

## **KINSHIP: THE ROLE OF STUDENT SERVICES PERSONNEL IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

Christian higher institutions of learning is not just for building the intellectual capacity of students; rather it is for holistic development that prepare students for service to God and humanity. Students develop and perform better in an environment of positive relationship with significant others like student services personnel who mingle with students within and beyond residential halls. Students usually leave behind relationships with loved ones and acquaintances when they gain admission into higher institutions of learning where they meet with different people they might have not met before. This transition and experience make kinship relationship by student services personnel a significant phenomenon. Through this relationship, students are provided with a replica of home in which they can develop mentally, socially, physically and spiritually; and be equipped to be agents of positive change to the society. Using desk research, this study considered how this is done in Nigeria and concluded that kinship needs to be focused on and practiced in Christian higher institutions of learning to bring about holistic development of students. The study found that is important personnel in Christian higher institution of learning fill the void of significant persons that students have when they come to the institution.

**Keywords:** Kinship relationship, holistic development, Christian higher institutions, student services, residential halls

### **Introduction**

The name Christian has a strong connotation of the ideal, the respected, thoughtful, unique, and unadulterated person, situation, event, and organization that is designed, operated and established in the similitude of the perfect man Jesus Christ to whom the name is associated. Therefore, Christian higher institutions of learning are assumed to be establishments of honour with positive attributes like, integrity, genuine, high morality, personality development, and the likes. History indicates that many of the imperial higher institutions of learning in the world such as Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, began as Christian institutions of learning. And people have, because of characteristics such as high standard, integrity, and excellence, struggled to attend and be trained in such institutions (Abolarin, 2015). These characteristics cannot be without the influence of those working for and with the students, especially those in student services.

Student services is an important arm of higher institutions of learning in producing young people who are well prepared to face the challenges of the world. The role of the student services, especially in the Christian higher institution of learning can either make or mar the mission of institutions. It plays an important role in making an ideal institution and in

building the lives of the students. The personnel in the student services are not to be just workers but kinsmen/kindred to students. Student services is known by different names in different institutions and establishments. Such names include student support services (Yinka, 2017), student affairs (Adeniyi, 2000; Omonijo, Anyaegbunam, Shaibu, Mabia & Nwodo, 2016; Omonijo, Oludayo, Uche, & Rotimi, 2014; Uche, Eche & Omonijo, 2016), and students' personnel services (Onuma & Ada, 2016). This study used student services more than the other nomenclatures, but they are to be considered as the same.

The importance of kinship in any institution of higher learning, precisely in Christian institutions cannot be overemphasized. This is more applicable in Africa and more especially in Nigeria where students leave their homes in which relationships play a central role in defining the relational atmosphere, into a place where they meet with strangers who either make them feel dislocated or make them a home. This study, using documentary type of qualitative research method, explored how kinship is being practiced in Christian institutions of higher learning in Nigeria and how it may influence the products of the these institutions.

#### Christian Education

Generally, Christian education has been a common focus of study among Christian educators due to its importance and influence on educational institutions, Christianity, students and society (Abolarin, 2015; Beers, 2008; Groome, 1980; Holmes, 1975; Litfin, 2004; Ostrander, 2008; Smith, 2009; Tippens, 2008; Westerhof, 2000; Wolterstorff, 2002). Christian education is an interactive activity that deliberately and intentionally attends to the holistic growth of students. That is, it focuses on building students physically, socially, intellectually and spiritually. This kind of education originates from God and is centred on him (Abolarin, 2015; White, 1903). The goal is to bring students into a right relationship with God, to discover and appreciate the relevance of biblical truth and to prepare student to be agents of positive change in the society (Abolarin, 2016; Miller, 1980). Christian education involves efforts and processes which help to bring people, especially students into a vital and saving experience of God as revealed in Christ Jesus (Attah, 2016).

