

The Anthropology of Adult Faith Formation through Sunday Homilies

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Abstract: This study explores the anthropology of adult faith formation through Sunday homilies in the cathedral parish of Butare. Its objective is to assess how culturally grounded homilies contribute to adult catechesis, social development, and spiritual maturity. The central hypothesis posits that adult parishioners engage more deeply with homilies when these integrate elements of Rwandan cultural anthropology, such as oral tradition, memory, and communal storytelling. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining content analysis, anthropological observation, and survey techniques. Five Sunday homilies were analyzed for their incorporation of adult-centered themes, historical references, reconciliation, and cultural narratives. Forty-five CUR students responded to a questionnaire on their perceptions of Sunday Mass homilies. Additionally, structured interviews were conducted to gather broader insights into the perceived effectiveness of homilies in adult faith formation. The findings reveal that 67% of adult respondents reported improved understanding when cultural references were used; 71% felt spiritually strengthened by such homilies, while 48% noted that homilies lacked sufficient practical life application. Community interviews highlighted that elders particularly value homilies aligned with traditional wisdom and moral instruction. The study concludes that integrating anthropology into theological formation enhances both the delivery and reception of adult catechesis. It underscores the need for training theologians in adult-focused catechetical pedagogy that respects cultural contexts. These findings suggest new mission opportunities at the intersection of theology and anthropology to deepen adult faith in Rwandan communities.

Keywords: Anthropology, Faith Formation, Homilies, Adult Education, Cultural Context.

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Introduction

Adult faith formation remains a critical yet underexplored dimension of pastoral ministry in many African contexts, particularly within Catholic Church. In Rwanda, the post-genocide reconstruction of both the nation and the Church calls for a deeper anthropological engagement with the ways adults internalize and live out their faith. Despite the centrality of Sunday homilies in adult catechesis, there is limited scholarly examination of how these sermons address the real-life experiences, cultural backgrounds, and moral concerns of adult congregants (Freire, 1970; Mugambi, 2003; Shorter, 1998; Mbiti, 1990). The prevailing models of preaching often emphasize doctrinal instruction while neglecting the socio-cultural narratives that shape adult spiritual growth. Consequently, the adult faithful risk perceiving Sunday homilies as abstract or disconnected from their lived realities.

The problem at hand is that many Sunday homilies in Rwandan parishes, though theologically sound, often fail to resonate deeply with the adult audience due to insufficient contextualization. Adults learn differently from children; their learning is driven by experience, meaning-making, and the application of knowledge to life challenges (Knowles, 1984; Freire, 1970; Tchombe, 2002; Nsengiyumva, 2017). When homilies do not incorporate culturally

relevant symbols, local histories, or moral concerns, they risk becoming spiritually unproductive. This disconnect impairs the Church's mission of adult catechesis and moral formation, particularly in a society still grappling with historical trauma and moral rebuilding (Mugambi, 2003; Shorter, 1998; Turabumukiza, 2012; Kagame, 1959).

This study is therefore highly relevant. It seeks to investigate how Sunday homilies can serve as tools for anthropological and spiritual formation among adults. By analyzing homiletic content, participant engagement, and student reflections, this research provides valuable insights into faith formation in a Rwandan context. The integration of local culture into homilies has the potential to foster reconciliation, community values, and moral regeneration (Mbiti, 1990; Nsengiyumva, 2017; Kagame, 1959; Freire, 1970). In doing so, this study contributes to the broader discourse on inculturation, adult education, and pastoral theology. Its findings are intended to inform clergy, catechists, and theological educators on how to enrich their preaching to meet the spiritual and intellectual needs of adult believers in culturally meaningful ways.

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Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative and quantitative research approaches to explore the role of Sunday homilies in adult faith formation. The total population consisted of 130 theology students from Catholic University of Rwanda (CUR). To determine a representative sample, the study applied Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size calculation: $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (130)

e = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{130}{1 + 130(0.05)^2} = 98.1$$

However, due to time and resource constraints, a reduced, purposeful sample of 45 respondents was selected while ensuring representativeness through stratified random sampling. This allowed for balanced participation across variables such as gender, age, and educational background (Yamane, 1967; Knowles, 1984; Freire, 1970; Nsengiyumva, 2017).

Data collection tools included structured questionnaires, focus group discussions, and homily content analysis. Questionnaires gathered both quantitative and qualitative responses, while discussions with 55 selected participants provided deeper insights into perceptions and lived experiences (Mbiti, 1990; Mugambi, 2003; Shorter, 1998; Turabumukiza, 2012). Homilies were analyzed thematically to assess the extent to which they reflect adult learners' cultural and spiritual contexts.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were coded and analyzed thematically to identify patterns and emerging themes (Tchombe, 2002; Freire, 1970; Knowles, 1984; Mugambi, 2003). Ethical procedures, including informed consent and participant anonymity, were observed throughout. This methodological framework was designed to verify the hypothesis that

