Organisational and Administrative Structure of Christian Academies in Zambia:
A Case Study of Lusaka City

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Abstract:- This article is based on a study that investigated the organisational and administrative structure of the Christian schools or academies in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia which is officially a Christian nation. The main objective of the study was to explore the organizational and administrative structure of Christian academies found in Lusaka and how the structure affects their education provision. The article employed a systems theory management theory and a case study design was adopted with a sample size of 10 participants drawn from 5 schools in the city. Interviews, focus group discussions and observations were used to collect data. The study revealed that the Christian academies vary in terms of organization; it was also revealed that each school's organizational structure was dependent on the capacity of the proprietor and the goals set for the school. The article, therefore, recommended that for effective provision of education, the proprietors and managers of these institutions should adopt a common organisational structure model even though they may continue to vary in certain activities that they consider to portray each institution's uniqueness.

Keywords:- Christian academies/schools, Organisational/Administrative structure, Proprietor, Model, Teacher, Christian values.

I. INTRODUCTION

The provision of education is cardinal world over because of the major role education plays in the development of nations and the world at large. As such, in the process of development, nations worldwide, including Zambia, have evolved their systems of education with the evolution process varying according to the local social and economic circumstances. In November 1991, the Zambian people ushered in a new party and government in power, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) led by Dr Fredrick J.T. Chiluba. This was the beginning of the Third Republic, which also brought with it new policies in many areas of life including education. To begin with, Zambia was declared a 'Christian nation' by the new President on 29 December, 1991.This meant that the country would no longer follow the philosophy of Zambian Humanism by which the UNIP government led by the first Republican President, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, had organized Zambian society. As early as 1992, the MMD government expressed the view that time had come to seek wider cooperation with potential partners in the task of providing education. Accordingly, through the 1996 education policy dubbed,

Educating our Future(MOE, 1996), Zambia liberalised its education provision.

Liberalisation of education provision entailed fundamental changes in the power relations within the education sector. Under the liberalised education system, the right of individuals, private organisations, churches, religious bodies, and local communities to establish and control their own schools and other educational institutions was recognised and welcomed. Thus a number of religious bodies and organisations as well as individuals began to set up Christian schools which they called 'Christian academies'. Furthermore, the 1996 education policy document seemed to amplify the Christian nation declaration as it emphasised that Zambia was a liberal democratic society whose education policy was based on the core values of fairness, equity and liberty and whose citizenry and faith-based institutions were free to participate in the provision of education (MOE, 1996:Educating our Future).The rapid growth of mainly Christian private schools (as part of the private education sector)in the country was even noted by the World Bank (2007), which reported that the private education sector had grown very fast during that decade, during that period, it was observed that every third child was enrolled in private schools. The government schools were now competing even though they were and still are better equipped with human and material resources. With no major study having been carried out to find out exactly what was happening in these Christian private schools or academies, this study (being reported) therefore focused on establishing and explainingthe organisational and administrative structure of these institutions in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since the 1991 declaration of Zambia as a 'Christian nation', particularly since the early 2000s, Zambia has witnessed a proliferation of Christian schools, self-called academies, especially in the urban areas. However, the organisational and administrative structure of these 'Christian academies' is unknown as no study has so far been carried out on the same in Zambia. It is this knowledge gap, therefore, that this study aimed to fill. If this study was not conducted, what is prevailing in these Christian academies would remain unknown and the Zambian education authorities and other stakeholders would not be able to make appropriate decisions or take actions and measures deemed necessary to ensure that the Christian academies operate as expected of private religious institutions in the country.

III. UNDERSTANDING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE IN LITERATURE

According to Lunenburg (2011), the school structure has a positive impact on school or academic performance. As such, it is vital for a school to ensure that the set organisational structure permits a healthy school environment. Greenburg (ibid) explains an organisational structure as a formal design among people concerning the duties, designations and specializations in the association. In other words, the structure of an organisation defines the way individuals should operate, in departments or divisions and is meant to link people as they interact to achieve set goals.

Santos and Nocum (2020) conducted a study on the organisational conditions of private schools and colleges in Nueva Ecija in the Philippines. The study highlighted the aspects of an organisational structure and employees' growth and development. The study further revealed that the organisational structure helps focus on the commitment of all members in achieving goals and objectives of the organisation and at the same time giving opportunities to all the members to become productive according to the distributed roles and responsibilities, acknowledging one's accomplishments and group cohesiveness.