Christian education is more than acquiring degrees or preparing for employment; rather, it is weaving beliefs with behaviour, getting equipped to run errands for the Creator. It involves integrating faith and learning, listening to God and engaging students in interaction with him. (Knight, 2016). This type of education leads students to discover and be motivated to utilize their God-given potentials. The summary of the functions of the Christian education is adapted from Attah (2016), and is given as follows:

1. Encourages students to face the need to make decisions and to develop their minds on how to withstand the emotional effects associated with their decisions through their involvements in Christian education.
2. Leads students to raise fundamental questions relating to life and existence—Who is God? Does God exist? Where is God? Why am I here? What is going to be my end? They should be able to ask and experience the answers to the life's basic philosophical questions (What is real? What is true and how do I know it? What is beautiful?) through their experience of Christian education?
3. Through Christian education students are trained to understand the world they live in and because this knowledge is indispensable, students are taught about the concept of

God. God must be seen as the creator of all things. The centrality of the Bible to true knowledge is established in students.

4. Christian education develops students with Christian attitudes and moral values such as humility, respect, love, tolerance, selfish service to God and humanity, and integrity (p. 10).

Every activity in Christian religious education institutions focuses on achieving these functions (Attah, 2016).

In essence, Christian religious education is a means of transforming students into the image of God and this involves a decision to approach the teaching/learning process from a different perspective in order to transform the beliefs, options, emotional reactions, and worldview of students, leading them to be aware of their individual gift of faith given by God, and be aware of the need to worship God (Attah, 2016; McEwen, 2012, 2012). This transformation according to McEwen (2012), involves:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination
3. A critical assessment of assumptions (worldview)
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new ways of living (new roles, relationships, and actions)
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. Reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective (p. 347).

For students to go through the process of transformation, there is a need for significant others who will serve as mentors, especially in Christian institutions of higher learning (Abolarin, 2017; Garber, 1996; Wolterstorff, 2002). Because personnel are to engage students through healthy, functional relationship that will help to liberate them through the power of God, and to lead them into divine connection that will sustain them through all the experiences of this age and have hope for a new age to come (Pazmino, 2012). This kind of relationship should be genuine, such as students will see as trustworthy and reliable.

McEwen (2012), argued that the presence of trusting relationships is the most important factor that can aid in sustaining transformation. Through a supportive relationship, students develop the confidence to navigate through the threatening experience of transformation. Relationship is the medium through which learning and change occur (Abolarin, 2015; McEwen, 2012). Christian education is a system through which this kind of relationship should occur since personnel in Christian institutions of higher learning are generally trained to be disciple makers, connecting students to Jesus Christ. No wonder Yount (2012), declared that Christian education is a life-long pursuit of Christlikeness. And Steibel (2010), stated that Christian education is spiritual formation and when it is less than that it is no longer Christian education. Spiritual formation, according to Groome as quoted by Lanker (2010), is

conscious attending to God's loving initiative and presence in our lives and to the movement of God's spirit to commit ourselves to wholeness for ourselves and for all humankind by living in right relationship with God, ourselves and others in every dimension and activity of our lives.

Succinctly, Christian education is about God, his love and relationship with people. And this is made possible through positive human relationships.

This relationship is more than student-personnel type, it is a demonstration of kinship which is usually thought of as having family ties not necessarily blood relationship as commonly viewed. Read (2001), argued that blood relationship is inadequate for understanding of kinship since it does not allow for the practice of adoption; instead he viewed kinship as a relationship that is based on social procedure which better situates the concept within the precincts of Christian institutions.

#### Christian Education in Nigeria

The introduction of western education into Nigeria generally was through the Christian missionaries from America and Europe. The primary goal of this form of education was to expose the converts to the arts of reading and writing which was needed for basic Bible reading and effective evangelism (Iwunna, 2006). When the indigenes were educated, it was easy for them to evangelize their own people. Christian education intrinsically involves the promotion of religious values and morality which are essential to the peace and development of the society. This also prepared students to develop critical thinking abilities and placed them in a position to distinguish between good and evil. Recipients of the early Christian mission mediated education were generally conscious of their positions in relation to God and his judgement, and for this reason the word of God became the guiding principle in daily relationships and dealings with one another (Fafunwa, 1974).

Through Christian education, some evil practices such as selling of children, buying of persons in exchange for money or material goods were abolished. High-mindedness among traditional rulers, forceful acquisition of women, children, and other properties from the subjects were reduced (Iwunna, 2006). It should be noted that the missionary schools at the time were mostly primary and secondary schools with only few polytechnic schools but many were able to secure good jobs after the secondary education due to the high standard of the educational system (Olukoju, 2016).