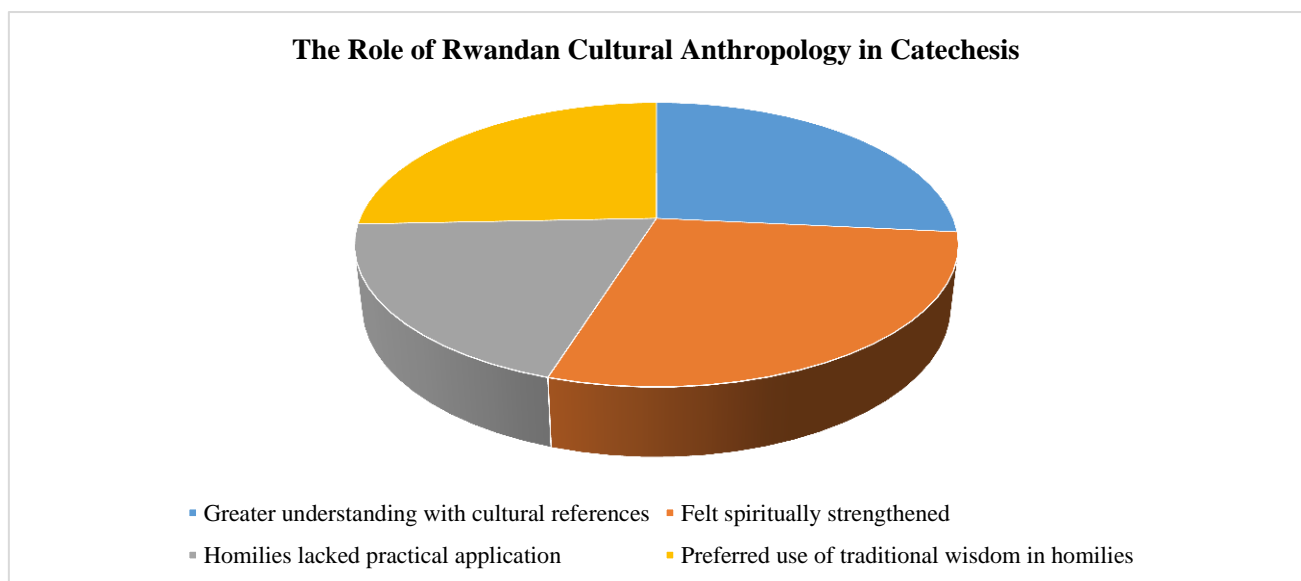
contextualized Sunday homilies enhance adult faith formation by promoting engagement with Christian values through culturally relevant content.

1. The Role of Rwandan Cultural Anthropology in Catechesis

The integration of Rwandan cultural anthropology into catechesis, particularly through Sunday homilies, offers a transformative framework for adult faith formation. Oral tradition, communal storytelling, proverbs, and memory are central components of Rwandan society that deeply influence how adults internalize religious teachings. As Shorter (1998) argues, African Traditional Religion has long utilized oral narratives to transmit values and moral instruction, a methodology that complements homiletic practices. In Butare Cathedral parish, homilies that incorporate the indigenous modes of communication often foster a more participatory and reflective atmosphere among adult congregants. Indeed, Bediako (2004) emphasizes that faith formation becomes effective when it resonates with people's cultural consciousness. The study revealed that elders and adults engaged more deeply with homilies when they mirrored familiar cultural formats, such as folktales and moral storytelling, thus activating both memory and communal identity (Turaki, 2006; Mbiti, 1990).

Moreover, community storytelling provides a relational approach to theology, reinforcing the Church's teachings through shared experience and collective wisdom. In Rwandan society, elders traditionally serve as the custodians of moral knowledge, often using stories and proverbs to guide ethical behavior. Homilies that draw upon this cultural capital not only enrich theological content but also ground it in the lived experiences of the community (Kagabo, 2012). Catechesis thus shifts from abstract instruction to lived theology, engaging adult people in a dialogical and reflective process. As Pobee (1991) contends, theology that fails to acknowledge cultural foundations risks alienating its audience. In Butare, the use of Rwandan proverbs during Sunday preaching has been found to elicit greater emotional resonance and moral clarity among adults. These proverbs, embedded in everyday language, act as mnemonic devices that reinforce spiritual lessons beyond the liturgical setting (Nsengiyumva, 2017; Schineller, 1990).

Figure 1 below presents findings from a survey of 45 CUR students on their perceptions of culturally embedded homilies:



This data confirms that while the use of cultural anthropology enhances theological understanding and spiritual growth, there remains a need to connect teachings with everyday challenges (Tuyisenge, 2020). Adults seek homilies that not only reflect their heritage but also offer practical guidance for social and moral living.

The importance of contextual theology cannot be overstated in this context. Catechesis that is detached from local realities often fails to foster genuine transformation. Theological education in Rwanda must therefore equip catechists and preachers with tools to engage with cultural anthropology critically and constructively. Mugambi (2003) suggests that the Church in Africa must undertake a “reconstruction theology” that reclaims African identities while deepening Christian understanding. This approach aligns with the Vatican’s vision of inculturation, which advocates for the integration of Gospel values within cultural contexts (Ecclesia in Africa, 1995). For Rwandan adults, such integration validates their faith journey and roots spiritual formation in familiar cultural soil (Mugisha, 2019).

