heritage but assumes a homogeneous community for faith education which disadvantages multi-ethnic

diverse communities like YCA community, due to movements away from cultural settings and both family and community fragmentations (Bickford, 2011). Westerhoff theory also does not connect the ownership of faith with the aspect of influencing YCA vocation choice

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

A study was conducted by D'Amato (2019) from six Maltese Salesian leaders to explore the young people's motivation to attend church services and full participation. The study findings indicate that sports and recreation use quality of the services offered and the challenge the lessons posed to determine their availability and commitment to the services. The study also shows that young people demand recognition, attention and unconditional love. They want to be at the centre of their programs which motivates them to share their talents. The study focused on the motivation of the young people to attend the church services and commit but not faith formation or vocation choices. According to Isingi (2019a), marriage is a journey in which two unique individuals invite each other for a lifelong partnership, self-awareness and the ability to communicate oneself convictions, fears, doubts and needs to the other lovingly and with utmost importance before making major decisions like marriage.

The young Catholic adult's faith formation program is also informed by the six tasks of catechesis explained in (CDC 1997, n. 86 & 86). The six tasks of catechesis are crucial to YCA faith formation because they explain first and foremost what profession of faith in creed demands of them; to hold on to the owned faith. The second task teaches us how to express our faith through liturgy and sacraments. The third is teaches on how to live this faith personally and in a Christian community. The fourth teaches on how to pray guided by the Lord's Prayer, and introduces them to different forms and types of prayer such as, vocal, meditation, contemplation prayers, as well as prayer of thanksgiving, adoration/worship, praise, petition and intercession types. The fifth teaches on how to mentor and develop personal faith development through continuous education on faith and practice through community service. And the last on how to embrace missionary spirit by evangelizing others and sharing the Gospel values in the community (CDC, 1997, n. 86 & 86)

The YCA faith formation program also encompasses the learning and reflection of the social life modelled in the church's social teachings. The social teachings of the church are founded on the seven principles and which form an essential program for YCA. They define their purpose of existence as a group to contribute to the proper formation and functioning of the social structures (YCA Manual, n.d.). On the formation of the church's social teachings, the YCA gained a deeper understanding of the church teaching on human responsibility and contribution to their relationships with each other in the service of God and neighbour in Christian living and in relationship with nature and God. The social teachings, therefore, are an elementary formation in the YCA faith formation program. It was reported that vocation is a concept used in both secular and religious contexts. In the secular context, vocation is understood as career, work or occupation, but in the religious perspective, vocation is a calling from God to offer a particular service unique to an individual (Thompson & Miller-Perrin, 2012). Individuals are called to a vocation to holiness, not for their own merit but for God's purpose and grace (2 Timothy 1:9). There are three different levels of vocations in the Catholic understanding from which an individual discerns to discover and respond to (Thompson & Miller-Perrin, 2012).

Thompson and Miller-Perrin (2012) adds that the vocation discernment journey consists of three components: listening to God's voice and seeking understanding to clarify one's purpose in life, responding through service to God and others, maintenance of the vocations honestly

through mentorship and accompaniment. Francis explains that discernment requires a listening companionship from dedicated persons like priests and religious men and women and qualifies professionals from lay and young persons (*Christus Vivit*, 291). He asserts that discernment is a means for a spiritual battle whose end is a path to liberty that brings to fruition what is unique in each person. It cannot be projected by others but born from a personal encounter with God through silence, solitude and (*Christus Vivit*, 295).

The young people, while living their vocations, can inspire the community towards achieving the common good. They, therefore, require communication skills, conflict management and resolution, delegation and planning to accommodate all respecting cultural diversity within the community and the places of their work (Martin, 2019). Hidayat and Safitri (2019) sought to determine the importance of leadership character among the Islamic millennials among the youth cadet of Sidoarum village in Yogyakarta. Twenty-eight people were sampled to respond to the study questions through questionnaire, observation and document analysis. The study aimed to explore the effect of Islamic leadership training on the youth in preparation for societal roles. The results indicate that faith-based leadership training significantly influenced 83% of youth character. Their empowerment through leadership allowed them to significantly use their leadership competence to serve the communities and the whole society as leaders. Faith and vocation formation of young adults requires relevant resources to provide the needed information regarding the themes. Most of the YCA faith formation resources material are books, specifically church documents as per the YCA manual training manual (n.d) and one leadership-related book by Steve Covey (2013). The USCCB proposes resources such as The Bible/scripture, which without exception is the central resource of authority for faith formation in the universal church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, which is the main Catholic doctrines resource book, the church documents and other secular books which offer relevant and practical information and experiences.