Johnson (2020) conducted a comparative analysis of private schools' organisational structure and identified three common models namely, the proprietorship model, the religious model and the non-profit model. Johnson also highlighted the unique features and challenges each model presented and went further to provide recommendations for improving the organisational structure in the private schools. In conclusion the study recommended that while there was no one-size fits all model of private school organisation, an effective structure should promote accountability, decentralisation and participation. The structure should further reflect the school's vision and mission. In line with this Johnson's work above, our study will also indicate the most appropriate organisational and administrative model for Christian schools/academies in Zambia.

Another study Chizyuka and Daka (2022) explored the relationship between private schools and their organisational structure. Chizyuka and Daka examined the different types of organisational structures commonly found in private schools, namely, Divisional, flat or horizontal and functional and matrixstructures and he went further to evaluate each structure's advantages and disadvantages. The duo explained functional structure as a structure where groups of people perform similar functions according to their specialty, (Arabi ,2007), In addition, the division structure is a structure that follows the roles of employees and categorises them according to clientele (Bosh 2013). Johatch (2014) explain matrix structure as one which combines the functional and divisional structures. In this structure according to (Arabi, 2007) employees are grouped according to functional departments based on their specialty but also placed in divisional teams to work on a given project. Lastly, in the flat model according to (Rezayian, 2005), each employee is or her own boss. The model disrupts the traditional way of top-down structuring of organisations and each employee has autonomy to make deceisions and submit them to the relevant person. In their conclusion, Chizyuka and Daka proposed that while private schools enjoy the autonomy of selecting the organisation structures, they must balance these with accountability measures that ensure educational quality and ethical practice. WhileChizyka and Daka's work was generally focused on private schools' organisational structure and quality education, covering all types of private schools in Lusaka,this study is particularly focused on Christian private schools or academies in Zambia.

Additionally,Chizyuka and Daka (2022)The study was a comparative study of private and public secondary schools. The purpose of the study was toinvestigate the interrelatedness of the school organisational structure and quality education provision. To establish the findings, the study was carried on the private and public secondary schools and the findings were that private schools used the team based organisational structure while the public school used the hierarchical organisational structure.

Allen (2010) conducted a study on the organisational structure and student performance in private school. In his study, Allen found that schools with more decentralised decision-making structures had higher levels of teacher autonomy and greater satisfaction. Allen therefore concluded that the organisation structure in private schools was vital as it helped in shaping academic outcomes. Although Allen's study was related to academic performance of students, it is important to our study as it provided some background for reference inour discussion and explanation of the organizational and administrative structure of Christian academies in Zambia.

As will be seen from the foregoing, many studies having been conducted in different contexts, explaining the importance and types of organisational structures in private schools. However, no studies have focused on the Zambian situation with regard to the Christian academies and their organizational and administrative structure despite these institutions existing in the country. This study will therefore provide this and related information on the Christian academies in Zambia, particularly Lusaka.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The system theory management was used toguide the study, including data analysisand discussion of the findingsof the study. The concept of systems can be traced back to Aristotle who suggests that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Vin Bertalanffay founded the systems theory in 1920 and continued to write about it till 1972. He asserted that it was not enough to understand the parts, that it was also important to understand the relation among the parts. A system may be defined as a series of interrelated and interdependent parts, such that the interaction of any parts (sub-systems) affects the whole system.According to Huse and Bowditch (1977),Henderson (1936),Parson and Shill (1951), the System theory rests on the belief that all systems including the educational system have different parts performing different functions but in such a way that

each part interacts and is interdependent with other parts and with other systems (environment) around it.

The Systems theory views the education system as a complex whole rather than an isolated set of parts. This encourages a holistic approach to management, which means considering the interactions and relationships between different stakeholders including students, teachers' parents and administrators. Furthermore, the aspect of interconnectedness of various elements such as the administration, teaching staff, support staff results in effective running of the institution. This further helps in addressing the systemic issues such as pedagogical methods, resource allocation and administrative policies that impact the functioning of the education system.

