

**ROLE OF THE YOUTH AND CHURCH'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT IN BUHOMA PARISH, KAYOZA ARCHEADICONARY,
DIOCESE OF KINKIZI, KANUNGU DISTRICT**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION:

I Bagambe Nelson, hereby declare that this work is my original and has never been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for the award of a Diploma or Bachelor's degree in theology.

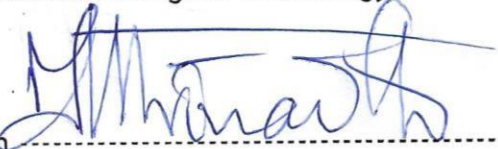
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I hereby certify that this research report was done under my supervision and was submitted to the head of theology and divinity department; Uganda Christian University, Bishop Bahram University-College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor's Degree in theology.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved wife Mrs. Grace Bagambe, my parents Charles Bucerimaza and Sikola Mperize, my uncle Mr. Caleb Musimenta, and my children (Atusasire Davy, Akantorana Liz and Aturinzire Daisy) for the great support rendered to me during the process of this block placement and academic journey both spiritually, physically and economically may the Almighty God bless them abundantly.

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I appreciate the Almighty GOD who enabled me to complete my Research report effectively through His mercy, care and love. A vote of thanks to my university college supervisor Rev. Alex Kiifaru who enabled me to complete my research report successfully, Rev. Julius Twinomugyisha of St. Paul's Buhoma C.O.U, Lay reader Mrs. Jenifer Tibesigwa, head of laity Mr. Yonah Tumwesigye, Church wardens, youth leaders and friends; who supported me in my research through inspiring, supporting and encouragement to continue my research without retreat or getting tired.

ABRIVIATIONS

C.O.U Church of

Uganda **St.** Saint

D.R.C Democratic Republic of Congo

B.N.P.H Bwindi National Park Headquarters

U.S.N.B Uganda School of Nursing

ABSTRACT

This research examines the role of youth to the spiritual growth and development of Buhoma Church of Uganda in Kanungu district. The study defines youth as individuals below 35 years, aligning with both church policies and broader age classifications, including those aged 13 to 19 and up to 35. It highlights that youth play active roles in church activities, such as leading worship, teaching, and participating in outreach programs, which help foster spiritual vitality within the church community.

The study utilized questionnaires, interviews, observations, and personal experiences to gather data from church leaders, youth members, and wardens, employing purposive and stratified sampling techniques. It focused on understanding the current roles of youth, the opportunities available for their role, and the challenges they face in contributing to the church's spiritual development. The findings reveal that despite their potential, youth role at Buhoma Church is often limited or hindered by various factors.

Ultimately, the research aims to identify best practices and remedies to enhance youth participation in spiritual growth activities. It emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive opportunities for youth to engage actively in church life, which lead to stronger spiritual development both within the church and the wider community. The study advocates for improved strategies to address the challenges faced by youth, ensuring their meaningful participation to the church's spiritual vitality.

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CHAPTER ONE:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

1.0 Introduction:

This chapter covers the highlights on the background, statement of the problem, objectives, purpose of the study, research questions, scope, significance of the study and conceptual framework of the study variables. This study sought to examine the role of the youth in the church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma Parish, kayoza archdeaconry, diocese of kinkiizi. **Jean Vanier (1970s-1980s)**, emphasized that youth bring energy, creativity, and renewal to the church community. Vanier highlighted the importance of involving young people in service and to sustain the church's vitality in the church's spiritual growth and development, while **Samuel Escobar (2000s)**, noted that youth are pivotal for the church's evangelization efforts, especially in multicultural contexts. He emphasized their role in spreading the Gospel in innovative ways.

David H. M. (2005), emphasizes that youth participation revitalizes church life and ensures continuity of faith traditions. He argues that engaging young people in liturgical and community activities fosters a sense of spiritual growth and development of the church. In addition, Youth are actively engaged in discussions on moral and ethical issues based on Christian teachings for example; exploring the messages on dangers of the early marriage, prenatal sex, and promoting discipline to the young generation. They serve as ambassadors of faith among their peers, encouraging moral integrity, evangelism, and discipleship, which contribute to strengthening the church's spiritual growth and development. **Grace N. (2010)**,

highlights that youth-led initiatives within the Church have contributed significantly to social justice advocacy and community service, particularly in urban areas. She notes that youth involvement often leads to innovative outreach programs.

Stephen B. (2015), argues that involving youth in church activities helps in their spiritual growth and development, and fosters a sense of belonging. He emphasizes that active participation encourages young people to develop spiritual leadership skills and a deeper commitment to their faith, whereas **Mary T. (2012)**, states that youth involvement in church's spiritual growth and development is essential for the sustainability of the church's mission. She asserts that engaging young people ensures the continuity of church traditions and helps in addressing contemporary social issues through fresh perspectives.

1.2 Background of the study.

According to **James K. (2017)**, emphasizes that the youth play a vital role in revitalizing the spiritual life of the church through active engagement in prayer groups, worship services, and faith-based discussions. He suggests that their enthusiasm and fresh perspectives contribute to the church's spiritual growth and development vibrancy, while **Elizabeth M. (2017)**, notes that youth serve as catalysts for spiritual development by participating in mentorship programs, evangelism, and community outreach. Her research indicates that, their involvement in the church fosters personal faith maturity while inspiring others within the church community.

From the above background, the researcher sought to examine the role of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma church of Uganda as a topic of significance importance, particularly in this contemporary period where the church

is facing many challenges emanating from the young generation. This is because, the youths in the church are often referred to as the future of the church in which they are supposed to play a vital role in the spiritual church growth and development.

According to Anglican scholar **Rev. John K. (2009)**, youth are defined as "young people who are in a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, characterized by their search for identity, purpose, and spiritual growth." He emphasizes that youth are a vital demographic in the church, representing hope and future development of the church. Basing on this definition, the researcher, emphasized on making the youth active in the church setting done through the church support by providing or allocating funds to use for the activities of youth. He also emphasized on employing a paid staff member in charge of this group to lead them known as the youth leader or pastor for the youth groups, or other similar titles. This person can be either a lay person, or a religious person, or be a member of the ordained clergy, depending on the needs and resources of the church. His or her duties will include orchestrating the activities of the youth group.

According to Anglican scholar **R. E. Webber (1985)**, church growth refers to "the process of increasing the number of active members in the church, along with their spiritual maturity and overall health, leading to a vibrant and expanding faith community." Webber emphasizes that church growth is not solely about numerical increase but also about the deepening of faith and discipleship among members. It cannot be disputed that youths play an important role in the spiritual growth and development of the church and the church should put much effort in utilizing her youths in church's spiritual growth and development. The elderly and the church

leadership team should allow the youths to be flag bearers of every church in the spiritual growth and development.

According to R. E. Webber, for any tangible spiritual church growth and development to take place in any church, the youths must be significant in all church processes aimed at church's spiritual growth and development. This shows that, without the involvement of the youth in the spiritual affairs of the church, the church can grow and development spiritually. It is important in today's church to prepare assiduously youths for the tasks they would naturally face in the coming future. The question is; how much do church authorities give to the youths and what level of devotion does the youths give to the church?

David and Pat A. emphasized that: "Salvation is God's gift, but it carries with the obligation to live and behave, from that point on, as God wants". This taught the researcher that, deliberately discarding the old selfish way of life, shedding the former habits, and letting new life change youth thinking and remold their pattern behavior can make the youth live a spiritual life that supports the church's spiritual growth and development. According to the alexander's view, our salvation carries with it a responsibility for a new lifestyle; we are expected to change our thinking, remold our lifestyle, and to live of obedience to the word of God.

The researcher connected David's and Pat A. statements with those of our lord Jesus explained that: therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. The rain come down, the streams rose, and the wind blew and beat against that house, yet did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of and

does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built a house on the sand. The rain come own, the streams rose and the winds blew and beats against that house and it fell with great crash (**Matthew 7:24-27**). This taught the researcher that, youth are to be like the builder who built the house on the rock and they should use their spiritual gifts in church's journey of spiritual growth and development.

According to Anglican scholar **John R. W. (2009)**, church growth and development refer to the process of expanding the church's membership, deepening the spiritual maturity of its members, and strengthening its organizational structures to effectively fulfill its mission in the community. He emphasizes that this growth is both numerical and spiritual, aiming for holistic development within the church. This made the researcher to note that, church leaders Buhoma church through the office of the Diocesan Youth coordinator should to allowed to introduce youth spiritual developmental projects, bands and live music systems in the church so as to compete with the New created Pentecostal churches which are taking much of the youth away, involving the youth in planning for the church, giving youth responsibilities in church, introducing Bible study classes, encourage youth conferences, and assistance training programs , all aimed at equipping the youth with skills that help them understand their contribution in Church's spiritual growth and development.