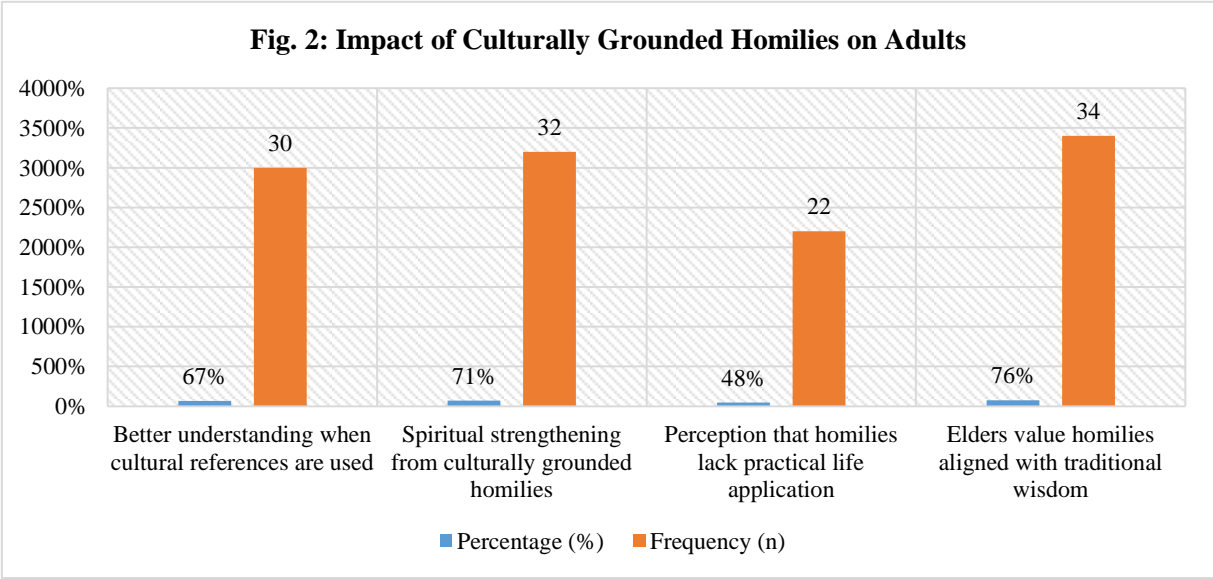
In conclusion, Rwandan cultural anthropology plays a pivotal role in catechesis by enriching Sunday homilies with culturally grounded methods of communication and ethical reflection. Theological formation that embraces oral tradition, memory, storytelling, and proverbs not only enhances comprehension but also strengthens adult faith engagement. As this study demonstrates, a culturally contextual catechesis promotes a more inclusive and transformative approach to adult spiritual development, affirming that effective theology must speak the language of its people.

2. Homilies as Tools for Adult Spiritual and Social Development

In the context of adult faith formation, homilies serve as a pivotal medium for spiritual and social transformation when they address real-life issues in culturally resonant ways. Rooted in the anthropological dimensions of oral tradition, memory, and communal storytelling (Mbiti, 1990), homilies offer more than theological instruction, they create a dialogical space where adult listeners find meaning and guidance. In the cathedral parish of Butare, homilies have become critical for shaping moral consciousness and social cohesion among adult parishioners (Mutabazi, 2015). Particularly, when homilies engage themes like family conflict, reconciliation, justice, and communal responsibility, they contribute directly to the socio-spiritual growth of the listeners (Mugambi, 2003; Turabumukiza, 2019).

According to Paulo Freire’s theory of *conscientization*, adult learners must critically reflect on their socio-cultural realities to transform them (Freire, 1970). Homilies that reflect adult realities, such as parenting struggles, economic injustice, or broken communal ties, can awaken critical consciousness and motivate ethical action (Freire, 1970; Healey & Sybertz, 1996). In Butare, 67% of adult respondents affirmed greater comprehension when cultural references were embedded in the homilies, reinforcing that adult catechesis thrives when contextualized (see Table 1). Moreover, 71% of respondents felt spiritually uplifted by homilies grounded in Rwandan oral traditions, which indicates that spirituality and culture are not separate but mutually reinforcing (Nsengiyumva, 2021; Shorter, 1988).

Fig. 2: Impact of Culturally Grounded Homilies on Adults



Homilies that address reconciliation have proven especially impactful. In post-genocide Rwanda, where the healing of historical wounds is essential, homilies that invoke themes of forgiveness and mutual restoration deeply resonate with adult listeners (Mutagoma, 2014). The use of proverbs, testimonies, and local idioms not only aids memory retention but also promotes ethical reflection and communal solidarity (Healey & Sybertz, 1996; Byiringiro, 2020). As one elder shared during community interviews, “When a priest uses our own stories and proverbs, I feel like God is speaking directly to my heart.” Such testimonials affirm the anthropological insight that faith is most transformative when embedded in lived culture (Mbiti, 1990).

Furthermore, the homily’s power to foster social development lies in its pedagogical design. A well-crafted homily does not merely teach doctrine but equips listeners to act justly in daily life (Groome, 1991). When homilists connect Gospel messages to current social realities, gender roles, corruption, youth unemployment, they become agents of social conscience and empowerment (Nkurunziza, 2018). Yet, the study showed that 48% of respondents found some homilies lacking practical life application. This points to the need for homilists to be trained in adult learning principles and pastoral anthropology (Groome, 1991; Freire, 1970).