Thusby understanding the principles of the systems theory which are interconnectedness, holistic approach, feedback loops, open and closed systems and emergent properties, the school can promote effective communication, collaboration and synergy among the various components of the organisation, leading to improved educational outcomes and a better learning environment for students.

V. METHODOLOGY

An interpretivist research paradigm which was adopted in the study informed the use of an exploratory approach which involved the use of qualitative methods of data collection. Accordingly, a case study research design was deemed appropriate for this study because the researchers needed to have more than one Christian school or academy in the sample in order to come up with meaningful findings. The use of qualitative methods was necessary because the researchers needed to fully understand the organisational and administrative structure of the academies by probing and seeking explanations from the academy proprietors or owners and head teachers of these institutions. The researchers needed to get the proprietors' and head teachers' explanations and justification for the existing organisational and administrative structures of these schools.

The population comprised of all pupils, parents, teachers and administrators of all Christian academies in Zambia, particularly the city of Lusaka, which was the study site. The sample size comprised of pupils, teachers and administrators in selected Christian academies in Lusaka. The purposive sampling approach used targeted these categories of participants as they were the key stakeholders in the Christian academies and were therefore likely to have in-depth information relevant to the study. The Christian academies targeted comprised of both primary and secondary schools or institutions and run from early childhood to either Grade 7 (primary) or Grade 9 (secondary) levels. The schools were also deliberately selected on the basis of location so that the study could benefit from a mixture of low density and high-density compound experiences. The participants' awareness of what goes on in the selected Christian academies helped in the understanding of the organisational structure of these academies.

The researchers utilized interviews as the method of data collection. The method went with interview guides for the different categories of participants as the instrument of actual data collection. The method and instrument were appropriate for the study because it was qualitative in nature and required in-depth understanding of the administrative structure of the Christian academies and the Zambian education system. Thematic analysis was utilised to examine and make sense of the data gathered.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As already stated, the researchers mainly sought to find out and explain the organisational and administrative structure of the Christian academies in Lusaka (and beyond). The participants consulted were mainly the academy proprietors and administrative staff. The following themes emerged from the data collected: organizational and administrative structure, affiliation of the academies to Christian and other organisations; and staffing.

VII. ORGANISATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

In order to establish the organisational and administrative structures of the academies, the participants were asked to explain how their institutions were structurally and administratively organized. It was established that almost all the academies were owned and run by individuals, families or business partners. One school was owned by partners in a limited liability arrangement. It was also observed that almost all the schools or academies were dependent on the fees from learners to run all their activities. Among the sampled schools, those that were affiliated to umbrella private school organizations had the kind of organization structure shown in the figure below:

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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │   School Board   │
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                        │ Director/Directors│
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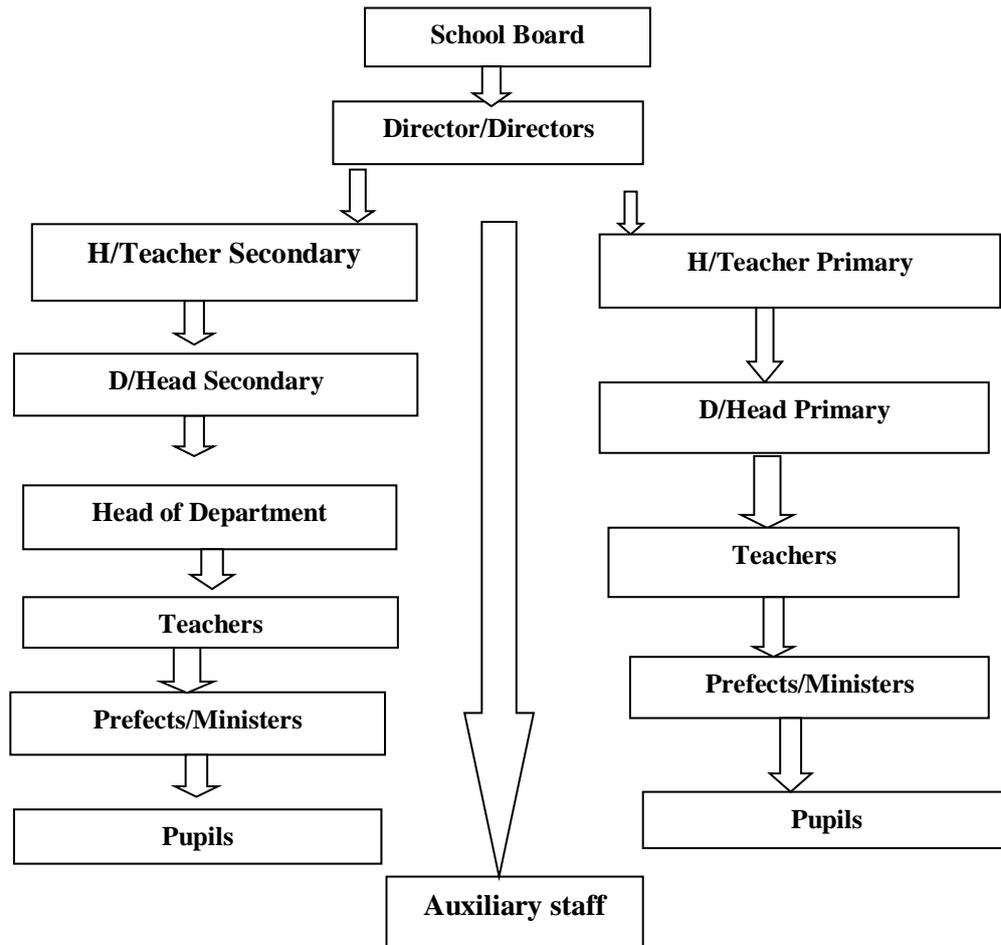
Fig. 2: Organisational Structure of the Christian Academies
Source: Field Data