In Ruaraka, deanery according to the YCA manual (n.d). The YCA program activities include; advocacy in community service, volunteer mentors of Pontifical Missionary Children, parish support on raising funds and other programmes, seminars and workshops, youth camps, retreats and recollections, exchange programmes (YCA constitution, n.d.). The manual of the YCA faith formation as well as the constitution focuses more on social teachings of the church as well as the members' welfare but does not have topics specifically for YCA faith formation on discernment and vocations or choices. Instead, the training manual gives guidance of what the YMCAs are expected to witness, but the constitution brings out some aspects of commitment and welfare explicitly connected to them. A quantitative study conducted by Russell (2021) measured adolescent Faith formation and the influence of theology classes, masses prayer opportunities, school retreats and Christian service programs among American high school students. The findings show that retreats are highly influential to students' Faith formation, followed by theological classes and School Sunday masses. The Christian service program and prayer opportunities at school were considered the least influential. Russel's study was interested in the influence of faith formation activities which are essential aspects for this study but not how they influence their vocation choices.

Mititi (2019) examined how youth formation contributes to choices of authentic vocation into consecrated life in the Diocese of Kisii, using convergent parallel research design. The study involved the youth and their coordinators, parents, youth advisors, seminarians, novices, religious men and women. From the finding, 48.5% of youth said that formation has not sufficiently equipped them with the knowledge about concerted life and only 14.6% have the



information about this life. On the contrary, the findings indicate that those who have been effectively prepared make good consecrated persons. Mititi looked at consecrated life as a vocation and how formation leads to entry to the religious life and sustenance in Kisii, this study of interest is in the Nairobi archdiocese and focuses on vocation choices in three levels. According to Liang and Ketcham (2017), faith does not only influence the young in understanding of their youth purpose but also in maturing it. Faith motivates their involvement in ongoing practices of faith and community service. Mayer (2018) too addresses faith, vocation and career development but referring to career development and values, decision making, especially between 25-40 years. Karei (2019) study findings on the evaluation of the Safari model for young adult faith formation in the CITAM church in Kenya to find out its effectiveness in making better disciples among them reports a similar pattern of young adults. Karei used a mixed method design with a sample of 42 participants of young adults between 12 and 29 years, their pastors and leaders. The findings show that the faith formation model did not effectively meet the young adult faith needs and as a result, they have exited the church and found fulfillment in other churches.

Ime and Unwanabong (2014) looked at how the changing society impacts the young moral values in Nigeria as would be leaders. The two clearly bring out the importance of moral formation of young people to gain values of honesty, humility, hard work, truthfulness, generosity, respect, human life and human dignity, among others to the as future leaders in Nigeria. Ime and Unwanabong (2014) see the family as the key players but do not associate moral formation to religion or faith, which is what this study seeks to do. Antonsen (2003) examines the effects of faith formation on marriage and the findings give evidence of its impact on marriage. His study participants described faith as the glue that binds them together during happy and difficult times. Others said that they are accountable to God first for everything they do in their married life because their faith is responsible for guiding their relationship and children. In other words, their marriage without faith in God is empty since it is God who holds their marital commitment firmly in the stormy days of life. They believe that no matter what experience they are assured of, his tight grip lets them falter (Antonsen, 2003).

Howard (2019) evaluated the impact of parental involvement in the growth and development of children's faith formation in the Assemblies of God churches in the USA and how much impact it has on them. The study sample included two-parent families with adolescent and young adults aged between the age of 10 and 19 years, and members of the Assemblies of God church for 10 years. Howard (2019) used qualitative narrative inquiry design. The findings revealed that good relationships in the family and parental role modelling, discussions with their children as well as family faith rituals impacted the faith children positively. Martin, White & Perlman, (2003) study also explored both the direct and indirect parental influence on the faith of their offspring. The study sample constituted both adolescent and young adults involving six protestant denominations with a total number of 2,379 young people. Francis (2020) maintains that many young people are most likely to go to church if their parents shared with them their faith and went to church. The peers also play the role of influencing each other to go to church and practicing of faith, though their influence was found insignificant compared to that of the parents. For this reason, Francis recommended more investment in education and faith formation of the parents to help in the faith formation of the children's faith.