This type of education could not continue in Nigeria as a result of its parochial nature, especially in relation to its Christian religion focus. In 1882, the British administration in Nigeria promulgated the neutralization of religion in matters of education. This brought about divergent opinions on the purpose and the curricula of education but henceforth, the religious content of the educational system was minimized (Abolarin, 2015). This led to a huge crisis in the educational sector precipitating the establishment of the Phelps-Stoke Commission in 1922. The commission ruled to permit religious and moral education without parochialism, catechism, and spiritual nature. And in 1962 however, a conference for higher education was organized in which the decision to exclude religion completely from school curricula was taken (Ahanotu, 1983; Ivorgba, 2006). Since the early 70s Christian schools were taken over

by the government and this led to the collapse of education generally in Nigeria (Ahanotu, 1983; Akinwale, 2017; Nwagwu, 1979). Going by these trend of events, it seems logical to infer that if Christian education could thrive once again, there is hope for the education sector in Nigeria. The taking over and secularization of Christian schools resulted in the fall of Christian religious education in Nigeria until 1999 when a new era began and private organizations and individuals were given the permission to establish universities in Nigeria.

In 1999, the government of Nigeria opened her door, following the action of the Supreme Court granting legal backing to the proprietor of Imo State Technical University, for the establishment of private higher institutions which led to both faith based organizations and individuals to establish colleges and universities in Nigeria (Ahunanya & Osakwe, 2012; Ewudere, 2019). As of 19th January, 2019, there were 79 approved private owned universities in Nigeria out of which 39 were Christian church owned (Beecroft, 2019). But the question is how “Christian” is Christian education in these institutions and specifically, how are the student services personnel working with and for students to accomplish the functions of Christian education?

An example of the situation of Christian institutions is an empirical study by Attah (2016), on the roles of Christian religious education in promoting human rights in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State. The study indicated that Christian education fails to teach values and morals that will equip students to face the challenges of life. The study also indicated that the Bible has not been given the central position it should take in Christian education. The study claimed that students disagreed with the lessons they learn, considering them as not ideal in Christian education.

#### Student Services in Christian Institutions

When considering education generally and specifically Christian education, the focus is always on the roles of teachers and little is mentioned about the roles of student services. The student service is also known as student affairs department (Abolarin, 2015) but, the term “student service” is used more in this study. The student services department in an institution of higher learning provides services, programs, and resources to help student learn and grow outside of the classroom (Adeniyi, 2000). The department promotes interpersonal relationships between students and personnel to the level of befriending the students through both formal and informal contacts. And this is solely to encourage interest in holistic development—intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual—of students (Aperocho-Tambalque, 2005; Guthrie, 1997).

Although, student services have gone through different turning points due to professionalism, there has been a constant returning to the purpose of caring for students’ development in every area of being using out-of-classroom contact and interactions especially in the students’ halls of residence (Abolarin, 2015; Sandeen & Barr, 2006). Knowing that students build relationships that last for a lifetime while on campus, it is the duty of student service personnel to leverage on this tendency to work for the well-being of students. This relationship is not only among students alone or between students and personnel, but also with God, their neighbours, with the world community, and with themselves (intrapersonal). The campus, through the interactions with the student services personnel, should be the place



where students learn the essentials of worship. The student services department bridges academic, personal, spiritual, and social experiences in order to help students become whole persons (African Nazarene University, 2009). In essence, student services is for developing balanced individuals who can function well in relationships with others and in service to the broader community (Abolarin, 2015; UNESCO, 2002).

Young people grow up in homes and learn the basics of life through kinship relationships; but in the process of going into higher institutions, specifically Christian institutions, they leave their homes, and those kinship relationships. While in the institutions, they sub-consciously expect to carry on the kinship relationships with the significant others they meet in the university, especially the student services personnel who accommodate them and also give them orientation on how to live on university campus. This is why student service department should strive toward the ideal of operating as a community in which students and personnel endeavour to build a habitation for scholarship that lead to fellowship and spiritual growth, producing whole people (Abolarin, 2015).