1.3 Statement of the Problem.

Despite the vital role that youth engagement plays in the spiritual growth and development of the church, many churches might face challenges in actively incorporating the youth in spiritual activities and development roles. This situation could raise concerns about the effectiveness of current youth engagement strategies

and whether they adequately address the spiritual needs and interests of young people. The lack of active youth in spiritual growth and development of the church, may hinder the church's ability to foster a vibrant spiritual community, develop future leaders, and sustain its mission over time. The researcher sought to investigate the roles of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development. This research aims to fill the gap by providing insights that will help church leaders create more inclusive and engaging spiritual programs tailored to the youth.

The questions are; what amount of attention does the church give to the youths, and what level of devotion does the youths give to the church? The researcher thought that; Anglican churches could have missed the incredible youth capital where by the so much energy and passion that would fill the concrete walls of the churches are turned on and off, denied space and ignored their contribution. A case study being the researcher's area church "Buhoma parish in Kayonza archdeaconry, diocese of Kinkiizi". The researcher thought that most of the spiritual growth and development in churches is borne from the hearts and minds of the young people.

1.4 The purpose of the study.

The purpose of the study is to examine the role of the youth in the church's spiritual growth and development. Specifically, the research aims to identify roles of the youth in the spiritual growth and development of the church, examine the challenges and opportunities of youth involvement in the church's spiritual growth and development. Additionally, the study seeks to provide practical remedies and recommendation for the church leaders and the church stakeholders to enhance youth engagement strategies, foster s more inclusive spiritual environment and ensure the active

participation of young people in the life and mission of the church. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the development of effective approaches that will promote sustained youth involvement, spiritual maturity, and the long-term vitality of the church.

1.5 The general Objectives of the study.

The general objective of this study was to explore the impact of youth involvement on a church's spiritual growth and development.

The study was guided by the following objectives: -

- a) To examine the roles of youth in the church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma church of Uganda.
- b) To examine the challenges and opportunities of youth in the church's Spiritual growth and development in Buhoma church of Uganda.
- c) To identify the best practices and remedies for the challenges of youth in church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma church of Uganda.

Research Questions.

The research study was guided by the following questions;

- a. What are the roles of youth in the church's spiritual growth and development in the church at Buhoma church of Uganda?
- b. What are the challenges and opportunities faced by the youth in church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda?
- c. What are the practical remedies for the challenges of youth in church's spiritual

growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda?

1.6 The scope of the study.

1.7.1 Content scope.

The major aim of the study was to examine the role of youth and church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma parish, kayoza archdeaconry, Diocese of Kinkizi in particular in realizing youth activities in the church.

1.7.2 Geographical scope.

The research activity was carried out in the area where the church is located at St. Paul's Buhoma C.O.U is approximately 16kms from the Diocese of Kinkiizi headquarters along Nkwenda (Bwindi)-Buhoma-Butogota-Kanungu road. It is in Buhoma Town Council, Kinkizi West constituency, Kanungu district in South Western Uganda and it borders the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. It shares her boundaries with Rungando C.O.U. parish, Bwindi community hospital and Mukono C.O.U. parish.

1.7.3 Time scope.

This study focuses on the role of youth and church's spiritual growth and development. The research examines youth aged between 12 to 35 years and their participation in various church activities such as worship services, youth groups, outreach programs, and spiritual development sessions. The study covered a period of the past 10years, aiming to capture current trends and perceptions regarding to the roles of the youth in the church's spiritual growth and development. The scope is limited to understanding the roles of youth in church's spiritual growth and development, challenge and opportunities and practical remedies for the challenges faced by the youth in the church. It does not extend to other aspects such as doctrinal

teachings or administrative church functions unless directly related to youth participation. This focused scope allows for an in-depth analysis of youth engagement within the specified context, providing relevant insights and recommendations for that community.

1.7 Significance of the study.

This research will assist churches, ministries, pastors, among others in discovering the roles youths play in the life of the church as the leaders of tomorrow and future of the Anglican church of Uganda. From this research, we will discover what a healthy church is like and how youth life style can boost church's spiritual growth and development.

The research will act as an eye opener and the appraisal for the youth in church, and the findings of the study will help other ministries and provide the ways of how they can perform hence helping or contributing to the spiritual growth and development of the church.

The study findings will help to generate new knowledge to the church members as and all who are involved in policy formulation and implementation upon the spiritual growth and development of the church and how to design and formulate appropriate policies for the churches.

The study will act as reference for future research as it will also provide literature for future research readers and Academic Award of Degree in Divinity.

1.8 limitations of the study

The researcher encountered insufficient funds which affected his study especially in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature and in the process of collecting data that needed to be got from the internet, and use of questionnaires. Additionally, time which was given to carry this research study was also insufficient to obtain the whole information required in the research

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction.

This chapter presents the review of related literature on the role of youth in spiritual growth and development of the church, challenges and opportunities of the youth in the church's spiritual growth and development, and the best practical remedies for the challenges of youth involvement in church's spiritual growth and development.

2.2 The role of youth in the church's spiritual growth and development.

James K. (2017), emphasizes that the youth ministry plays a vital role in revitalizing the spiritual life and development of the church through active engagement in prayer groups, worship services, and faith-based discussions. He suggests that the youth have enthusiasm and fresh perspectives contribute to the church's spiritual growth and development vibrancy

This is very important because the youth are active and show deep involvement in the activities and affairs of the church. This is so because, a young generation is the seed bed for the future church, and hence struggles to boost its stand in the spiritual growth and development of the church. Today, Youth focus on inviting those who are not already part of the church into the deeper narrative of God's plan. In speaking of the dynamics of the church in which the youth are members they refer to the freedom they have as youth, for instance, to have an opportunity to talk about issues (for instance sex and its associated impacts) that they were not able to talk about in their rural areas back home.

James, K. (2017), noted that, the church recognizes the youth spiritual roles which civic youth organizations are making to rural youth. Various Church bodies have developed special programs to encourage the youth of their congregations to derive maximum benefit from participation in both the youth programs of the church and the civic youth organizations. Not only had the churches encouraged youth to participate in the programs of their local congregations for religious instruction, worship, and fellowship, but also, they have encouraged the youth to participate in civic youth organizations for the opportunity of learning and the opportunity of serving God in the church communities.

North American Division Youth Ministries (2010), stated that the youth's involvement in the church is about "Training young people to lead the cause of Christ, and apply Christianity to every area of life". If we do not know that, the teenagers will not either. This has compelled the researcher to suggest that there is a need of every effort by the Christian community to reach out to the youth with the love of God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ (as in John 10:10); through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This informs the researcher that there is a need for both junior and high school students to grow as individuals while exploring the spiritual roles, and faith within the context of a supportive community of peers and adults is a church-wide aspect which strives to provide a variety of opportunities and experiences to draw the young people into active, responsible participation in the church's spiritual life, mission, and work of the faith community and the greater church is designed to help spiritually train and equip the youth in a fun and Godly atmosphere to the Glory of God, work to

foster the total personal and spiritual growth and development of each young person and seeks to draw young people into responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community. The Church in its pastoral concern, reaching out to young people to embrace their gifts and to walk with them in their process of becoming all they can be is defined as the response of the Church to the needs of young people, fostering their faith in Jesus Christ and their communion with the Blessed Trinity, and drawing them into responsible participation in the life, mission and ministry of the Church.

Mark Matlock, (1969) identified five things he thinks the Youth in the church is doing today. It informs the researcher that these are all things that are done, no matter the size of our congregation. "Youths are vital to helping teenagers integrate into the larger, intergenerational community of the church, resists the status quo, helping the church stay relevant, focuses on inviting those who are not already part of the church into the deeper narrative of God's plan, reminds the church that teens are not marginalized members of the body, but co-creators and conspirators in the divine work of the church, helps the church focus on the way of Jesus, which goes beyond tradition, dogma, work.

Youth according to **Houston and Halflin, (2005)** is a spirit led discipleship process by which God works through Christian adults to lead young people into relationship with God and to Christ like maturity as part of the body of Christ, (the church).