Young (2017) examined why seventy percent of teenagers in the evangelical church had abandoned the church attendance and faith practice during their transitional years from adolescence to adulthood. The study results reported that poor ineffective methods of faith

formation are one cause. Young (2017) argues that the presentation of faith in contemporary times requires modern learning methods within the family context and church community management. This will ensure stability and sustained faith for the generations to come. Young (2017) adds that parents have a responsibility of taking charge of their children's faith formation by owning the process. He proposes mixing both the traditional and modern methods of learning faith at home and non-fiction books to ensure their children's effective formation of faith. Young further notes that education of parents on the efficiency of the modern methodologies for spiritual formation and equipping them with the spiritual theories that help the process would help. On the role of ecclesial shepherding Wachege and Langat (2018) note that the faith agent's main role involves service and ministering selflessly to the community welfare after Christ their chief shepherd. They are to embrace a Christ-like model who identified himself as a good shepherd (John 10:10-18). Wachege and Langat (2018) propose the integration of the community and servant model to evangelization of the young people. The literature has demonstrated in detail the community role of faith formation of young people's faith in general which is mainly to inspire good behavior and morals but not specifically on young adult's vocation choices.

### **3.1 Research Methodology**

Mixed method design was preferred for this study because it combines the strengths of both the quantitative and qualitative data to understand the research problem better (Creswell 2014). The study employed convergent parallel mixed method design in which both quantitative and qualitative data is collected concurrently, analysed and then the overall results are integrated in the interpretation. Mixed methods were used to help the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the YCA faith formation role in influencing the vocation choices of young Catholic adults from quantitative and qualitative data overview. The study was conducted in 10 parishes of Ruaraka Deanery Archdiocese of Nairobi. The entire target population was 364 that included 344 YCA members, 10 moderators and 10 chaplains.

### **4.0 Research Findings and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Faith Formation Programs that inform YCA vocation choices**

The participants were asked to rate the frequency with which they discussed the themes of the listed program. Table 1 presents a summary of the descriptive analysis results presented in terms of percentage frequenting.

**Table 1: Frequency of discussed the faith formation program themes**

	Always		Often		Sometimes		Never	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Faith formation programs								
Bible Study & Faith Sharing	17	16	29	27	55	50	9	8
Discussions on vocations	4	3	37	33	57	52	12	11
Discussion and lessons on work	9	8	22	20	55	50	24	22
Training on the liturgy of the church	5	4	39	36	49	44	17	16
Training on the Christian Living	23	21	42	38	23	21	22	20
Lessons on justice and peace	20	18	21	19	50	46	12	11
Lessons on Christian leadership	10	9	42	38	44	40	15	13
Lessons on cultural Diversity	7	7	26	23	49	44	28	26
Training on environmental Care	15	13	28	26	38	34	27	24
Mentorship training	22	20	31	28	33	30	24	22
Training on vocation discernment	1	1	27	24	46	42	35	32

Based on the study results presented in Table 1, 16% of the YCA discussed faith formation program on bible study and faith sharing. The highest number 50%, said sometimes they had bible study and faith sharing discussions, 27% had it often and 8% never discussed. On vocation sessions, 5% had it always, 50% had it sometimes, 33% often, while 11% never had it. On Vocation to work, 50% had it sometimes, 20 % often and 22 % never discussed it. On training on the liturgy of the church, 44 % had it sometimes, 36 % said it often, and 16 % were never trained on the liturgy of the church. Training on Christian Living 38 % often had it 21 % sometimes, and 20 % said they never trained on Christian living. Sessions on Justice and peace and its importance, 46 % said they discussed it sometimes, 19 % often, and 11 % never had such discussions. Lessons on Christian leadership 40% discussed it 40% sometimes, 38 often, and 13 % never discussed it. Lessons on cultural diversity 44 % said sometimes, 23% often, and 26 % said they never discussed it. Training on environmental care, 34 % said sometimes, 26 % said often, and 24 % said never trained. On Mentorship training, 30 % indicated they had it sometimes, 28 % often and 22 % never had it. On vocation discernment training, 42% had it sometimes, 24% often, and 32 % never trained on it. The findings indicate that the YCA across the deanery had discussed some of the faith formation programs themes at most sometimes, as shown in Table 10