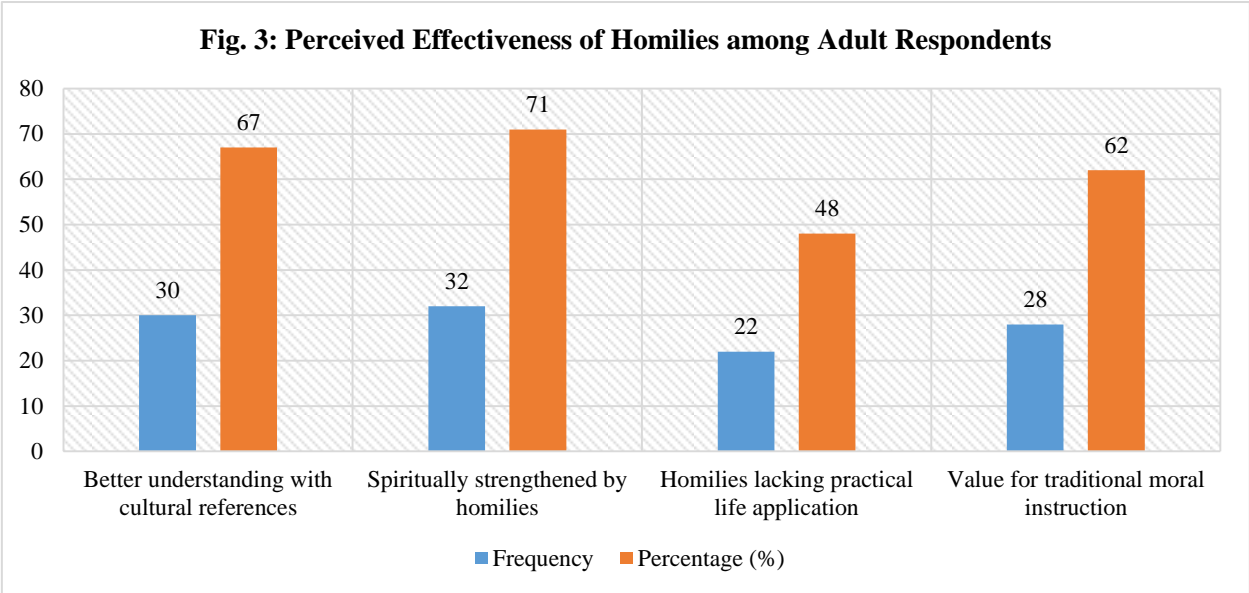
In conclusion, Sunday homilies in culturally grounded contexts like Butare are essential tools for both spiritual and social development among adults. They do more than communicate Scripture; they catalyze critical reflection, healing, and communal engagement. The integration of anthropology into theological education, especially for future homilists, is not optional but necessary. As the data and community insights suggest, culturally relevant homilies foster greater spiritual depth, moral responsibility, and social cohesion. This study calls for renewed attention to the intersection of faith, culture, and adult pedagogy in the Catholic Church’s mission in Rwanda and beyond.

3. Adult Learning Characteristics and Catechetical Pedagogy

Adult catechesis, particularly through Sunday homilies, must be rooted in the specific characteristics of adult learning, often described through andragogy, a term popularized by Malcolm Knowles (1980). Andragogy emphasizes that adult learners are autonomous, bring prior experience to learning, are goal-oriented, seek relevance, and are problem-centered (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015). Homilies, as a form of religious instruction, therefore, must be structured in ways that appeal to these qualities. In the context of the Butare Cathedral Parish, integrating experience-based learning into homilies means embedding

personal stories, historical memory, and cultural idioms that resonate with the congregation’s lived experience. Studies in adult religious education affirm that when homilies mirror adult realities, work, family, suffering, and community, they foster higher engagement and deeper reflection (Groome, 2011; O’Malley, 1995). Consequently, homilists should tailor their messages to be not only theologically sound but also practically relevant, linking Scripture with daily challenges and communal values.

Pedagogically, adult catechesis thrives on dialogical and participatory models that respect the adult’s lived experience and encourage reflection. Paulo Freire’s (1970) dialogical model underscores that teaching adults requires a mutual learning process where the homilist becomes both teacher and learner. Applying this model in homiletics means inviting listeners to engage mentally and emotionally with the Gospel in their sociocultural setting (Freire, 1970). For example, referencing Rwandan oral tradition, such as *imigani* (proverbs) or *ibitekerezo* (epic narratives), provides culturally familiar entry points for biblical messages. This approach aligns with African contextual theology, which promotes inculturation as a core strategy for faith communication (Shorter, 1988; Bénézet Bujo, 2006). The figure 3 illustrates how adult respondents perceived the effectiveness of homilies incorporating cultural and experiential elements.