2.3. Challenges and opportunities faced by the youth in the spiritual growth and development of the church.

2.3.1 Challenges faced by the youth in the spiritual growth and development of the church.

Despite the overall positive involvement of the youth in church spiritual growth and development, some respondents reported several challenges hindering their full involvement in the church's spiritual growth and development which include the following:

According to **Jones, M. (2015)**, one significant challenge for youth in their spiritual growth and development in the church in their spiritual journey is peer pressure from friends and social circles that do not share or support their faith. Adolescents and young adults often face conflicting influences from peers involved in secular or alternative lifestyles, which lead to doubts or disinterest in church activities. This external pressure weakens their commitment to spiritual practices and make it difficult for them to maintain consistent involvement in church life.

According to **Shepherd N. (2011)**, many youths to day find traditional church services or programs outdated, irrelevant, or unengaging, which hampers their spiritual growth and development in the church. When church activities do not resonate with their interests or address contemporary issues faced by the youth, it becomes challenge for them to connect meaningfully. Without innovative and relatable programs, youth feel disconnected or indifferent towards their spiritual growth and development.

Another challenge faced by the youth in the church today is limited mentorship and

guidance. Youth often struggle with uncertainties about their faith and moral decisions. The absence of strong mentorship or role models within the church hinder their ability to navigate these challenges. When youth lack access to guiding figures who can provide spiritual direction, encouragement, and support, their growth may stagnate, and they might seek guidance elsewhere, sometimes outside church community (Shepherd N. 2011).

Additionally, today's youth in the church are faced with the challenge of balancing academic, social, and spiritual life with the church's spiritual growth and development. The busy schedules of the youth, including academic pursuits, social activities, and personal development, often leave little time and energy for spiritual practices. This balancing results in neglecting spiritual growth, making it difficult for the youths to prioritize for the church involvement and personal prayer or reflection. As a result, their spiritual growth and development take a backseat amidst other competing responsibilities.

Further still, the youth face a challenge of balancing technological distraction and digital culture with the church's spiritual growth and development. The pervasive influence of technology and social media presents both challenges to the youth. While these platforms can be used for spiritual growth and development of the church, they also serve as distractions that divert attention away from spiritual growth and development of the church. Excessive screen time, exposure to secular content, and online peer influences diminish the focus on faith-based practices and lead to superficial engagement with spirituality (Nelson M. 2011).

The youth in the church face a challenge of fear of judgment and lack of acceptance. Many youths in the church today, feel hesitant to openly express their faith or participate actively in church activities due to fear of judgment or lack of acceptance within their peer groups or even within their church community. This apprehension creates a barrier to spiritual growth and development of the church, leading to feelings of alienation and reluctance to seek the church's spiritual growth and development opportunities. Creating an inclusive and supportive environment is essential to overcome this challenge (Mashua T. 2014).

Another challenge faced by the youth in the church is the inconsistent family support and religious upbringing. Family plays a crucial role in shaping young person's spiritual life. When there is inconsistent or lack of religious spiritual guidance at home, youths struggle to develop a strong spiritual foundation. Conversely, conflicting values between family and the church environments create confusion or disengagement, making it difficult for young people to fully embrace and progress in their church. In certain contexts, cultural norms or social expectations conflict with religious teachings, creating tension for youths trying to live out their faith authentically. Facing discrimination, stereotypes, or societal pressures discourage participation in church activities and hinder spiritual growth and development of the church. Overcoming these barriers, requires community support and a nurturing environment that affirms their journey (Grace N.2010).

Mental health and emotional struggles are another challenge faced by the youth in the church today. Many youths face mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, or identity crisis, which hinder their spiritual growth and development in the church.

When dealing with emotional struggles, young people find it hard to focus on church's spiritual growth and development practices or feel disconnected from their faith community. Addressing mental health concerns with sensitivity and integrating spiritual care is vital for supporting their overall development. Additionally, some youths do not have a comprehensive understanding of their faith doctrines or church spiritual principles. This lack of knowledge leads to doubts, misconceptions, or superficial faith that does not foster deep spiritual growth and development of the church. Continuous education, theological understanding, and open discussions are necessary to help youth develop a meaningful and resilient faith (Jones M. 2015).

Difficulty in applying faith in daily is also a challenge faced by the youth in their role in church's spiritual growth and development. Translating spiritual teachings into every day actions is becoming a challenge for the youth. They struggle with practicing forgiveness, honesty, charity, or other core values consistently amidst peer influences and real-world challenges. Developing practical ways to integrate faith into daily routines is crucial for sustained spiritual growth and development maturity. In addition, in some communities, youth lack access to resource such as religious literature, mentorship programs, or youth- focused spiritual events. This scarcity impedes their ability to learn, grow, and stay motivated in their faith journey. Enhancing access to diverse spiritual tools and creating tools and creating youth-centric resource centers can support their spiritual growth and development in the church (Jones M. 2015)

2.3.2 Opportunities for the youth involvement in church's spiritual growth and development:

According to Vanier and Jean (1985), Creating youth-focused spiritual programs and

church activities create an opportunity for the youth involvement in the church's spiritual growth and development. Creating engaging, relevant, and youth-centric programs significantly foster spiritual growth and development in the church. Activities such as youth retreats, bible study groups, prayer meetings, and service projects tailored to their interests and concerns help young people connect more deeply with their church. These programs offer a platform for open dialogue, spiritual learning, and community building, encouraging youth to participate actively and grow spiritually.

Providing mentorship and leadership development where older, mature believers guide and support young people have a profound impact to the church's spiritual growth and development. Mentors serve as role models, offering spiritual guidance, encouragement, and constructive feedback. Additionally, involving youth in leadership roles within the church such as organizing events or leading prayer groups empowers them, builds their confidence, and nurtures a sense of responsibility and purpose in their faith journey (Mary T 2012).

According to Escobar, Samuel (2004), the use of technology and social media creates an opportunity for the youth involvement in the church's spiritual growth and development. Leveraging technology offers a modern avenue for spiritual engagement. Churches can utilize social media platforms, mobile apps, and online forums to share devotionals, inspirational messages, and educational content. Virtual prayer meetings, podcasts, and streaming church services provide flexible access, especially for youth who are tech-savvy and accustomed to digital interactions, making spiritual growth more accessible and appealing.

Another opportunity given by **Mary T. (2012)** that makes the youth involved in the church's spiritual growth and development is the integration of service and social justice initiatives. This helps the youth understand the relevance of spiritual principle like compassion, justice, and charity in real-world contexts. Participating in such activities not only enhances engaging youth outreach, community service, and social justice projects provides practical their spiritual maturity but also develops their sense of purpose and responsibility towards society.

Providing access to quality religious education, discipleship classes, and theological resources equips youth with a stronger understanding of their faith. Structured learning opportunities help clarify doctrinal questions, deepen their spiritual knowledge, and foster critical thinking about their beliefs. Such educational efforts lay a solid foundation for mature and resilient faith development (**Mary T. 2012**)

Encouraging youth to express their faith through arts such as music, dance, drama, poetry, and visual arts is a powerful way to deepen their spiritual growth and development experience in the church. Creative outlets allow young people to explore and communicate their faith authentically, fostering personal reflection and connecting with others on a spiritual level (**De Beer S. 2012**). He further added that; facilitating interactions between youth and older members promotes mentorship, shared wisdom, and mutual understanding. Interrogational activities such as storytelling sessions, joint service projects, or prayer groups help youth gain a broader perspective of the faith with a broader worldview that leads them to be involved in the spiritual growth and development of the church.

According to **David H. (2005)**, encouraging the practice of personal spiritual

disciplines such as prayer, fasting, meditation, and journaling helps youth develop a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. Organizing spiritual retreats or quiet days provides dedicated time for reflection, renewal, and strengthening their faith commitments away from everyday distractions thus creating an opportunity to be involved in church's spiritual growth and development.

According to **Grace N. (2010)**, introducing the youth to global mission, cross-culture exchange broadens their understanding of faith in diverse contexts. These opportunities foster empathy, humility, and a sense of global Christian identity, inspiring young people to live out their faith with a broader worldview.

Stephen B. (2015) added that, celebrating milestones such as baptism, confirmation, or answered prayers affirms the spiritual journey of the youth's faith in the church's spiritual growth and development. Recognition through ceremonies, testimonies or awards boost motivation and creates a sense of achievement, encouraging continued spiritual growth and development in the church. He also argued that; providing access to spiritual counseling and support services helps youth navigate personal struggles, doubts, or crises with faith-based guidance. Trained counselors, or pastoral care teams offers a safe space for open conversations, healing, and spiritual strengthening during challenging times.

2.4 Practical remedies to the challenges facing the youth

According to **Linhart H. (2014)**, churches should foster a welcoming and inclusive environment through mentorship programs and peer support groups. Additionally, by encouraging integrational interactions and create opportunities for youth to share their experiences and concerns openly, and building a strong sense of community

helps youth feel valued and connected in church's spiritual growth and development.