The following are the findings from the interviews with the YCA participants, moderators and chaplains as well as from the focus group discussions (FGD) hereafter. The moderators will be represented by letter A, the YCA members (FGD) letter B and the Chaplains letter C respectively. Across the deanery the findings on the faith formation programs that informed the YCA vocation choices indicated that, the YCA had had training and discussions on various faith formation programs, which informed some of their decisions and choices related to their vocation to a certain level. The discussed faith formation program themes across the 10 parishes

in the deanery include; bible study and faith sharing, prayer, liturgy, marriage, work and relationships. Some additional programs, however, which were not initially part of the YCA faith formation program were discussed in nearly all the parishes in the deanery due to necessity. Moderator Participant A1 explained that, "some additional training programs on mental health, healthy living, family leadership and family financial management and entrepreneurship were necessitated by the current situation of the YCA members as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic." Moderator A2 too noted, "The pandemic pushed a good number of the YCA members to the wall since no one expected it. Some left the city to their rural homes and others relocated elsewhere and had not communicated. The members however supported those who communicated to find jobs and to have their basic needs as they settled on their way forward.

The young adults move for the mental health training at the point was key according to Shah, Kamrai, Makala, Mann, Desai and Pate (2020) who note that mental health and stress related to epidemics like the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak bring about extreme fear and stress to individuals, families and even nations. This is due to the stigma associated with the loneliness of isolation of the infected and affected persons and their families by the public. Individuals and society also get overwhelmed by sources of exaggerated information about the virus, as well as the reality of loss of loved ones, jobs and long periods of lockdown (Kamrai et al 2020). This type of barring to public life decreases economic activities that deny people access to basic needs and health care services, leading to depression (Shah et al. 2020). According to Sood (2020) COVID 19 pandemic idea of social distancing created a feeling of rejection among those infected as well as the affected, resulting in stress and mental health disorders. Sood (2020) further notes that the World Health Organization had to change the social distance concept into the physical distance to reduce loneliness, which predisposes people into extreme anxiety, leading to high mortality rates.

Concerning the faith formation program themes that they YCA trained on, majority of the participants noted that the existing programs partly influence their vocation choice and decisions but are inadequately done. The participants also expressed lack of consistency and frequency in the training programs in the whole deanery. For instance, in the bible study and sharing, there is nothing that guides the group in the whole deanery on what specific scripture reading is related to a particular day's theme. A3, said "the YCA in each parish uses a different scripture reading from other parishes during the allocated time for bible study."

The participants in FGD also supported this claim. For instance, a participant in FGD B2 noted that "there is no uniformity in the selection of the scripture reading for YCA in the deanery. It all depends on the inspiration of the liturgist leaders of the day who are among YCA members." FGD B6 participants also noted that, the lack of uniformity is caused by the lack of organized YCA faith formation guide. However, the group acknowledged the availability of a draft of YCA training manual which addresses mainly the principles of the social teachings of the they which they were yet to be trained on. The FGD B6 participants added that there was also no uniformity in the whole deanery on other program themes due to the same challenge of lack of a program guide.

FGD B1 participant confirmed this by noting that "in each parish YCA group plan what needs to be covered both activities or themes and workshops depending on what they wish to discuss." Another participant in B1 group added that, "One of the challenges facing the group is scanty knowledge on almost every selected theme. For example, on the core doctrines of the church, vocation to marriage, or leadership only a small section is addressed and not the whole



theme satisfactorily." Further, moderator A1 agreed that "Sometimes only a small section of a doctrine is discussed and not consistently addressed and therefore the group has little knowledge on most of the faith formation program themes both on doctrines and on the social teachings of the church."

Moderator A6 also explained, "most of us operate with the little faith knowledge gained from the catechesis on the sacraments of initiation which was not elaborate, that is why the church needs to educate us on faith at our age. We need a serious faith education so that we can understand because it is the right time to live this faith consciously." FGD B1 and B2 shared that, in most cases a theme subsection is addressed because either a YCA member or group raised a question on it. However, some important aspects on that particular theme or topic might be ignored all the same. Which means, the group members will only have scanty knowledge about the rest on that particular topic.