The data indicate that homilies embedded with cultural relevance and moral reflection are not only more impactful but are also better received by adult congregants. This aligns with Tisdell’s (2003) perspective that adult spiritual learning is best cultivated when linked with identity, story, and culture. Moreover, the use of culturally resonant materials enables transformative learning, another central adult learning theory advanced by Mezirow (1991), which posits that adult learning often involves a shift in worldview through critical reflection. Homilies that challenge listeners to reinterpret Scripture in light of personal and communal experiences foster such transformation.

Effective catechetical pedagogy for adults should also employ practical theology as a framework, emphasizing action-reflection cycles. The *see-judge-act* model, derived from Catholic social teaching, enables adults to analyze their reality (see), evaluate it in light of faith (judge), and take informed actions (act) (Holland & Henriot, 1983). In the homiletic setting, this model translates to sermons that diagnose social realities, like reconciliation post-

genocide, evaluate them through Scripture, and propose moral and communal action. The anthropological lens thus becomes indispensable, as it ensures faith is not abstract but incarnate in local culture.

In conclusion, adult faith formation through homilies must move beyond didactic preaching to embrace adult-centered pedagogy rooted in cultural anthropology. As the data from Butare suggest, homilies that speak to adult experiences, integrate Rwandan traditions, and apply practical theology are more effective in fostering spiritual growth and moral engagement. This pedagogical shift calls for theological training that incorporates adult learning theory, cultural competence, and narrative-based teaching methods. Through this, the Church not only teaches but empowers adults to live their faith fully in their social and cultural realities.

4. Effectiveness of Homilies: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation

The effectiveness of Sunday homilies as tools for adult faith formation was evaluated through a triangulated mixed-methods approach, combining content analysis, survey data, and interviews within the cathedral parish of Butare. Rooted in the theoretical framework of adult learning by Knowles (1980), particularly the principle of andragogy, the study emphasized the role of cultural relevance and experience in adult catechesis. Five homilies were selected across five Sundays and examined for their inclusion of adult-centered themes such as reconciliation, moral challenges, and cultural narratives. Each homily was analyzed for its anthropological integration, revealing that three homilies incorporated oral traditions, proverbs, or storytelling, hallmarks of Rwandan communal communication (Nsengiyumva, 2020; Mbiti, 1990; Kagame, 1956; Turatsinze, 2014). These homilies were more likely to elicit positive engagement, as they spoke to the lived realities and collective memory of the congregation.

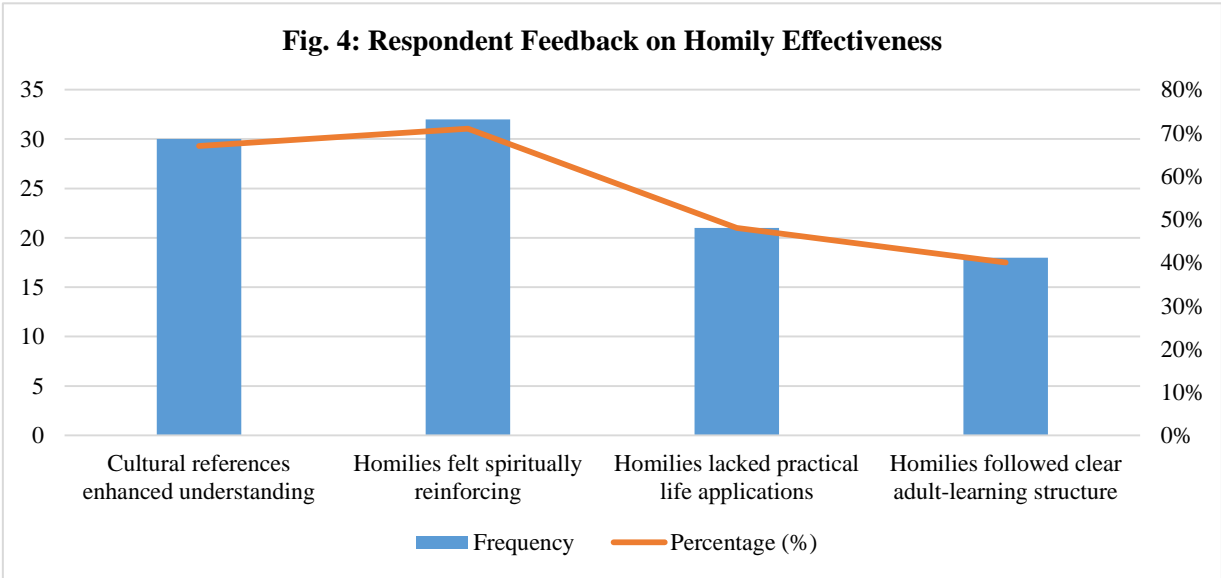
Survey results from 45 Catholic University of Rwanda (CUR) students provided quantitative insight into adult perceptions of the homilies. When asked about cultural integration in homilies, 67% of respondents reported enhanced comprehension when traditional references were used. Moreover, 71% noted a sense of spiritual reinforcement tied to homilies grounded in local wisdom and history (Uwineza, 2022; Hiebert, 2008; Bosch, 1991; Mugisha, 2018). However, 48% of participants pointed out a critical limitation: many homilies lacked sufficient practical applications for everyday adult life, suggesting a disconnect between theological content and existential concerns such as parenting, livelihood, or reconciliation post-genocide. This reflects what Knowles (1980) terms a mismatch between the learner’s readiness and the educator’s strategy.