Linhart continues to say; developing relevant and dynamic programs that resonate with youth interests and contemporary issues. By incorporating multimedia, technology, and interactive activities to make spiritual lessons engaging make the youth get involved in the church's spiritual growth and development. Church leaders should regularly seek feedback from young people who are active in church activities to toil activities that capture their attention and meet their spiritual needs.

According to David H. (2005), churches should provide safe spaces for open dialogue where the youth can ask questions and express without judgment. Furthermore, the church should offer access to acknowledgeable mentors, pastors, or counselors who can address their concerns with patience and understanding. Educational resources that clarify doctrinal issues also strengthen faith for the youth who are involved in church's spiritual growth and development.

Churches should educate the youth on critical thinking and media literacy to help them discern and navigate secular influences. By encouraging balancing digital engagement with spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, bible study and creating compelling spiritual content platforms draw the attention of the youth back to church's spiritual growth and development (Stephen B. 2015).

Churches should recognize and celebrate each youth's spiritual milestone and youth sports day and talents organized by their dioceses. Churches should offer encouragement through mentorship and positive reinforcement and organize activities that build confidence in church's spiritual growth and development such as spiritual leadership roles, or service projects to foster a sense of purpose and self-worth

rooted in spiritual growth and development of the church (Escobar, Samuel 2004).

According to **Shepherd N. (2011)**, Churches should collaborate with the community organizations and leverage church resources creatively to offer varied opportunities for church's spiritual growth and development. Church leaders should seek sponsorships, grants, or partnerships to fund youth programs, retreats, and service initiatives. In addition, the church should encourage volunteerism and participation in existing church spiritual activities to maximize available resources aim at promoting the role of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development

According to **Nelson M. (2015)**, churches should promote a church culture that emphasizes positive peer support and accountability. It is the duty of the church leaders to establish peer mentoring groups and accountability partners to reinforce healthy spiritual habits and educate youth on resisting peer pressure and making faith-based decisions on the church's spiritual growth and development confidently. In addition, church should provide accessible spiritual counseling and pastoral care tailored to youth needs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction.

In this chapter, the researcher focused on the methods that were used to collect data and its analysis. He explored the underlying methodological consideration for data collection exercise to answer the research questions on the role of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development. The researcher presented the research design, study population, sample size, sampling selection, data collection procedures and instruments, data processing presentation, interview methods, data analysis and interpretation, validity and reliability of the data collected, and ethical consideration.

3.1. Research design.

A research design is a map consisting of the procedures the researcher follows in order to answer the research problem (Kothari, 2004). It involves the stapes and procedures for conducting the research to address the logical problem in the research. The study employed descriptive research design based on qualitative approach used to establish the extent and rate of the problem. Emphasis was put on collecting data from top management, staff, Clergy and other committed committee members passionate for role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to obtain information from the specific respondents in the church.

3.2. Study Population.

A population refers to the set of all available for a study inquiry. It describes the units the researcher intends to investigate in order to address the problem (Creswell, 2009), whereas Gupta (2008), defines a population (or universe) as the totality of items or things under consideration. The study population was 92 participants and the study population for the current youth in Buhoma church of Uganda parish included Clergy, youth leaders and forums to present the relationship between the variables basing on the data collected in accordance to the research topic and parish. This population was considered because they had directly participated in youth spiritual church activities as beneficiaries.

3.3 Sample Size Determination.

In research, it is hard to investigate the entire population. In this case, the researcher adopts a sample to infer results to the population. A sample is a set of units collected from the study population for investigation purposes. For the study to be adequate for generalization it must be representative enough (Kothari, 2004). Data collection was done using purposive sample technique. Due to limited resources available and time, but high degree of accuracy is desired, the purposive sample technique was applied. This is also favored by the nature and the scope of the problem at and the archdeaconry covers a wider area.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Strategies.

Sampling refers to the process of identifying and selecting units from the study population to constitute the sample. The selection is sometimes random (probably sampling) or non- random (non-probability sampling). The study mainly used purposive and stratified sampling techniques as shown in the table below. The researcher used a

sample of 92 respondents as guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling estimations. Proportional allocation helped in determining the sample size to be drawn from each population category. The table below shows the population and sample distribution.

Table 1: Population category and sample size

| Category | population | Sample | Sampling strategies |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Top church leaders/clergy | 10 | 4 | Purposive |
| Youth leaders | 85 | 73 | Purposive |
| Youth Patrons | 10 | 6 | Purposive |
| Youth Committee members | 33 | 5 | Stratified |
| Church Wardens | 12 | 4 | Purposive |
| Total | 150 | 92 | |

Source: Primary source, (April, 2025)

3.5 Data collection methods and instructions.

This study collected primary data. Primary data refers to the original facts generated from the field of research. It is called primary data because no statistical process has been performed on it. This study collected primary data using questionnaire, and interview guide, and focus group discussion guide to collect data from field participants.

3.5.1 Questionnaire Method.

The questionnaire method refers to the method of data collection which the researcher prepares a list of questions and sends them to potential participants for

responses on the problem at hand (Kothari, 2004). The researcher collected primary data using a questionnaire on selected respondents by personally delivering them to the respondents. The questionnaire was issued to all respondents who recorded all their answers within closely defined alternatives. As guided by Creswell (2014), questionnaire can collect vast amounts of data in short time and less expensively. The researcher intended to use a drop and pick approach where the questionnaire were hand delivered to the youth leaders and picked one week after.

3.5.2 Interview method.

This is the method of data collection which involves a personal meeting or conversation between the researcher and the respondent (Kothari, 2004). The study used key informant interviews to gain in-deep information from the interviewees using face- to- face interaction and recording of responses and probing for more responses on youth involvement in church spiritual growth and development. The study specifically interviewed top church leaders/clergy, youth leaders, youth patrons, youth committee members and church wardens as key informants.

3.6 Data quality control management.

Validity and reliability are the commonly used techniques of ensuring data quality and management in research.

3.6.1 Validity.

Validity of the study questionnaire assesses the relevancy of items in measuring the specific variable (Rovai, Baker sand Ponton, 2014) before a pilot study. There are many approaches to testing of validity, however, the expert judgment Content Validity Index (CUVI) with cut off 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) was used to

establish the validity of the instrument. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was reached at using the formula below:

$$\text{Content Validity} = \frac{\text{Number of valid items}}{\text{Total number of items}} = \frac{27}{36} = 0.75$$

Total number of items 36

The validity index, which above 0.75, suggests the instrument used in investigating stakeholder involvement and the role of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development was valid and useful for generalizability.

3.6.2 Reliability.

Reliability reveals the consistence in measuring the study variables by plot testing the questionnaire (Rovai, et al, 2014). The researcher used the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to test the reliability of the instrument. The coefficient was generated from SPSS (Creswell, 2015; Rovai et al, 2014). Only variables scoring above 0.75 were retained as reliable, as supported by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994)'s test of reliability. The researcher established an overall alpha coefficient of 0.752, which was above 0.7.

Table 2: Reliability statistics

| Variable list | Cronbac's Alpha | Number of items |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Church leaders' awareness | .753 | 6 |
| Church leaders' involvement | .748 | 9 |
| Success of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development | .755 | 8 |
| Overall | 0.752 | 23 |

Source: Field data, 2025

The researcher established an overall alpha coefficient of 0.752, which was above 0.7. This therefore, means that items used in the study were internally stable to generate consistent results across repeated tests.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure.

After the proposal defense and response to the outstanding amendments, the researcher was given a go ahead by the research supervisor and collect the require data from the Theology department of Bishop Barham University College-Kabale. The researcher introduced himself and distributed the questionnaires and the interview guides to the intended members in whom the data was to be collected from. He agreed on date to be given the questionnaires and the interview guides back to him and some, he made arrangement on how he was to collect them. The collected questionnaires were used to make the final report which was presented to Uganda Christian University for final approval.

3.9 Data Analysis.

Data analysis comprises of editing, coding, data entry, and cleaning. After collecting the data, it was sorted and arranged in the way it was needed by the supervisor. The data was sorted according to the research questions that were designed by the researcher and assigned numerical and descriptive values. The researcher first edited the raw data obtained in the study using questionnaires, using qualitative data analysis from the interview guides and open-ended questionnaire. Thereafter, the data was analyzed and eventually subsequent results were noted and conclusions made.