In Nigeria, little or no emphasis has been laid on the importance of student services to the holistic development of students. One of the reasons for the lack of emphasis is the generally poor standard and misguided orientation of educational policy. This has generally jeopardized the commencement of student service as a career especially in the tertiary educational system (Ejeh, Okenjom & Chizi-Woko, 2016; Omonijo, Anyaegbunam, Shaibu, Mabia, & Nwodo, 2016; Onuma & Ada, 2016). Studies have also attributed this to bad leadership, poor funding of education, endemic corruption among Nigerian elites in government agencies, commissions, parastatals. These factors may not be as destructive as corruption among elites in the university administrations across the country (Arisukwu, 2013; Enekwechi, 2015; Memory & Memory, 2013; Omonijo, Uche, Rotimi, & Nwadiolor, 2014; Kukogho, 2015).

Since the establishment of private universities is to ameliorate the problem associated with the quality of education in Nigeria, they have since inception, tried to provide state-of-the-art facilities to accommodate students as much as they could. This has brought to the fore the reengineering of student services department to foster a variety of programs which include student career development, student work-study program, hall administrative officers and assistance, student welfare, moulding the character of students, and counselling programs among others (Omonijo, Oludayo, Uche, & Rotimi, 2014; Onuma & Ada, 2016). Despite all these efforts, many of those who work in the student services have no understanding or training on how to go about this important duty (Omonijo, Anyaegbunam, Shaibu, Mabia, & Nwodo, 2016). Therefore, the service delivery of the department is still not adequate. Majority of the people working in student services department do not see it as a career, but they are engaged in it as a means of ensuring their financial survival (Nwodo, 2016). Many actually settled for the job after searching for jobs in their chosen career to no avail. It is not surprising therefore that many of the personnel do not have an idea of what should be their relationships with students which means that the kinship relationship that ought to occur between students and student service personnel is often non-existent. This has led to student service personnel extorting, abusing, and relegating students. Instead of being the ideal example to students, the personnel have many times negatively influenced students, resulting in risk behaviours and even in academic failure and expulsion among students.

## Kinship

Kinship has been a major field of study in anthropology (Schweitzer, 2000). It is a social and cultural construct that is used in every social group and human society serving as the foundation for social relatedness and social organization. Although, many have considered kinship solely from the biological relationship angle, it integrates non-biological relationship that can be considered to be as real as any biological relationship. Kinship is not essentially a permanent state rather it is inherently flexible but not formless and allows extensive improvisation in such a way that people are free to choose their kin (Jack, 2015; Mader & Gippelhauser, 2000; Nuttall, 2000). Kinship, an important phenomenon in Nigerian society, consists of persons who identify themselves in terms of a group that defends, rules, and directs the members of the group. Jack (2015), presented five significances of kinship as follows:

1. Allocation of rights such as those of residence, group membership and citizenship, succession to office, and an inheritance of property which are transmissible from one generation to the other
2. Regulation of sexual relations
3. Enjoying some social obligations like moral support and material dependence of assistance when needed
4. Contribution to social order and prediction of behaviour in society
5. Political and economic functions (many groups in Nigeria are involved in this practices).

Since students of institutions of higher learning are generally in the young-adult stage of life, they deal with issues of identity, belongingness, and intimacy (Bussing, Foller-Mancini, Gidley & Heusser, 2010, Erikson, 1950) and they mature in their ideological understandings and commitments through the expansion of their cognitive abilities—formal operations (Piaget, 1981). Kinship is an important element during this developmental age in their pursuit of self-definition through identification with a meaningful kinship group, which Christian institution personnel are expected to establish (Abolarin, 2015; Garber, 2007; Jones & Wilder, 2010; Kim, 2010). Students acquire values in a greater measure by observation and imitation through loving interactive relationships which are essential for cognition and a sense of self.

In Nigeria, like other African nations, there are strong kinship ties among people based on tribe, clan, family, even acquaintance. Kinship community of mentoring and modelling is so much a part of the nation's ethos (Abolarin, 2015). Both children and adults identify and associate with their kinsmen/kindred. It is a major factor that determines different things such as marriage, association, job placement, business line, and relationship to keep. It also determines human-network system, economic, political, even religious involvement. Kinship ties help different tribal groups secure jobs and economic opportunities after migration to a new place. The kinsmen who have already been established in such areas incorporate the individual into their businesses or jobs and get the person engaged meaningfully (Smith, 2011). Kinship relationship in Nigeria begins immediately after an individual is born and this is signified through different rites and initiations (Abolarin, 2015; Mbiti, 1990). Young people grow with this experience of the significance of immersion into kinship relationships and eventually proceed into Christian higher institutions of learning with the mind-set.