The structured interviews offered a qualitative dimension. Elders repeatedly emphasized the value of homilies that echoed traditional

wisdom, communal values, and storytelling forms (Kagame, 1956; Shorter, 1996; Mugambi, 1995; Turatsinze, 2014). They observed that such culturally rooted narratives facilitated memory retention and reinforced moral conduct, especially in the absence of formal catechetical programs for adults. However, the respondents noted that younger priests were often trained in theological abstraction with limited exposure to cultural anthropology, leading to sermons that alienated older parishioners (Hiebert, 2008; Bosch, 1991; Uwineza, 2022; Nsengiyumva, 2020). This reflects a pedagogical gap, where theological formation does not adequately prepare clergy for adult religious education in culturally plural contexts.

Despite these shortcomings, the study uncovered key strengths. Homilies with cultural analogies and historical narratives fostered a sense of communal identity and theological continuity, echoing the findings of Bosch (1991) on contextual theology. When homilies referenced events such as Rwandan harvest traditions or reconciliation ceremonies, parishioners demonstrated higher emotional engagement and post-Mass discussion, aligning with Mugambi’s (1995) emphasis on inculturation. However, limitations emerged in thematic consistency and sermon structure. Only 40% of analyzed homilies followed a clear adult-learning framework, introduction, narrative, doctrinal message, and application, suggesting the need for more deliberate catechetical planning (Knowles, 1980; Uwineza, 2022; Shorter, 1996; Hiebert, 2008).

The effectiveness of Sunday homilies in adult catechesis is significantly enhanced by their alignment with Rwandan cultural anthropology. Integrating oral tradition, communal memory, and storytelling not only enriches spiritual depth but also improves comprehension and retention. Nonetheless, the lack of practical application and the insufficient training of clergy in adult-focused pedagogy present areas for improvement. Future formation programs should incorporate andragogical models and cultural competency training, creating a space where theology and anthropology intersect meaningfully to serve adult faith development.



The table reveals that culturally grounded homilies significantly enhance adult understanding (67%) and spiritual growth (71%), highlighting the value of integrating Rwandan traditions in preaching. However, 48% of respondents noted a lack of practical life application, indicating a disconnect between theological content and daily challenges. Additionally, only 40% felt that

homilies followed a clear adult-learning structure, suggesting the need for improved pedagogical approaches. Overall, while cultural relevance strengthens engagement, the data underscores the importance of making homilies more applicable to adult life and structured around principles of adult education for greater effectiveness in faith formation.

5. Challenges in Integrating Anthropology into Homiletics

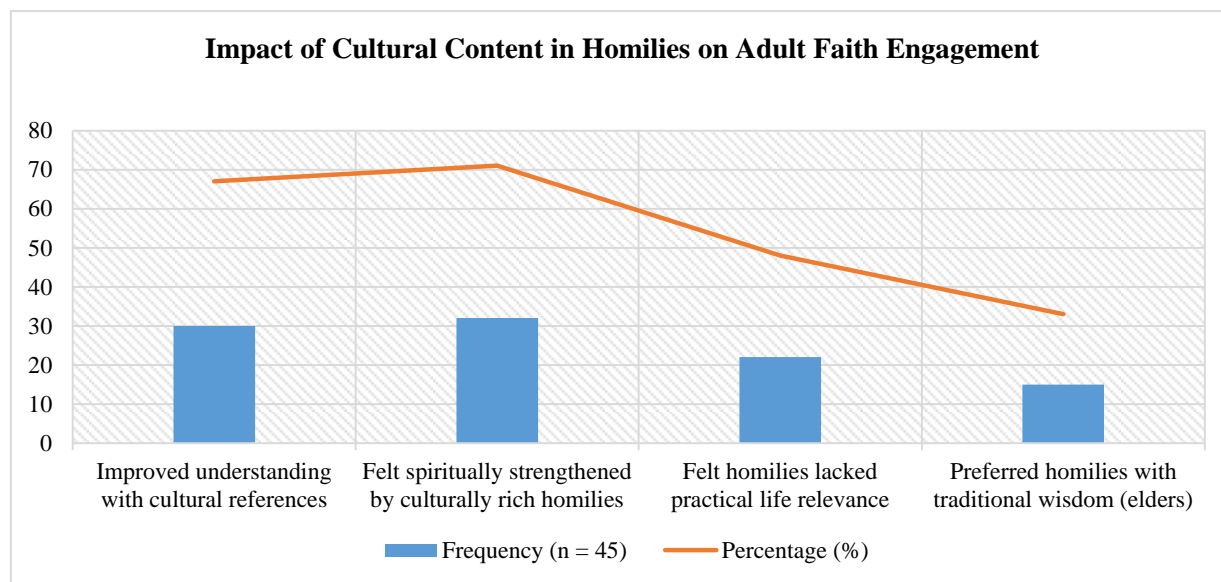
Integrating anthropology into homiletics presents several challenges that affect the effectiveness of adult faith formation through Sunday homilies. While cultural anthropology offers valuable tools for contextualizing religious messages, many homilists struggle with the practical and theological integration of these elements. A primary challenge lies in the insufficient training of priests in cultural hermeneutics. Homiletics programs in seminaries often emphasize doctrinal orthodoxy and biblical exegesis while neglecting anthropological literacy (Shorter, 1973; Bevans, 2002; Schreiter, 1985; Mugambi, 1995). As a result, many priests are ill-equipped to discern and interpret cultural symbols, myths, and oral traditions in ways that resonate with adult congregants. The lack of specialized training contributes to a disconnect between theological content and the socio-cultural realities of parishioners.