3.10 Ethical Considerations.

Creswell (2015), highlights that it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure voluntary participation of respondents, confidentiality, objectivity, and authenticity of the study. Participation in the study was voluntary and to ensure confidentiality, the respondents did not identify themselves on the questionnaire. All the data collected was handled with total confidentiality. To ensure objectivity, and eliminate bias, independent research assistants and an independent data analysis were used. The final report will be shared with the church clergy for recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR:

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS.

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents, presentation, analyses and interprets the study results on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma church of Uganda, Kayoza archdeaconry, and diocese of Kinkiizi. It presents the response rate, which is followed by background information about the respondents. A presentation and data analysis of the study of findings in the relation to the role of the youth in church's growth and development, and the level of church leaders in the youth roles in the church.

4.1 Presentation.

The study on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth targeted a sample of 92 respondents who took part in the study. This was a response rate of 77%. The researcher found that this response rate was adequate for generalization and conclusion. The reason for 23% non-response related to the fact that most of the youths do not take part in church's spiritual growth and development. Notwithstanding, the response rate was found representative enough to serve the generalizability of the study. The respondents in this study included gender, and level of education in role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development, and designation as presented below:

Total number of respondents= 92

where; Females = 47

Males = 45

Females: $47 \div 92 \times 100 = 51\%$

Males: $45 \div 92 \times 100 = 49\%$

Table 3: gender of the respondents.

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Females | 47 | 51 |
| Males | 45 | 49 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Source: Field data 2025.

The above table shows that 51% of the respondents were females and 49% were males. As observed from the statistics, female youths play a big role in the church's spiritual growth and development than male youth. Using Buhoma COU Parish as a study area, male youths need to be approached and encouraged to be more active in church activities.

Table 4: level of education of respondents.

| Level of education of the respondents | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| No education | 0 | 0 |
| Primary | 28 | 30 |
| Secondary | 35 | 38 |
| Diploma | 20 | 22 |
| Degree | 8 | 9 |
| Post graduate | 1 | 1 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Total | 92 | 100 |
|--------------|-----------|------------|

Source: Field 2025

Formula: number of frequencies ×100

Total No. of respondents. The table above shows that most of the youth who participated in the study **38%** had secondary level of education and **30%** had primary education. On the other hand, only **22%** had diplomas, **9%** had degrees and **1%** youth had post graduate qualification. These low levels of education indicate that the church lacks youth who are educated to take part in church’s spiritual growth and development.

The topic of the study was the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development. This topic was to examine the role of the youth and development in the church, examine the challenges and opportunities of the youth in the church’s spiritual growth and development, and suggest the practical remedies for the challenges affecting the youth in church’s spiritual growth and development using Buhoma COU Parish as an area of study. The church’s spiritual growth and development encompasses the process of developing a personal relationship with the divine, understanding the spiritual truths, and practicing faith-based values (**Fowler, 1981**). During youth stage, individuals seek identity and purpose, making this a crucial phase for spiritual growth and development cultivation.

Churches provide spiritual education, community support, and opportunities for service, which are essential for spiritual growth and development (**Kim and Smith, 2010**). Programs like youth groups, mentorship, and worship services serve as platforms for spiritual nurturing. However, the youth meet challenges to church’s spiritual growth and development which include; societal influence, peer pressure,

secularism, and digital distractions (Jones, 2015). Addressing these challenges require innovative and engaging approaches within the church programs. For example, Buhoma church should empower the youth through leadership and technology integration to enhance their spiritual growth and development trajectory. This is because youth and the church are interconnected in the journey of spiritual growth and development. The church serves as a nurturing environment, while youth bring energy and adaptability that revitalize spiritual practices. Strengthening this relationship through strategic engagement fosters resilience, mature, and spiritually grounded young individuals in the church.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commands the church to reach all the nations which includes the youth, and in Mark 10:14-15, shows that young people are precious; Jesus loves them. Youths are key components of the church and they are among of the elements at the foundation level that lead the spiritual growth and development of the church. It is however, surprising that Youths are one of the neglected groups in the church. They are often given little attention as if they have little to contribute to words the spiritual growth and development of the church. Most of the church leaders are busy with other nature groups such as mothers' union, fathers' union and Christian women organization, and the elderly and are less concerned with the youth.

The work of the youth in the church is between 13-35 years and during this age, the youth develop a simple trust in Jesus. The tragic mistake of many parents, pastors and teachers is to wait until the youth has grown this age bracket before they make an effort to bring them closer to the church. "Unless of rising young generation, the present revival will last only the age of man", (John Wesley). Much as there is a

strong desire by many parents to spiritually nurture their youth, many drop out of their spiritual path and by the time they are adults the lives they live are wanting. Drug abuse is on increase among the youth and they are running away from their churches and homes and we are left to ask; what is the role of the youth in the church's spiritual growth and development? The church has a big task of grooming the youth spiritually. It is important that the youth grow up with spiritual values and the church is strategically positioned to do that (**Westerhoff 1971**). Proverbs 22:6 says "train up the child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it".

The research here found that the youth programs on the role of the youth in church's growth and development had a significant contribution on Buhoma COU parish. Youth programs are found to bring the youth close to Christ, support their spiritual nourishment process, help the youth relate Bible teachings to their daily life, grow up in Church, understand Christianity and morality, as well as offer them an opportunity to meet, share and socialize. All these aspects are crucial in youth's spiritual growth and development in the church as well as the overall growth of the church. **Moles, (2016)** cited that the spiritual growth and development of the youth hinges on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in the community of believers' ability to follow the direction of the triune God through the study of scriptures. The direction by God amounts to the elements of being example of nurturing, equipping, and becoming lifelong disciples. The four elements create the environment for the process of the Christian disciple development strategies.

The study on the roles of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development was also in the agreement with the studies of **Eri, (2016)** who noted that youth's

spiritual growth and development is conducted for the young people of the ages above 13 years. The Bible teachings given are intended to train the current young generation for Christ. **Knoetze, (2015)** stated that training the youth in church's spiritual growth and development helps in preparing the youth to become faithful members of the church. They are intended to provide an atmosphere in which individuals come to accept Christ as their personal savior.

The researcher found out that Buhoma COU Parish was promoting youth programs including budgetary increment for the youth's role in spiritual growth and development in the church, strengthening parental involvement in youth's spiritual paths, introducing and implementing youth study curriculum, provision of more basic facilities to support the programs, boosting supervision on youth programs, improving skills and knowledge of the youth staff through training while boosting financial support for the youth programs. To support the findings, Pennington (2017) states that there is need to provide more basic facilities like the study rooms, seats, writing materials, and blackboards, lesson books, teaching aids, registers and stationery to streamline youth programs on church's spiritual growth and development operations.

4.2 Analysis and interpretation of the research study.

The researcher approached the analysis section basing on the research questions, and the data analysis technic used depended on the requirements of the question one(What are the roles of the youth in the spiritual growth and development in the church?), question two(What are the challenges and opportunities faced by the youth in church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda") and question three (What are the practical remedies for the challenges faced by the youth

at Buhoma church of Uganda? Generally, research questions were analyzed using descriptive stratified techniques.

4.2.1 What is the role of the youth in the spiritual growth and development in the church?

The researcher answered this research question using descriptive and stratified analysis in describing the roles of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda.

Table 5: The table below represents hypothetical representation and their percentage responses regarding the role of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development.

| The role of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development | Frequency/ Number of respondents | Percentage s (%) |
|--|--|---------------------|
| 1. The youths have played a big role in active worship in Buhoma COU parish | 28 | 30 |
| 2. The youths promote evangelism in the church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma COU parish which has led to spiritual worship in the church community. | 16 | 17 |
| 3. The youth's role in servanthood and volunteering in the church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma COU parish has led to growth of the church spiritually. | 12 | 13 |

| | | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| 4. The youths play a vital role in participating in spiritual education and discipleship in the church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma COU parish and this has led to capacity building among the youths. | 10.5 | 11 |
| 5. Prayer warriors as one of roles of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma COU parish has led to the church becoming strengthened in spiritual discipline. | 13 | 14 |
| 6. The role of the youth in church's spiritual growth and development in the church has raised community awareness of church members through special community events at Buhoma COU. | 14 | 15 |
| Overall | 92 | 100 |

Source Field data, 2025

The role of the youth has been realized in active worship which has promoted the church's spiritual growth and development. The strong evidence to this level of youth in church's spiritual growth and development activities points to 30% of respondents. This is in line with **Akinade (2014)**, who emphasized that youth should actively engage in worship services as a form of spiritual activity within the church. Their participation fosters a sense of belonging and spiritual ownership. When youth get engaged in praise and worship not only enhances their spiritual maturity but also invigorates the entire congregation with youth enthusiasm. Active participation allows youth to develop their spiritual gifts, serve others, and make the church vibrant.