The figure above shows how the academies affiliated to umbrella private school organizations are structurally organized to ensure the smooth running of the institutions. The highest organ or body which is also responsible for policy is the Board. Below the Board is the director or directors for the academy responsible for providing strategic vision and direction for the academy and oversees the day-to-day operations of the institution. The director was in most cases the owner or a group of owners of the academy or school. The duties of the head teacher are similar to those of the director, except that the head teacher was more focused on the day to day running of their institution which involved staff management, professional development,pupils' welfare and maintaining strong professional relationships.

In line with the foregoing, the head teacher of school C, explained the organizational and administrative structure of the academies as follows:

The affairs of the school in terms of academics are mostly run by the head teachers. All academic activities are managed by the head teacher with his deputy and the senior teachers or head of departments in case of secondary schools. However, issues to do with the auxiliary staff are directly dealt with by the director. The auxiliary staff comprises of the secretary, accounts officer, security officers and cleaners. The cleaners also help in taking care of the young ones in pre-school by sometimes bathing them or helping them to feed.

In school D, it was observed that the accounts officer also served as the secretary and shared the same office with the head teacher. However, such a school is an example of schools that have not yet satisfied the requirements for their registration status.

Among the academies sampled, it was established that threeof the schools wereaffiliated to independent bodies; Private Schools and College Association of Zambia (PRISCA)and Independent School Association of Zambia (ISAZ)and had a slightly different organizational and administrative structure from the one illustrated in figure 1 above. This second structure was as shown in the figure below.

