

15 - 17 May 2026

Rome , Italy

The Preventive System in Contemporary Education: a Phenomenological Perspective

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Abstract

This article explores the enduring relevance of Saint John Bosco's Preventive System of education through a phenomenological lens. By examining the lived experiences of educators and learners within contemporary Salesian learning institutional contexts in Zambia. Using a qualitative approach and a phenomenological research design to delve into the lived experiences of head teachers, cooperator-teachers and learners in Salesian institutions of learning, following the nature of Salesian accompaniment and the collaboration between the congregation and the lay people since 1982 when they set foot in Zambia. The study purposively sampled 30 participants once data saturation was reached. Data were collected through interviews with headteachers and teachers, and FGDs with cooperators and learners, and triangulated with document analysis of institutional records, policies, and relevant books on Don Bosco and his preventive system of education. Data was thematically analysed using the Collaizzi method. The study findings highlighted a relational pedagogy where discipline, spirituality, and loving-kindness converge to create a holistic educational environment. The schools emerged not just as sites of instruction but as a moral and relational community. Educators acted as companions, moral anchors, and facilitators of dialogue, fostering both intellectual and ethical growth. This integrated approach reflected a commitment to nurturing learners as whole persons; socially, morally, and emotionally. The implication of the study shows religion operating as a cultural and moral compass, reinforcing relational pedagogy. It provided a collective anchor for ethical conduct, ensuring that moral education is embedded in everyday routines and interactions that may result in bringing forth 'honest citizens and good Christians.

Keywords: Salesian Institutions, Reason, Religion, Lovingkindness-Kindness, Relational Pedagogy, Moral Anchors.