Participants in FGD B2 gave an example and a suggestion of marriage theme which they said was wide and very key to their stage in life. The participants noted that, only some bits of it has been discussed and not on a serious training session. Some of participants thought that it would have been better if the training on marriage began with introduction to relationships, courtship, marriage as a sacrament and other issues that are key to marriage or even what to expect from both the church and family in relation to living this vocation in both Christian and African contexts.

Moderator A8 concluded that "each of the program themes has to be fully addressed to be adequately understood and so that, the YCA has no excuses to live their faith effectively and vocation according to what they professed in faith, vows they make in marriage as well as the oaths taken or promises made during employment agreements.

The inadequate training in most of the parishes was blamed to the absence of the YCA appointed leaders especially the chaplains, failure to appoint the chaplain's assistants as well as lack of YCA appointed mentors. The YCA group agreed that, while a few chaplains try to avail themselves to the group, most of the chaplains were not available due to other equally important commitments in their work. They proposed that the appointing authority to consider appointing either chaplain assistants among the religious brothers and sisters and mentors to assist the chaplains with the YCA faith formation. Another pertinent issue which was discussed was lack of financial, professional and moral support of the YCA group from the church leaders and Christian community.

Chaplains C1 confirmed the YCA moderators and YCA participants in the FGD claim of lack of uniformity in training and the unavailability of a YCA faith formation guide which would provide the faith formation relevant program themes and a method of presentation of the content within a given timeframe. Chaplain C2 noted that, the availability of the YCA training manual draft. He said, the "YCA faith formation manual addresses the social teachings of the church which gives the group a general overview of the social-economic and spiritual perspectives of Christian living but which the group may not understand on their own." This was in line with what the moderator A7 said that, "the YCA existing training manual does not effectively address their own faith and vocation needs with the practicality and urgency required but rather focuses on how they should live and serve others in the community."

Chaplain C3 also noted, "the faith formation guide is still under slow development because the YCA group is still considered a new phenomenon in the diocese and nationwide which has not been fully understood and accepted by the majority of the church leaders in the diocese and in

the parishes. This factor has made the growth and development of the group slow making their faith formation in the whole diocese slow too."

The interview findings on the faith formation program that inform the YCA vocation choices in Ruaraka deanery indicate that, the YCA has group has been taken through some faith formation and vocation training on some relevant topics like bible study, prayer, liturgy and marriage. These themes have partly influenced YCA in relation to their faith and vocation choices and decisions. Additional themes necessitated by the COVID 19 pandemic situation in the country were also covered including, mental health, health living, family finance and leadership. However, these themes were not adequately addressed and the training lacked uniformity. The inadequate YCA faith formation was blamed on the lack of faith formation guide which contributed to inconsistency or lack of uniformity in the training within the deanery. This also contributed to failure to effectively address the relevant themes fully and as a result, inadequate knowledge and understanding of some of the core doctrines among the YCA in Ruaraka deanery. The unavailability of the YCA chaplains from the group training, and accompaniment, failure to have their assistants and also lack of YCA mentors who would assist the chaplain in the YCA journey of faith also contributed inadequate faith formation. Although there was a YCA training manual draft, it did not seem to address the YCA faith and vocation needs as they expect. Another gap was in the financial, professional and moral support of the YCA formation program from the church leaders and the Christian community. This lack of support caused failure in effecting their faith education and activities.

Concerning the training guide, Nienhuys and Advies (2011) shows its significance in the provision of program direction, articulation of the objective and purpose of the program, the content, methodology, order, timeframe, reference materials, and the expected competence or outcomes at the end of the training. Tractenberg, Lindvall, Attwood and Via (2020) state that, of the key considerations in a training program is the consistency in the presentation of the program themes; the timeframe needed to complete the intended course work and the outcome of the training, which is the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and abilities.

The discussed challenges in the YCA faith formation in Ruaraka deanery may lead to what are closely related to Roberto and Hayes (2007) observations as well as those of Karei (2019). Roberto and Hayes (2007) say that young adults are loosely attached to the church due to inadequate or lack of faith formation. Their programs also lack committed mentors to accompany them. The young adults do not also feel at home in the church since they do not seem to be given the attention that other groups are given, like women, youth and children. For this reason, they run away from the church in search for fulfilment in their spiritual starvation. Karei (2019) also observes that the exit of the young adults from the CITAM church is has been fueled by poor faith formation. The available model of faith formation, does not meet their faiths. This shows how important is both the formation guide and model as well as the commitment of the young adult's faith companions and mentors in the realization of the main objective of their formation in faith and vocations.