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          ┌─────────────────────────┐
          │   Director/Head teacher  │
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          ┌─────────────────────────┐
          │      Deputy Head         │
          └─────────────────────────┘
                      │
          ┌─────────────────────────┐
          │       Teachers           │
          └─────────────────────────┘
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          ┌─────────────────────────┐
          │    Prefects/ Captains    │
          └─────────────────────────┘
                      │
          ┌─────────────────────────┐
          │        Pupils            │
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                      │
          ┌─────────────────────────┐
          │     Auxiliary staff      │
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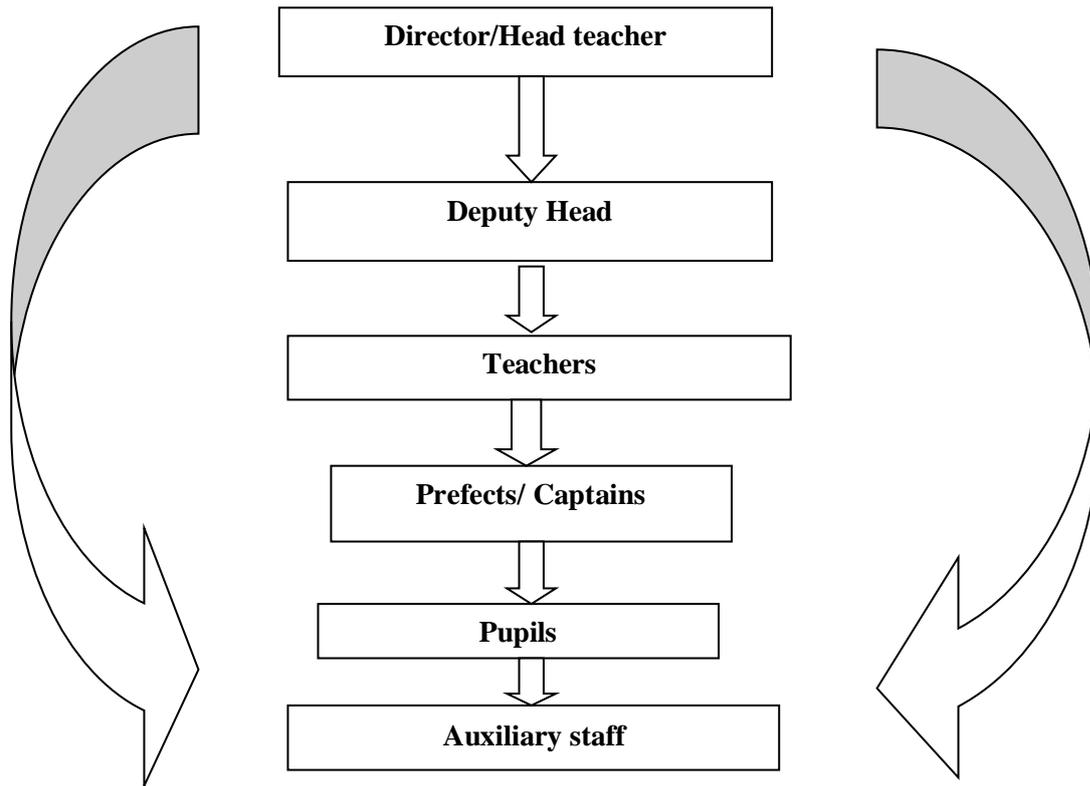
Fig. 3: Alternative Administrative Structure of Christian Academies
Source: Field data

The second figure above shows how the academies affiliated to independent umbrella private school organizations, PRICSA and ISAZ, are structurally and administratively organized. The highest office or authority which is also responsible for policy is the Director or Head teacher. The director was in most cases the owner of the academy. The duties of the head teacher are similar to those of the director, except that the head teacher is more focused on the day to day running of the institution which involves staff management, professional development, pupils' welfare and maintaining strong professional relationships. Below the director/head teacher is the deputy head teacher who is responsible for academic staff and part of administrative responsibilities. The deputy head is followed by teachers who are responsible for classroom teaching and performance of any other duties assigned by the head teacher. Below the teachers are captains or prefects whose responsibility is to assist the school authorities in maintaining order and discipline among fellow pupils. The pupils are of course there to learn and are therefore the main business of the academies. Last but not least are the auxiliary staff who may include secretaries, drivers, cleaners, and garden boys.

As can be seen, though different, the similarity between the first and second organizational and administrative structures is that authority flows directly from the top management to all other members. In as much as the deputy head teacher and other members of staff have their prescribed roles to play, the director will always ensure the running of the school is done according to the way he or she thinks it should be done. The system shows little influence in terms of authority from other members in leadership positions but the director. Cuthbert (2015) states that in a well-structured institution, teachers operate in school clusters and teams of manageable size. These are formed on a basis of initiating staff development and sharing of ideas and knowledge on the new trends. This implies that, for an organisational structure to function effectively it requires a system which has teachers in departments or groups of similar characteristics designed to enhance productivity. This affirms the system theory management which stresses the interconnectedness of entities in an organisation structure like the schools.

Additionally, academies have varying organizational structures which depend on the proprietors and their capacity to take into consideration all the processes involved in establishing an organization such as a school. These findings are in line with Tamamet.et al (2020) who state that the existing organizational structure of private Christian schools is not standard; so, if one of the elements is inappropriate or has no good function, then the structure can be changed and adjusted. For example, the first structure above had the board at the top and which was not necessarily attached to any independent organization. The schools are autonomous and their activities are only regulated by the board or proprietor. Schools with such organizational structures had not yet been registered with the Registrar of Societies as required, but were in the process of meeting requirements to be fulfilled. These findings are also in line with Chizyka and Daka (2022) who explained that there were different types of organisational structures commonly found in private schools namely; Functional,

divisional, flat and matrix and went further to evaluate each structure's advantages and disadvantages. As such, private schools, like the sampled academies in Lusaka, may choose the one which best suits their school environment as these schools are autonomous.