### Kinship in Christian educational system in Nigeria

Christian religious education has the potential to equip people with skills, knowledge, values and behaviours necessary for survival and changing the society positively (Attah, 2016). Because of its Christian worldview, Christian institutions can help students develop holistically. Omonijo, Oludayo, Uche and Rotimi (2014), in their study on how to use student affairs to curtail academic dishonesty listed the strategies being used to curtail dishonesty. The strategies are:

1. Passing information to students warning them against the danger of academic dishonesty
2. Ensuring that students caught for academic dishonesty face disciplinary actions
3. Checking students to prevent them from carrying implicating materials to the examination halls
4. Assisting students who have moral issues by referring them to the Chaplain
5. Encouraging students to be studious on campus instead of playing around
6. Preaching against academic dishonesty in Chapel Services
7. Referring students who have moral challenges to Bible schools and counselling centre for rehabilitations
8. Acting as role models to students on campus
9. Organising programs and lectures bothering on integrity for students from time to time
10. Monitoring students to ensure that they comply with the rules and regulations of examinations (p. 1511).

Considering these ten strategies, many have to do with doings and the only one that comes close to kinship relationship is the eighth point which is acting as role models to students on campus. Even on this one, the respondents in the study disagree that student affairs personnel are effective. This means that the strategy of serving as role models is required but it is generally ignored because it involves building relationships which is obviously more challenging than simply bossing students around. This indicates that there is a gap in understanding and practice of student services duties especially regarding kinship relationship. It is essential to mention that the management of student services department is critical to the fulfilment of its purpose in the lives of students. Yinka (2017), presented that in many cases, inadequate management of student services had led to series of students' unrest and closure of university campuses which consequently resulted in instability of academic calendar.

Kinship is not easily comprehended in Nigerian Christian institutions partly because of the cultural orientation on adults-children relationship which is purely hierarchical in nature. Adults are free to issue orders to younger ones and the younger ones are to obey even when they do not understand the order. This hierarchical relational approach is symptomatic of a high power-distance culture in which young people are afraid of the adults and there are scarcely opportunities for the kind of rapport that will bring adults down to the level of the young people (Alofe, 2019). Such rapport is what kinship relationship calls for, especially in Christian institutions in which significant others are to be connected to students and naturally model and mentor them. When students experience sincere and genuine love and concern,



they are ready to become whatever the adults want them to be; and they are inclined to become like the person who sincerely and genuinely loves them (Abolarin, 2015).

Kinship relationships in higher institutions is to fill the emptiness students are likely to feel as a result of the detachment from the relationships they enjoyed before coming to university. It is making student service personnel fathers, mothers, and other relations that are important to students while on campus. Lack of understanding of the role of student service personnel has limited their responsibilities only to the mechanical and non-relational activities (Omonijo, Oluday, Uche & Rotimi, 2014). The important part of their role which is the kinship relationship with students has been left out. It is stated that the general objectives of student services are to assist students to attain maximum self-realization, become effective in their social environment, and compliment the academic program of the institution. It is important to have a clear understanding of how this goals are to be achieved.

Relationship is a powerful factor for influencing students. Young people are ready to die for a person who loves and care for them (Abolarin, 2015). Therefore, kinship relationship can be an effective strategy through which student service personnel can easily influence students, making them to develop positive characters and a new orientation and attitude towards God and the universe. Kinship relationship with students is the primary role of student service personnel in Christian higher institution.

Kinship relationship is the method adopted by Jesus during his earthly ministry. He mingled with people, he met their needs and then invited them to follow him (Abolarin, 2015, Hull, 2004, White, 1903). The student service personnel in Christian institutions of higher learning are to be sources through which students would experience the love of God (Hull, 2006). In an ideal kinship relationship, rather than students being humiliated, exploited, abused or negatively influenced, they are motivated and empowered to overcome many at-risk behaviours with which young people are plagued.

Young people learn better in a positive relational environment where the significant others are intentional about mentoring. When young people are admitted to Christian institutions of higher learning, they look forward to having individuals they can look up to as their mentors, models and confidants. Student service personnel, being the first to receive students on campus and help them settle down, are naturally the first point of call as students unwittingly search for reliable people they can connect with. While lecturers spend few hours with students and mostly in the classroom, the student service personnel have many hours to mingle and interact with students both in the hall of residence and at the places of extracurricular activities. And students learn not only with their teachers but also, if not more, in variety of ways outside of their direct relationship with teachers. In all these variety of ways, student services department features prominently (Abolarin, 2015; Pazmino, 2010).