#### **4.2 Correlation Analysis of Faith Formation Programs and Vocation Choices**

This study sought to establish the correlation between faith formation programs and young Catholic adults' vocation choices and the results are presented in Table 2

**Table 2: Correlation between Faith Formation Programs and Vocation Choices**

		Vocation Choice	Faith Formation Programs
Vocation Choice	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Faith Formation Programs	Pearson Correlation	.628**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results depicted in Table 2 establish a positive and significant association between faith formation programs and vocation choices ( $r=.628$ ,  $p=.000$ ). This implied that when faith formation programs move higher or lower, the vocation choices move in the same direction.

### 4.3 Linear Regression Diagnostic Tests

Before undertaking regression analysis, the data was subjected to diagnostic tests. The discussions on the diagnostic tests are illustrated in the subsections below.

#### 4.3.1 Normality

The normality test was assessed through the Shapiro-Wilk test. The normality results are as presented in Table 3

**Table 3: Tests of Normality**

Variables	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Faith formation programs	.845	108	.064

The study results depicted in Table 3 shows that faith formation programs were found to be normally distributed ( $p>.064$ ).

#### 4.3.2 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity was assessed in this study using the variance inflation factors (VIF). Table 4 presents the multicollinearity result.

**Table 4: Multicollinearity Test**

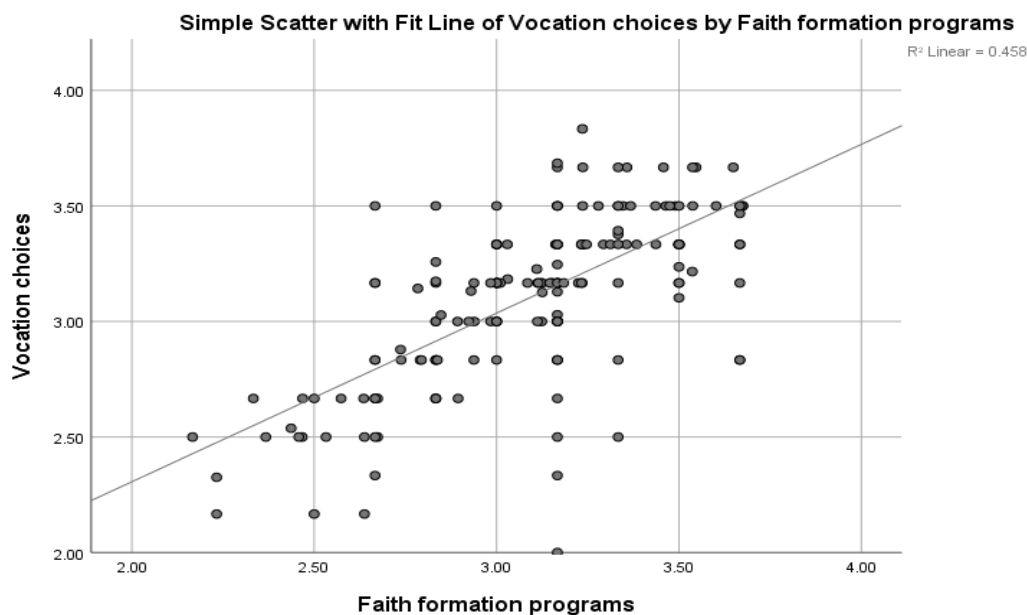
Variable	VIF
Faith formation programs	1.675

The results in Table 4 indicated the absence of multicollinearity since the VIF of the variable was less than 10. According to Katrutza and Strijov (2017), VIF values above 10 indicate the presence of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity inflates the standard errors and confidence intervals, leading to unstable estimates of the coefficients for individual predictors.

#### 4.3.3 Linearity of the Relationship between Faith Formation Programs and Vocation Choices

Linearity assumes a straight-line relationship between the predictor variable and the dependent variable. Linearity test was assessed by examination of a scatter plot of all the independent

variable against the dependent variable to measure if there is a straight-line relationship and the results are presented in Figure 1



**Figure 1: Scatter Plot of Faith Formation Programs against vocation choice**

The results presented in Figure 1 shows that faith formation programs depicted a straight-line relationship with vocation choices.