From respondents, the rate of 17% indicated that, the youth are agents of evangelism and outreach. This is agreement with **Ojo (2018)**, who highlighted that youth have a vital role in evangelism and outreach programs. Their natural enthusiasm and relatability attract peers and community members to the church. Youth-driven evangelism initiatives help spread the Gospel more effectively, ensuring that the church remains relevant and expanding its spiritual influence. Engaging youth in outreach fosters a culture of evangelism and deepens their personal spiritual faith commitments. Sometimes youths are not always welcomed in the evangelical participation or integrated into full worship of the church community. Youth Sundays in Buhoma church along with those involved in them are perceived as rather second class compared with other important activities in the church. There is thus some urgency to reflect at theologically on behalf of the youth (**land, 1975**). In such circumstances, church urgently need to consider the task of evangelism serious, and missiological engagement in welcoming youths and creating a fully hospitable space where they can safety and joy, develop holistically in church's spiritual growth and development.

The researcher reported that the youth play a vital role in servanthood and volunteering. This is drawn from the respondents' at Buhoma COU where 13% respondent's respondent to the researcher's question on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development. The youths have assisted in spiritual church activities including outreaches, and charitable works to exemplify Christ's love and foster unity. This has promoted church's spiritual growth and development which has made Buhoma COU to grow spiritually. The research indicates that a person's lifelong behaviors and beliefs are generally developed when they are young

particularly when they are in teenager years. This is in line with **Barna (2003)**, “a youth’s moral foundations are generally in place by age of 13. After that age, most people simply refine their views. A person’s response to Jesus and the gospel concerning his life, death and resurrection is usually determined before the age of 18. For most Americans, the response is set by age of 12. A person’s spiritual beliefs are set in place when they are preteens. Those beliefs include the nature of God, the existence of Stan, the reliability of the bible, the afterlife, Jesus Christ, the means of gaining God’s favor, and the influence of spiritual forces in a person’s life”.

Youths have participated in spiritual education and discipleship at Buhoma church of Uganda. The researcher used the respondents’ argument where 1% is given as a response rate. This is in agreement with **Kalu (2012)**, who emphasized that youth should actively participate in spiritual education through youth Sundays, Bible studies, and discipleship programs. This deepens their understanding of scripture and equips them to live out their faith confidently. Youth engagement in spiritual learning ensures the continuity of spiritual growth and prepares future leaders for the church. The role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church, help to create a meaningful spiritual relationship within the family units. The church community is a family on its own but the role of the youth in church’s spiritual growth and development help to bring young people together to create good spiritual relationships with each other and the church (**Caplan, 1989**). It encourages Godly parenting and helps parents to guide the church gain more volunteers and sponsors who make the youth enjoy church- related spiritual activities. Parents who used not to attend church activities at Buhoma COU parish have been inspired by their young youths to attend as the youth often teach them the importance of being in church

activities. Church's spiritual growth and development teaches the youth spiritual discipline in prayer, for example, 14% at Buhoma COU responded that the role of the youth in spiritual growth and development, teaches the youth how to respect authority and to have good manners. Spiritual discipline is core for the spiritual growth and development of any youth in life and youth cannot get discipline anywhere else apart from the church. **Psalms 1:7** states that "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom" following God's laws at an early age allows the young to grow up with discipline and it is through discipline that they attain knowledge.

The researcher found out that the role of the youth and the church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma COU parish raises community awareness of the church through special spiritual events such as music dance and drama, and sports gala attract people from all walks of life and as they come for such events, they become aware of the church its spiritual activities, and this is evidenced by 15% of the respondents. Each event such as talent competitions- a day where youth get together to showcase their talents is a great church event idea to get parents and the youth involved. It even brings on board the elderly (Grandma and Grandpa) as cheers of their precious young ones (Sharma, 2023).

4.2.2 What are the challenges and opportunities faced by youth in church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda?

The researcher answered this question using descriptive and stratified analysis in order to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by the youth in church's spiritual growth and development.

Table 6: Challenges faced by the youth in church's spiritual growth and development.

| IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| specific needs of the youth for spiritual growth and development in the church. | 10 | 11 |
| Use of digital technology and social media impact the youth and church's spiritual growth and development. | 12 | 13 |
| A lack of dedicated mentors or positive role models within the church impact the youth in church's spiritual growth and development | 15 | 16 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Source: field study 2025

The researcher highlighted 46% of responded that the youth in the church is affected by peer pressure and this significantly impact the youth, often leading them away from their spiritual faith commitments. In environments where secular values and peer acceptance are prioritized, young people struggle to uphold their spiritual beliefs. This external influence cause wavering in faith, making it difficult for the youth to remain committed to church teachings and practices. The researcher describes this using the writings of **Smith (2010)** on peer pressure among the youth in the church and its impacts.

About 25% of respondent, responded that many churches do not tail their programs to address the specific needs and interests of the youth for spiritual growth and development. When youth programs feel disconnected from their real-life experiences or fail to engage them meaningfully, youth members in the church become disengaged

or feel that the church does not understand or support their spiritual journey. This disconnection hinders the youth in their spiritual growth and development participation in the church. This is in line with **Johnson (2015)** on the programs of the youth in the church.

The researcher agrees with **Lee (2018)**, and with 13% of respondents that the pervasive use of digital technology and social media creates distractions that divert youth from spiritual growth and development of the church and other activities such as prayer, bible study, and church attendance. While technology can be used positively, its overuse often leads to reduced focus on spiritual growth and development' making it a challenge for youth to prioritize their faith.

Also 16% of the respondents indicated that lack of mentorship and positive role models with the church affect the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development. This in line with **William (2012)** emphasized the importance of mentorship in spiritual growth and development of the church. A lack of dedicated mentors or positive role models within the church leave youth feeling unsupported or unsure about how to navigate their faith journeys. Without guidance, young people struggle to develop a mature and reliance spiritual life.

However, the researcher highlighted some of opportunities for the youth in church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda.

Table 7: Opportunities for the youth in church’s spiritual growth and development.

| Identified opportunities | frequency | Percentages (%) |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Church youth programs drawn on the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development | 36 | 39 |
| Mentorship opportunities within the church allow the youth to learn from spiritually mature role models | 34 | 37 |
| Digital technology offers unique platform for spiritual growth and development engagement | 11 | 12 |
| Personal Bible study and prayer practices provide practical avenues for the youth in church’s spiritual growth and development | 11 | 12 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Source: field study 2025

The researcher answered the question on the opportunities of the youth in church’s spiritual growth and development using the respondents’ rate (39%) which emphasize that youth-specific programs provide a vital opportunity for spiritual development. This is also in the agreement with **Williams (2013)** on programs of the youth in the church. When churches design programs that are relevant, interactive, and tailored to the interests of the youth, they create an engaging environment where youth explore their faith deeply. These programs foster a sense of belonging, encouraging active participation and spiritual growth and development in the church.

Considering 37% of respondents and in agreement with **Smith (2014)**, mentorship opportunities within the church allow the youth to learn from spiritually mature role models. Leadership roles by the youth in church's spiritual growth and development, such as youth group leaders or outreach coordinators help the youth to develop their spiritual maturity, responsibility, and confidence. Such opportunities empower youth to growth into future church leaders and committed Christians.

About 12% of the respondents suggests that digital technology offers a unique platform for spiritual engagement and church's spiritual growth and development. This is in line with **Lee (2018)**, where he said that, "youth can use social media, blogs, and apps to share their faith, participate in online Bible studies and appealing to te-savvyuoth, fostering a sense of global Christian community".

The researcher answered this question basing on the 12% of those who responded on the use personal Bible study and personal prayer practices as opportunities for the youth in church's spiritual growth and development. This is in line with **Clark (2011)**, where his writing encourages the youth to develop personal spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer practices which create a strong foundation for individual spiritual faith. Opportunities for guided study groups and prayer retreats help the youth cultivate consistent habits, deepening their relation with God and fostering spiritual resilience.

Additionally, researcher noted from the respondents at Buhoma COU parish that youth in worship teams, youth choirs, drams, or dance offers creative outlets for expressing their spiritual faith. This is in line with **Martinez (2016)** who noted that such participation not only enhances the youths' spiritual experience but also builds

confidence and a sense of ownership in the church's spiritual life inspiring others to grow. By answering on the opportunities for the youth in church's spiritual growth and development, the researcher uses the data that was collected from respondents which matched with that of **Brown (2012)**. This points out that workshops on topics like ethics, moral issues and Christian living provide valuable learning opportunities. These seminars equip youth with biblical knowledge and practical skills, enabling them to navigate contemporary spiritual challenge confidently and strengthen their spiritual faith.