Through a sincere kinship relationship, students can be challenged to perform better academically and in character development. The times students spend in the hall of residence and in different places outside of the classrooms are the period when their true characters are displayed. These are the teachable moments when through informal relationships, they can be influenced holistically—moral, social, intellectual, and spiritual. At these periods too, the true

characters of the personnel are shown, their love, their skills of integration of faith and learning, and their commitment to the mission of the institutions are clearly displayed (Abolarin, 2017). Studies have indicated that students develop better in a kinship environment where love, care, positive relationship exist (Adams, 2015; Ali, Tazilah, & Ahmad, 2016; Chukwuemeka, 2013).

Students are ready to commit themselves to those who show sincere love and concern for their development and are ready to emulate and imitate such individuals in every aspect of being. This state of mind gives ample opportunity for students to evaluate their lives and worldview and choose better ones as they interact with exemplary adults within the university system. In an environment permeated by kinship relationship orientation, students are considered to be children of God who are in need of holistic education that will help them to live a life that will fulfil God's purpose for them (White, 1903). Specifically in Christian institutions of higher learning, student service personnel serve as surrogate parents for students. They understand the conflict going on within each of the students, and so give every help needed to the students in order to overcome the conflict. The personnel serve as the conduit through which students are connected back to God. Student service personnel are the agents of making education become what Augustine (354-430) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) called moral calling, an act of spirituality that facilitates salvation and leads students to serving God and others (Abolarin, 2015, Ozmon & Craver, 2003).

The student service personnel are to have the same attitude as Palmer (1983), who saw his service to students as a projection of his soul onto his students and their way of forging a bond. He considered the entanglement he experienced as being not more or less than the convolutions of his inner life; and that whatever he engaged in with students is a mirror to the soul showing who he truly is. It is dangerous to perceive one's responsibility to students as a mere job; it is the work of the soul. It is more than money making, it is the building of lives for eternity. The student service personnel should be able to perceive what and who the students could be beyond the present, and therefore carry on a labour of love to help them reach the lofty heights of skill and character development. They are to demonstrate a God-given capacity to see the potential in students, develop a vision for what students may become rather than seeing them for what they are currently (White, 1913).

In order to encourage students to develop in a kinship relational environment, student service personnel should strive to live the kind of lives that are congruent with and amplifies their own positive character. Authenticity is a major characteristic young people look for in adults (Gay, 2010; Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007). Values are not only to be clarified to students, they should be debated, judged, exemplified, demonstrated, and tested before students if they are to be embraced by students (Gautam, 2015).

#### Conclusion.

Although, this study is not empirically verified, the desk research approach has been meticulously used to present a way by which education in Christian higher institutions can be improved to achieve its goal. Education is beyond mere certification, it involves character building and connecting students to their Maker. Student services department in Christian higher institution is important in ensuring the achievement of these educational objectives. As

students leave their significant others behind to spend years in Christian higher institutions, there should not be a relational gap so wide that students will end up alienated, depressed or despondent. Student service personnel are the appropriate individuals to fill in the space of the significant others in the lives of students. The personnel spend both day and night attending to and relating with students.

The student services personnel are to be intentional in building kinship relationships with students. Through this relationship students can have holistic development and be equipped to face the challenges of life after university years. Through kinship relationship students can weave beliefs with behaviour and not end up having meaningless experience in institutions and in life (Garber, 1996).

In order to have kinship experience with students in Christian institutions, student service personnel should be individuals who are passionate about supporting students as they transit from one stage of the lives to the next. They should be visionary in their approach as they watch students navigate the twists and bends in their journey towards self-awareness and identity. Christian institutions need to be circumspect in the process of hiring people to work in the student service department. In addition to this, an adequate evaluation of performance and monitoring systems should be put in place by the administration to ensure that the personnel work in accordance to the objectives of the institution. Regular training can also help to equip the personnel with updated approaches and techniques of working with students. The goal of Christian institution of higher learning is to redeem students and equip them for joyful service here and higher joy of service in the life to come; achieving this goal can be ensured through fostering kinship relationships between student services personnel and students.

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