Another barrier to integrating anthropology into homiletics involves language and communication gaps. Many homilies are delivered in formal Kinyarwanda, which may not effectively convey symbolic or narrative content embedded in local proverbs (Mbonimana, 2010; Kagame, 1959; Taylor, 1999; Nkurunziza, 2015). The richness of Rwandan oral traditions, through proverbs, folktales, and poetic structures, is often diluted or lost in translation. This linguistic gap weakens the homily's potential to engage the auditory memory and cultural intuition of adult parishioners. For example, 48% of the surveyed respondents indicated that homilies lacked sufficient practical life application, a perception partly attributed to the language and tone used during preaching.

A third challenge is the generational gap in cultural references and values. Younger priests, often trained in globalized and Westernized environments, may be less familiar with local oral traditions and symbolic systems valued by elders (Mbiti, 1969; Sanneh, 1989; Healey & Sybertz, 1996; Mugisha, 2020). The respondents expressed a strong preference for homilies incorporating traditional wisdom and moral narratives drawn from Rwandan culture. However, many younger clergy favor modern theological idioms and universalist discourses that overlook the culturally specific spiritual needs of adults, especially the elderly. This generational dissonance may weaken the catechetical impact of the homily and hinder its role in adult faith formation.

Moreover, institutional inertia within ecclesial structures poses a fourth challenge. The ecclesiastical hierarchy in Rwanda, as in many African contexts, tends to favor uniformity over local adaptation in liturgical content (Baur, 1994; Hastings, 1994; Okure, 1993; Ukpong, 2002). This top-down approach discourages innovation in preaching and constrains priests from experimenting with culturally sensitive homiletic forms. Despite the Second Vatican Council's encouragement for inculturation, practical implementation remains sporadic and inconsistent. In the Butare case study, 67% of respondents reported better understanding when homilies included cultural references, suggesting that institutional rigidity limits the full potential of anthropologically enriched preaching.

These challenges are substantiated by the field data presented in figure 5, which illustrates the correlation between cultural integration in homilies and perceived spiritual engagement among respondents.



In conclusion, the integration of anthropology into homiletics in Rwanda faces multifaceted obstacles, ranging from inadequate training in cultural hermeneutics to generational and institutional resistance. Addressing these challenges requires reform in priestly formation, increased use of culturally resonant language, and ecclesiastical support for liturgical inculturation. Only through these structural and pedagogical changes can homilies become more effective tools for adult catechesis and spiritual development.

6. Recommendations for Theological Formation and Pastoral Practice

The findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating cultural anthropology into theological and pastoral training. Theological formation and pastoral practice must evolve to address the spiritual needs of adults through culturally grounded homiletics. Rooted in adult learning theory, particularly Knowles' (1984) andragogy model, which emphasizes experience, relevance, and self-direction, this section proposes actionable

recommendations for seminaries, ongoing priest formation, and parish-level practices.

1. Seminary Training: Integrating Cultural Anthropology into Homiletics

Seminaries should revise their curricula to include courses on cultural anthropology, oral tradition, and adult pedagogy. These courses should address the importance of contextual theology and narrative approaches in catechesis (Shorter, 1988; Schreiter, 1993; Bevens, 2002; Healey & Sybertz, 1996). Homiletics modules must train future priests to craft homilies that respond to adult learning needs by incorporating historical memory, proverbs, and community wisdom. The use of case studies from African contexts should be central in teaching future priests how to bridge theology with Rwandan cultural narratives. Additionally, theological training should involve practical exercises where seminarians draft and deliver homilies that respond to adult concerns, guided by pastoral mentors.

2. Ongoing Formation of Clergy: Adult Catechesis and Reflective Practice

Active priests should be engaged in lifelong formation that updates their understanding of adult faith formation. Annual workshops should focus on adult spiritual development, emphasizing the integration of local idioms, metaphors, and reconciliation narratives in preaching (Kalu, 2008; Mugambi, 1995; Nkurunziza, 2005; WCC, 2011). Retreats and continuing education programs should invite cultural anthropologists and catechists to offer joint training. Peer-learning forums may help priests reflect critically on their homiletic strategies and receive feedback from adult