**4.4 Regression Analysis on Faith Formation Programs and Vocation Choice**

The influence of faith formation programs on vocation choices was examined using linear regression analysis. The results of model summary on faith formation programs and vocation is presented in Table 5

**Table 5: Model Summary on Faith Formation Programs and Vocation**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.628a	0.395	0.389	0.95643

a Predictor: (Constant), Faith Formation Programmes

The model summary shows that the coefficient of determination (R squared) was 0.395. This implied that faith formation programs accounted for 39.5% of vocation choices. The remaining 60.5% was accounted for by other factors other than faith formation programs.

The analysis of variance was examined and the study results are depicted in Table 6

**Table 6: ANOVA on Faith Formation Programs and Vocation Choice**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	62.642	1	62.642	68.479	.000b
	Residual	96.05	105	0.915		
	Total	158.692	106			

a Dependent Variable: Vocation Choice

b Predictor: (Constant), Faith Formation Programs



The results in Table 6 indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. The results imply that faith formation programs are a good predictor in explaining the vocation choices. This is supported by an F statistic of 68.479 and the reported p-value of 0.000, which is less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05, implying that the independent variable (faith formation programs) is significant in predicting vocation choices.

The regression coefficient from the study results on faith formation programs is presented in Table 7

**Table 7: Regression coefficient on Faith Formation Programs**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.216	0.288		4.216	0.000
	Faith Formation Programs	0.633	0.077	0.628	8.275	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Vocation Choice

Based on the results presented in Table 7, it was found that faith formation programs is positively and significantly related to vocation choices in Ruaraka deanery ( $\beta=.633$   $p=0.000$ ). This was supported by the calculated t-statistic of 8.275 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. This implied a unitary change in faith formation programs leads to an increase in vocation choices in Ruaraka deanery by 0.633 units when other factors are held constant.

The hypotheses was tested using the results in Table 7 above.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between faith formation programs and vocation choice on young Catholic adults in Ruaraka deanery

The hypothesis was tested by using linear regression and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criterion was that, if the p value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) but if it is more than 0.05, the H<sub>0</sub> is not rejected. The null hypothesis indicated there is no significant relationship between faith formation programs and vocation choice on young Catholic adults in Ruaraka deanery. Based on the results presented in Table 7 the p-value was 0.000. The null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between faith formation programs and vocation choice on young Catholic adults in Ruaraka deanery.

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between faith formation programs and vocation choices ( $R=.628$ ,  $P<.0.000$ ). The regression analysis showed that faith formation programs have a positive and statistically significant influence on vocation choices ( $R$  Square= $0.395$ ,  $P<0.000$ ). Additionally, the findings from the participants indicated that the YCA group across the Ruaraka deanery have been exposed to some relevant faith formation programs that are capable of influencing vocation choices. Some of the program's themes addressed include, prayer, bible reading and faith sharing, relationships, some sub-topics on marriage, work, and liturgy leading and participation. Some other programs have been made necessary by the immediate YCA needs such as mental health, stress management especially dealing with losses such as job and loved ones, family finances, family leadership. The study conclude there is no uniformity in the faith formation programs training in all the parishes. This is attributed to lack of guidance with relevant reference resources which would

give direction to the YCA faith programmes training in the deanery. This means that the programs are not deliberately organized into an orderly manner and presented progressively and consistently to achieve a particular goal of the faith formation. The reference resources according to the YCA members and the moderators lean more on the church teachings rather than providing holistic formation to enable YCA address both their faith and vocation needs. The activities were found relevant for faith formation and vocation choices. The only challenge is that they lack implementation due to lack of financial and human resource training support from the community of faith.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended YCA groups across the Ruaraka deanery should be exposed to relevant faith formation programs that are capable of influencing vocation choices. The faith formation programs can include prayer, bible reading and faith sharing, relationships, sub-topics on marriage, work, and liturgy leading and participation. Moreover, it is recommended that there should be uniformity in the faith formation programs training in all the parishes. The personal efforts to grow one's faith through reading the church documents, journals on faith formation and finding relevant links of prayer should be encouraged among the YCA group.