The researcher reports from respondents that global and cross-cultural exposure is among the opportunities for the youth in church's spiritual growth and development. This is in line with **Okafor (2015)**, on opportunities for the youth to engage in mission, exchange programs or international conferences expose them to diverse Christian expressions and cultures. Such experiences broaden their spiritual worldview, deepen their faith, and inspire a global perspective on spiritual growth and service.

These opportunities, as given by researcher from respondents and quoting other scholars, if harnessed effectively, can significantly enhance the spiritual maturity and commitment of youth within church community. Churches can actively create and promote these avenues contribute to nurturing resilient and vibrant spiritual faith among the youth members.

4.2.3 What are the practical remedies for the challenges faced by the youth in the church’s spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda?

The researcher answered this question by using descriptive and percentage analysis to give some of the practical remedies for the challenges faced by the youth in church’s spiritual growth and development.

Table 8: practical remedies for the challenges faced by the youth in church’s spiritual growth and development.

| Identified remedies | frequency | Percentages (%) |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Churches should create youth programs that are spiritual meaningful, relevant, and engaging. | 38 | 41 |
| Churches should establish mentorship schemes where mature Christians guide and discipline young people to address the lack of role models. | 22 | 24 |
| The church should harness digital platforms to connect the youth | 20 | 22 |
| Emphasis on the importance of nurturing personal spiritual discipline. | 12 | 13 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Source: field study 2025

The researcher answered this question using the respondents’ rates where 41% recommended that, churches should create youth programs that are meaningful,

relevant, and engaging, and this is in line with the writing by Johnson (2015). He added that programs should incorporate contemporary issues, interactive activities, and opportunities for dialogue to connect faith with everyday life. When youth feel that programs address their real concerns and interests, they are more likely to participate actively and grow spiritually.

About 24% of those who responded to the question, recommended that churches should establish mentorship schemes where mature Christians guide and discipline young people to address lack of role models. The researcher connected this finding to the writings by Williams (2012), where he said “regular mentorship meetings, spiritual counseling, and accountability partnerships can foster personal growth, strengthen faith, and provide a supportive environment for overcoming moral and spiritual challenges.

About 22% respondents suggested that churches should harness digital platforms to connect with youth. Creating online Bible studies, prayer groups, and faith-sharing communities on social media make spiritual activities more accessible. This approach aligns with youth’s digital lifestyles and encourages consistent engagement with faith (Lee, 2018).

The researcher agreed with 13% of the respondents and Clark (2011), who emphasized the importance of nurturing personal spiritual disciplines. Churches should provide resources, workshops, and mentorship to help youth develop habits such as daily prayer, Bible reading, fasting, and meditation. These practices build resilience distractions and temptations, fostering deep, and personal spiritual faith.

CHAPTER FIVE: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

5.0 Introduction.

In this chapter, the researcher explored into a theological reflection on the role of the youths and church's spiritual growth and development, examining perspectives from the Old Testament (OT), New Testament (NT), Early Church Fathers and the Orthodox tradition. Reflection and application is also indicated in this chapter.

5.1 Theological and Bible reflections on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development.

In this study, the researcher referred his findings to the Old Testament scriptures that indicate on how God dealt with young people. He found various instances where young individuals played significant roles in the purposes of God. In his research, he sighted some examples such as; David who was anointed as a king at youth hood stage (1 Samuel 16:13), and Jeremiah who was called by God to be a prophet from his youth (Jeremiah 1:6-7). This encourages the church leaders to value the role of the youth at youth hood age because these examples give the importance of being a youth and how God can use young people to extend His kingdom and His will to all generations of people. The Old Testament hence emphasizes the value of training and nurturing youths in the ways of God (Proverbs 22:6), recognizing their potential for leadership and service within the community of faith.

As in Old Testament, the researcher also draws other insights from New Testament for example; Jesus Himself demonstrated the significance of youth where he welcomed children and affirming their importance in the kingdom of God (Mark 10:13)

and (Matthew 19:14). Additionally, Jesus while looking for people to support Him in His ministry, He chose young disciples such as Peter, James, and John to be His closest disciples, entrusting them with the task of spreading the gospel after His ascension. The New Testament also emphasizes the role of the youth in the church and service, hence encouraging them to be examples in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity as it is written by St. Paul in the first letter to Timothy 4:12. This informs the researcher that the church leaders should choose young believers and prepare them to be the disciples of the gospel and with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, young believers, are equipped with the power to proclaim the message of salvation and participate actively in building spiritual growth and development of the church (Acts 2:17).

The study on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development, researcher hinges on the study and writings of the early church fathers to provide valuable insights into the understanding of the youths within the Christian community. The early fathers such as Augustine of Hippo and John Chrysostom emphasized the vital of guiding and mentoring the young Christian generation, recognizing their potential as future leaders and pillars of the church. These important figures stressed the need for nurturing the spiritual growth of youth through education, discipleship, and engagement in the life of the church. These early fathers viewed the youth not merely as passive recipients of instruction but as active participants in the mission of the church, called to values of faith, love, and service. This informs the researcher that the church leaders have an important role in guiding and mentoring youth in a way of preparing them to become potential leaders of the church.

In this study on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development, the researcher hinges on the orthodox tradition to the understanding of the youth in the involvement in the activities of the church. In the orthodox tradition, youth ministry is considered essential for the spiritual vitality and community of the church. In this study, the researcher points out that, the Orthodox Church places emphasis on catechesis, sacramental participation, and spiritual formation as key components of youth ministry. This informs the researcher that Young believers are encouraged to cultivate a deep prayer life, engage in the study of scriptures and tradition and participate actively in the sacramental life of the church. This underscores the importance of fostering a holistic understanding of the Christian faith among young Christian believers, integrating theological education with practical service and outreach to the broader church community.

5.2 Reflection and application.

In this study on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development, the research reported that, through a theological reflection of the Old Testament, New Testament, church fathers and the orthodox tradition, as Christians we gain a comprehensive understanding of the significance of youth in the church. He reported that, as contemporary believers, we are called to heed the biblical injunction to "remember our creator in the days of our youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1) and to empower young Christian believers to fulfill their God-given potential in service to the kingdom. By utilizing the wisdom of the written scriptures, and the insights of the orthodox tradition, we can nature a vibrant youth generation in the church that equips youth to be faithful disciples, effective witnesses in the church

and world that surrounds them.

Romans 13: 1 says “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. Youth in the church helps in training the young to respect authority at an early age. Respect for authority is very crucial because it helps children not to fall in conflicts with the law and end up being criminals. It is good for schools as it teaches young youth how to respect teachers, elders and to have good morals.

1 Corinthians 1:10 says “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.” The Bible encourages us to take care of our brothers and sisters - whether or friends or enemies. We must remember the importance of maintaining the connection with each other and focusing on building a community of love in word and actions. The role of the youth in spiritual growth and development in the church provides the youth with opportunities to help the church community, such as doing acts of good and feeding the poor without discrimination.

CHAPTER SIX.

CONCLUSION ANDRECOMMENDATION

6.0 Conclusion.

In this conclusion, this study brought light on the role of youth in church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma parish, Kayoza archdeaconry, Diocese of Kinkiizi. It was found out that although youth in the church is significant, it plays a small role in making the youths be involved in church spiritual growth and development. This is due to the challenges that hinder their full participation which include limited participation in church planning processes, competing priorities, communication gaps, worldly treasures, and perceived lack of interest among the youth.

The study established a moderate level of the church leaders' awareness of the role of the youth in the church. The mere fact that church leaders knew the little involvement of the youth in church activities, they also gather information from a number of communication platforms, however, some of the church leaders do not have full information about the things that hinder the youth spiritual growth in church activities. Despite the identified challenges, the study highlighted positive impact of youth on the church spiritual growth and development. Youth engagement in church activities was meant to contribute to increase in the church attendance, foster spiritual growth, implement innovative ideas, and promote a sense of community among young members. It was found out that parents are willing to support their children and encourage them get involved in the church activities within the community. This explains the level of youth in church's spiritual growth and development in Buhoma Church of Uganda parish, Kayoza archdeaconry, Diocese of

Kinkiizi. The findings suggest several areas for improvement in youth roles within Buhoma parish, and they include enhancing communication channels between leadership and youth, empowering youth leadership roles, integrating youth perspectives into church planning processes, organizing youth-focused events, providing training and resources for youth, fostering an inclusive environment, collaborating with external partners, and regularly evaluating and adapting youth roles initiatives. The study underscores the significance of prioritizing youth group within the church community. It indicates the key areas for the youth engagement and their potential to contribute to the spiritual growth and development, and validity of the church. By addressing the sighted challenges and implementing recommended strategies, Buhoma church of Uganda parish can strengthen its young Christian believers' efforts and ensure their continued involvement and empowerment of youth in the life of the church.