The study revealed that the second organisational structure was the most common in the academies and had the board as the highest position or body but also are also affiliated to an independent organization which facilitates the smooth running in consultation with the Zambian Ministry of Education. This kind of school will have been registered with the Registrar of Societies and in many circumstances had reached an established position and also had two or more streams of classes. George and Jones (2005) depict organisation structure as the relationship between the management team and the workforce for performing formal tasks and reporting. The management team designs the structure of an organization and the basic aspirations is the motivation of employees to work to their expectations of the organisational structure that allows them to best execute their duties to produce desired goals. Therefore, the success of the organisation is also dependent on the organisational structure in terms of its hierarchy structure and line of authority and channels of communication a particular school. The systems theory of management if applied can help optimise the education system in academies by providing a structured approach to understanding and managing the complex interactions among the various connections.

VIII. AFFILIATION OF ACADEMIESTO CHRISTIANORGANISATIONS

In probing further on the organizational and administrative structure of the academies, the participants were asked whether these institutions were affiliated to Christian organizations since all of them carried the word, 'Christian' in their names. From the responses given, it was clear that all the academies or schools sampled were not affiliated to any Christian body. Thus at school C, the two teachers interviewed indicated that they themselves as individuals belonged to different Christian denominations. One said: *'I am a member of the New Apostolic Church'*, while the other said: *'I am a member of the United Church of Zambia.'*At school 'D' the head teacher stated: '*The couple which owns the school are members of the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) and the teachers and other members of staff belong to various denominations.'*

This religious affiliation situation applied to the learners too. During the focus group discussion at school 'A', one of the learners reported as follows:

Some of our friends belong to the Buddhist religious tradition and each time they need to go for their religious activities, they are given permission to go. At other times religious leaders come and conduct their religious programmes within the school premises.

Still atacademy 'A'which was also a boarding school, the teacher interviewed confirmed the learners report as follows: 'O*ur learners have a free denominational path and we have a system of ensuring that they register on a weekly basis their schedules of religious activities.'*

In response to why the academies carried the word 'Christian' in their names, a volunteer from one of the independent affiliating bodies offered this explanation:

These schools in many instances use the word Christian simply for business purposes; to attract parents many of whom associate good morals with Christianity. Many parents in Zambia subscribe to Christian values and would like these values to be imparted into their children. The use of 'Christian' also meant to ensure that they are in line with the constitutional Christian nation. The word 'Christian' is also further used to ensure easy and quick registration at PACRA, (Patents and Company Registration Agency) and the Registrar of Societies.

According to Baum et. al. (2017), these academies fall under private schools which are owned and managed by religious institutions and private individuals. These schools receive no subsidies from the government and they only collect user fees from parents.The report further states the four categories of schools found in Zambia as private, grand-aided, community, and government schools.

From the above findings it is clear that the academies have novalid explanation to justify the inclusion of the word 'Christian' in the school names; theyhave no special religious reasons for their Christian tag and just use it for business purposes. At the same time, the use of the Christian tag can be linked to the very nature of faith-based education in which religious identity is upheld in many ways, including through the names of institutions and ethos.

IX. AFFILIATION OF ACADEMIES TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

As earlier explained, although the academies in the study were not officially affiliated to any Christian bodies or churches, they were, however, affiliated to other umbrella bodies or professional organizations such as the PRISCA and ISAZ, while some remained unregistered and operated as independent institutions. To this effect, one of the administrators interviewed at school B reported as follows:

Our school is affiliated to the Independent School Association of Zambia (ISAZ), a professional organization that does not tolerate low standards. The school is also an International General Certificate of Secondary Education Centre (IGCSE) for Cambridge Examinations.