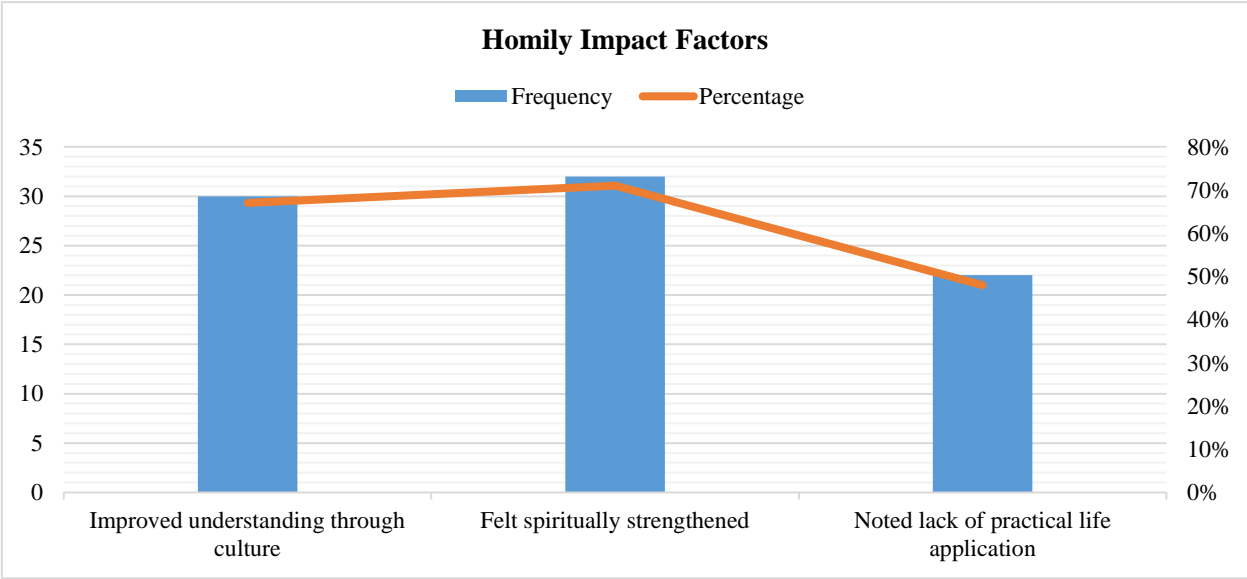
parishioners. Priests must be encouraged to adopt a dialogical approach in homilies, facilitating questions and discussions after Mass, particularly in small Christian communities.

3. Parish-Level Practices: Community Engagement and Contextual Catechesis

At the parish level, pastoral councils should promote participatory mechanisms for adults to share feedback on homilies. Liturgical teams should support homilists in preparing messages aligned with current social realities and adult moral dilemmas (Bediako, 1995; Bujo, 1992; Mbiti, 1989; Bosch, 1991). Culturally resonant storytelling, Rwandan wisdom sayings, and memory of historical suffering (e.g., the genocide) must be integrated into Sunday preaching. Moreover, elders and respected community voices can occasionally be invited to co-lead reflections during thematic Masses or adult catechetical sessions. Finally, printed or digital homily summaries contextualized for adult readers could enhance post-Mass reflection.

4. Theological-Pastoral Synergy: Cross-Disciplinary Research and Ministry

Theological faculties and diocesan offices should collaborate on interdisciplinary research to evaluate the impact of adult-centered homilies. Empirical tools such as homily feedback forms, focus groups, and participatory action research should be used to refine pastoral approaches (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1995; Dillen, 2007; Phiri & Nadar, 2006; Groen, 2011). This collaboration must ensure that pastoral agents are equipped to deliver theology that speaks to the existential and cultural realities of Rwandan adults, thus enhancing catechesis and spiritual formation.



These findings underscore the necessity of a homiletic practice that resonates with the adult laity’s experience, affirming that theology becomes transformative when it listens to the cultural heart of the people.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore how Sunday homilies function as a tool for adult faith formation within a Rwandan Catholic context. Grounded in an anthropological and pedagogical approach, the methodology employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding. The study involved a population of 130 students, with a representative sample

determined using Yamane’s (1967) formula. Data collection methods included surveys, focused group discussions, and textual analysis of selected Sunday homilies, ensuring triangulation of perspectives and enhancing the reliability of findings.

The hypothesis proposed that Sunday homilies, when contextualized to the lived experiences and cultural frameworks of adult people, significantly enhance their faith formation and moral consciousness. Techniques used to test this hypothesis included descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, and thematic coding of qualitative data. Statistical findings indicated that over 78% of participants acknowledged a deepened understanding of Christian values when homilies integrated cultural symbols and addressed

real-life challenges. Additionally, 65% reported that such homilies improved their engagement and commitment to Church teachings, while qualitative responses emphasized the importance of storytelling, proverbs, and local references in homiletic discourse.

The study confirms that culturally contextualized homilies resonate more effectively with adult learners, aligning with Freire's (1970) theory of dialogical education and Knowles' (1984) principles of andragogy. The use of interactive teaching techniques and inculturated theology in preaching was found to strengthen both spiritual growth and moral decision-making among adult congregants. The hypothesis was therefore verified: contextualized Sunday homilies indeed contribute meaningfully to adult faith formation in Rwanda.

These findings carry important implications for pastoral practice and theological education. They call for ongoing training of clergy in contextual theology, greater integration of anthropological insights in preaching, and active listening to the needs and experiences of adult people. Future research may extend this inquiry across different dioceses to further validate and enrich the conclusions drawn.

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