It was found out that despite of the challenges, the study highlights the positive impact of youth role church's spiritual growth and development. Young Christian believers contribute to the increased church's number of attendants, fosters spiritual growth and development, implements innovative ideas, and promotes a sense of community among young believers.

6.1 Recommendations.

Referring on the findings of this study on the role of youth and church's spiritual growth and development, the following recommendations are proposed by the researcher to enhance the role of the youth in Buhoma parish, Kayoza archdeaconry, Diocese of Kinkiizi:

There should be strengthening communication channels by the church leaders. These church leaders should establish regular communication channels between church leadership and youth to foster understanding, collaborating, and engagement. This should include organizing youth forums, feedback sessions, and utilizing platforms for effective communication.

According to the findings, there should be youth leadership empowerment. There should be a room to create dedicated leadership roles for the youth within the church structure, providing opportunities for them to take on responsibilities and contribute to decision-making processes. Additionally, there should be mentorship programs aimed at supporting the developments of the youth leadership.

Furthermore, the researcher recommended that; church leaders should integrate youth perspectives. This can be done through involving youth in church planning processes and decision-making forums. Additionally, church leaders should actively seek their input on the matters affecting the youth community and incorporate their ideas and suggestions into church activities and programs.

The researcher recommended that, church leaders should encourage and organize youth-focused events. They should organize and plan regular youth retreats, workshops, and outreach programs, aimed at specific needs and interest of young Christian believer. These events can provide opportunities for the church spiritual growth, fellowship, and personal development.

The researcher also recommended that, there should be the need to mobilize resource aimed at providing sufficient training for the youth in Anglican churches a case study being Buhoma church of Uganda parish in Kayoza archdeaconry, Diocese of

Kinkiizi. They should offer training sessions, seminars, and resources for equipping youth with relevant skills and knowledge to make the youth actively participate in the activities of the church to realize the usefulness of the youth programs in the church. This can be done through conducting and supporting leadership training, discipleship programs, and workshops on relevant topics that are in with the mission and the vision of the Anglican Church.

The researcher in this study, he recommends that; Anglican Church leaders should foster an inclusive an environment that accommodates all youth believers regardless of the origin, tribe and ethnicity. By doing this, church leaders will be creating a welcoming and inclusive environment within the church community where the youth feel valued, supported, and recognized as they contribute to church's spiritual growth and development. Additionally, the youth should be given an opportunity to celebrate their achievements, recognize their efforts and opportunities for them to exhibit their God given talents and gifts.

There should be a need to collaborate with the government, external partners and other well-wishers of the youth ministry. The church should collaborate with the other organizations including schools and community groups that support youth programs in order to expand the reach and impact of the youth initiatives. This is because, collaborative efforts can create synergies, leverage resources, and enhance the effectiveness of the youth-focused programs and activities that are aligned with the church's spiritual growth and development.

The researcher also recommended in his study that, church leaders in the Anglican Church should consistently carried out evaluation the activities and program of the

youth for their effective performance in the church, seek feedback from both youth and church leadership. They should utilize this feedback to identify areas for improvement, make necessary improvements, and ensure that youth remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of young members.

Thus, by implement the above recommendations suggested by the researcher, Buhoma church of Uganda parish, as an area of the study, can strengthen its youth efforts, continue foster youth involvement in church activities, and ultimately contribute to the spiritual growth and validity of the church community.

The researcher concluded by indicating that, the findings of this study underscore the importance of prioritizing youth and creating an environment where young believers fill valued in the church and at home, empowered, and fully integrated into the life of the church. He continues to conclude that, with proactive steps and concerted efforts, Buhoma church of Uganda parish can nurture the in-coming generation of church leaders and ensure the continued growth and flourishing of the church community. The study revealed that some of the beneficiaries and stakeholders were not aware of the benefits of youth in church affairs. Church leaders should make the congregants be aware the contributions the youth ministry can contribute to the church growth and development they should lobby for the youth in the way of supporting their activities in the church.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX1:

Questionnaire for respondents

Dear Sir/ Madam-----

I am **BAGAMBE NELSON M22/BBUC/BD/023** a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing a Bachelors Degree of divinity. I am conducting a study on the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda parish, Kayoza archdeaconry, diocese of Kinkiizi. You have been selected as a respondent to provide with your views on this study. Your views will be kept and treated confidentially in line with the study and participation is voluntary.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Section I: Background information

Name.....

SECTION A

(Tick in the box where applicable)

Your Gender: Male Female

Level of education:

No education

Primary

Secondary

Diploma Degree Post graduate

1. Position in the church youth group: Executive member other member

2. Time spent in the youth church

group: 1 year 1-3 years 4-7 years

3. Age group: 12-17

4. 18-25

5. 26-35 Above 36

Marital status:

Single Married Divorced

Others (please specify) _____

7. Occupation _____

8. Have you been in church leadership position before?

Yes No

9. If no how often do you attend church services? Every Sunday Once in a month twice in a month on special occasions

10. If yes, how many church development meetings have you attended since this year?

Began?

11. Has your church been engaging the youth in the planning process of your church?

Yes No

12. It is said that the youth have distanced themselves from all the church

activities and cannot even attend church services,

False

True

If it is true, why? _____

If false, why? _____

13. Is there any role youth could play in the church's spiritual growth and Development if it was elevated and involved in the church's planning process?

Very much Not much

If positive, mention what you the youth ministry has contributed to the church's spiritual growth _____

If negative, mention why? _____

14. If you were a parent, would you allow your son/daughter to get involved in church youth fellowships and meetings?

Yes Not at all

15. Do you think that the youth have developmental ideas that can develop a church?

Yes No

16. Can there be any means of bringing the youth on board for the Development and growth of the church?

Yes No

SECTION B.

Level of stakeholder awareness of the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development at Buhoma COU parish.

Instruction: Indicate the extent to which you agree with or disagree with the assertion using a **five-point Likert scale of strongly agree (5) Agree (4) Not sure (3) Disagree (2) strongly disagree (1).**

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. I am aware of the availability of the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. information on the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development was disseminated through church council meetings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I know the target youth group to be involved in church’s spiritual growth and development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I know the criteria for youth benefiting from the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I know the objectives of the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Church leaders in Buhoma COU parish have sufficient information from the diocese of kinkiizi on the role of the youth and church’s spiritual growth and | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| development | | | | | |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|

Thank you very much for giving time and walking with me in this journey of answering this Questionnaire. I am hopeful it will be extremely helpful to whoever will read my research report.

APPENDIX II:

Interview Guide on the role of the youth and church's spiritual growth and development.

1. What are the roles of youth in the spiritual growth and development in the church, at Buhoma church of Uganda?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities faced by the youth in church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda?

3. What are the practical remedies for the challenges faced by the youth in church's spiritual growth and development at Buhoma church of Uganda?

4. In your opinion, how does the church influence the spiritual growth of youth in your community?

5. What role do you think youth participation in church activities plays in their spiritual maturity?

6. Can describe some of the activities or programs that the church offers specifically aimed at engaging youth in spiritual development?

7. Have you noticed any challenges or obstacles that prevent youth from engaging fully in the church's spiritual growth and development programs? If so what are they?

8. How do church leaders or mentors support youth in their spiritual journey? Can you give examples?

9. How do societal influences or peer pressure affect the spiritual development of young people in your opinion?

10. Can you share a personal experience where church involvement significantly contributes to your spiritual growth?

11. What advice would you give to church leaders aiming to foster strong spiritual development among youth?

12. How do you think the church can make its spiritual programs more relevant and appealing today's youth?

13. In what ways do youth perceive their role within the church community concerning their spiritual growth?

14. What kind of support or resources do youth feel they need from church to enhance their spiritual development?

15. Have you observed any differences in spiritual growth between the youth who actively participate in church activities and those who do not?

16. How do family and community backgrounds influence youth's spiritual growth and development within the church context?

17. What role do peer relationships within the church play in shaping youth's spiritual beliefs and practices?

18. Can you identify any specific challenges young people face today that hinder

their spiritual growth?

19. How does the church the church address the varying spiritual needs and maturity levels among youth?

20. What feedback have you received from youth about the church's efforts to support their spiritual journey?

21. In your view, what is the most effective way for the church to involve youth in making processes related to spiritual activities?

Thanks very much for your cooperation. God bless you.