Similarly, of the six sampled schools, three were affiliated to two different organizations. Thus the head teacher of school 'C' reported as follows:

Our school is affiliated to Private School and Colleges Association of Zambia (PRISCA) and our learners participate in co-curricular activities with other schools affiliated to the same organization. Like in government schools, our learners get involved in sporting activities, debate and scripture union meetings with the other schools which are members of our affiliating organization. The affiliatingorganisation also playsthe important role of preparing common mock examinations for our learners in affiliated schools before our learners are exposed to government national examinations at the end of the year.

Additionally, the schools or academies were free to change affiliation from one affiliating institution to another. For example, a teacher at school B reportedthathisschool was initially affiliated to PRISCA but was now an affiliate of ISAZ.

Chita and Masaiti (2014) opines that the democratic government of Zambia promote and recognizes the national policy of education of 1996 Educating our Future) which focuses on the decentralization, partnership, equity and effectiveness of education. The above view justifies the reason for the private schools which operate in partnership with the government to ensure that they enhance the aspect of equity and effectivenessin the provision of education as they consolidate partnerships with other bodies since the government do not have direct influence on the schools.

Hiemstra and Brink (2003) state that diverse traditions understand the role of faith schooling in different ways ranging from religious observance, morality, religious course topermutation and integration of faith in schooling. Emanating from the above positions, it can be assumed that academies in Zambia have employed Christian names as part of religious marketing in order to attract religious parents or guardians who would seek religious values in the education system. Therefore, the religious context which is predominately Christian coupled with the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation has created a fertile landscape for Christian academies. This is further supported by the system theory of management which has been utilized in this study,the theory's main focus is looking at a system as a series of interrelated and interdependent part. Therefore, for a school to function properly as a system, it needs to have part that interacts with each other and in academies the interaction of education and religion enables the achievement of the goals and values of the system.

X. TEACHING STAFFING

In terms of staffing, the numbers of members of staff in these academies ranged from 10 to 30 as of 5th April 2022. School A which had the highest number of academic staff had initially started with6 teachers and now had 18. The picture and numbers at the other sampled schools were not very different as can be seen in the table below.

Academy/Institution	Number of Academic Staff	*Qualifications*
A	18	11 Degree and holders, 7 diplomas
C	12	7 diplomas, 5 degrees
E	17	6 Degree holders,8 diplomas and 3 certificates
B	11	3-degree holders, 3 diploma holders and 5 certificates
F	20	13-degree holders, 7 diploma holders
D	15	4-degree holders and 11 diploma holders

The study also revealed that the academies were generally not consistent on staffinglevels as they changed staff on a regular basis. Accordingly, almost the schools sampled had teachers who had been in those schools only for a period ranging from only months to 3 years except for one which had a few teachers who had been there since its inception. This in turn affected their organisational structures as at times it was difficult and took longer than expected to place or replace key staff members or office bearers on the school organisational and administrative structures. This may consequently affect the achievement of expected outcomes of the schools as organisations.

With regard to qualifications, it was found that the teachers had the right qualifications to teach the subjects they taught as they were trained at recognized institutions of teacher education and had varying qualifications ranging from a degree to certificate. This was in line with the Teaching Council of Zambia's requirement that all schools be it government or private should have certified teaching staff. In terms of the systems theory,management has a series of interrelated and interdependent aspects. Assuch despite a school having staff members with moderate qualifications, the school goals can still be achieved since the aspect of interrelated and interdependent will be at play. In other words, the culture of sharing ideas among differently qualified will exist and lead to working as a team in achieving institutional goals.

XI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the Christian academies or schools have no specific and uniform organizational and administrative structure. These schools choose and use organisational structures which their boards or proprietors consider to be beneficial to the institution. This means that the system in the academies is not democratic and does not allow other members of staff to freely contribute to the day to day running of the institution. Thus the choice of structure may negatively affect the effective running of the institution if the structure does not allow the interaction of units and collaborative decision making in the institution to contribute to the day to day running of the organization.

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Therefore, in order to minimise the risks of disorganization and to ensure effective running of the institutions, the study recommends that a particular organizational structure should be adopted for use bythe Christian academies.The adopted structure should take into consideration, parents and community involvement.The structure should provide for a team of qualified staff which should be supported with professional development programmes.The head teachersor school managers should have relevant experience in school management. Additionally, advisory boards should be established to provide guidance on academic programmes, religious aims to be achieved, community relations and strategic planning.

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