## REFERENCES

- Aihiokhai, S. (2019). Priestly formation and Sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church: In dialogue with the Nigerian Church. *Researchgate*, (XII), 105-126.
- Avenant, J. (2018). The role of parents in the development of faith from birth to seven years of age. *HTS Theological Studies*, 74 (2), 1-11. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i2.4773>.
- Bickford, M. (2011, 12 Friday). *An evaluation of the contribution of John H. Westerhoff III to Religious Education*. Retrieved from Religious Education. Net:<https://religiouseducation.net/wp-content/uploads>
- Cornelio, J. (2012). Priesthood satisfaction and the challenges priests face: A case study of the rural diocese in the Philippines. *Journal of Religion*, 3, 1103-1119.doi:10.3390/rel3041103.
- D'Amato, L. (2109, February 25). *University of Malta*. Retrieved from University evangelization of Malta: <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/53480>
- Francis, L. (2020). Parental and peer influence on church attendance among adolescent Anglicans in England and Wales. *Journal of Anglican Studies*, 18(1),61-73.
- Hidayat, R. & Safitri, N. (2019). Optimizing the Millennial Role in Communities with Islamic Leadership Training. *International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application*, 2(1), 1-8.
- Hope, K. (2012). Engaging the youth in Kenya: Empowerment, education and employment. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 17(4), 221-236.
- Howard, L. (2019). *Johnson University*. Retrieved from Doctoral dissertation: <https://www.aymeducators.org>
- Isingi, E. (2019a). *Marriage preparation for family sustainability: The challenge*. Nairobi: CUEA Press.
- Isingi, E. (2019b). *Marriage preparation guide for Pastoral agents*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications.
- Izang, Y. & Yusufu, S. (2020). Divorce as a Publishing area in Christians marriage in Nigeria. *International Institute of Religion and Culture Practice*, 5 (1), 29-44.
- Karei, J. (2019). *Ecommons*. Retrieved from ATS Dissertations 1399: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/ecommonsatsdissertations/1399/>
- Kimanth, L. (2017). Challenges of the devolved health sector in Kenya: Teething problems or systemic contradictions? *Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa*, XLII (1),
- Kiry, M. (2019). Education corruption: How to access it and ways to address it. *Anti-corruption Resource Centre*, 4(5), 1-15.
- Kowalewska, S. (2016). Gender-Based Violence and Christianity: Catholic prevention of divorce traps women in an abusive marriage. *Scientific Research Publishing*, 7(13) 1624-1644.
- Kubi, F, & Korah, L. (2020). The vocation, ministry and mission of the catholic priests and religious men and women in church mission in Africa. *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies*, 1(1), 43-51.

- Langat, J. (2018). *University of Nairobi Research Archive*. Retrieved from Doctoral Dissertation, University of Nairobi Digital Repository: <http://hdl.handle.net/11295/101429>
- Liang, B, & Ketcham, G. (2017). Emerging adults' perceptions of their faith-related purpose. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 9(1), 22-31.
- Martin, F. W. (2003). Religious socialization: A test of the channeling hypothesis of parental influence on adolescent faith maturity. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18(2), 169-187.
- Martin, P. (2019). *Digital Commons@ fuller*. Retrieved from Fuller Theological Seminary's David Allan Hubbard Library: <https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/dmin/390/>
- Mayer, C. (2018). Faith, vocation and career development in specific cultural and gendered contexts. Research gate, DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.10424.24324.
- Mititi, E. (2019). *Tangaza University College*). Retrieved from Masters' thesis Repository. tangaza.: (ac.ke:8080/xmlui/handle/20.500.12342/1028
- Roberto, J. & Hayes (2007). Best practices of faith formation. *Lifelong Faith: Theory and Practice*. *Lifelong Faith*, 1(3)-1-97.
- USCCB. (2010). *Connecting Young Adults to Catholic Parishes*. USA: Catholic Current.
- Westerhoff, J. (1976). *Will our children have faith?* New York: Seabury Press.
- Widmer, A. (2011). *The Pope the CEO*. Steubenville. Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing.
- Wojtyla, K. (1994). *The way to Christ spiritual Secrecies*. San Francisco: HarperOne.
- Wright, M. B. (.2017). Marriage, Cohabitation and divorce in later life. *Innovation in Aging*, 1(2), 1-11.
- Young, K. (2017). *Theses and Dissertations*. Retrieved from Digital Commons George Fox University: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/21>