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Ascertaining the Quality of Catholic Education Among Schools in the Diocese of Iba

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Abstract: This study evaluated the quality of Catholic education among schools in the Diocese of Iba. The quantitative descriptive survey research design was utilized, and data were obtained through the questionnaire adopted from National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools, which was answered by 210 respondents selected using the convenient sampling method. Gathered data were encoded and analyzed in SPSS using mean for descriptive data. One-Way ANOVA was used to identify significant variations in the assessment of stakeholders on the quality of Catholic education. Significant findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the school leaders in ACSDI schools ensure the commitment of the Philosophy, Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (PVMGO) statements to the Catholic identity, that there is a harmonious relationship between the governing body of ACSDI schools and the Bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue and respect for the legitimate authority of the Bishop, that the curriculum is aligned and rooted in the Catholic standards and values to ensure quality education among students, and the development, and that the development plan of the school requires the school leaders and governing body to ensure that the key strategies are in track to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects. It was found out also that there were significant variations in the assessment of stakeholders on the quality of Catholic

education across schools in terms of mission and Catholic identity, governance and leadership, academic excellence, and operational vitality. Based on the findings of the study, a comprehensive strategic plan was crafted to assure the quality of Catholic education among schools in the Diocese of Iba.

Keywords: Quality of Catholic Education, Catholic Schools, Quantitative Descriptive Research Design, Diocese of Iba

INTRODUCTION

For decades, one of the popular ideas in Catholic education literature is the idea that the Catholic vision of education is rooted in its 'Christian concept of life centered on Jesus Christ; he is the One who ennoble people, gives meaning to life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils, and must be handed down through Religious Education and Catechesis and must be the foundation of the entire educational process (Madrigal & Oracion, 2018). Catholic education is related to the evangelical mission of the Church. But despite the clear mission of the Catholic educational system, there are further problems regarding the quality implemented by the Catholic schools. Catholic school stakeholders lack the realization of the vision and mission concerning their commitment to Catholic identity (Hobbie et al., 2010). As Madrigan (2018) mentioned, due to secularism and globalization, there was a depreciation in moral values that caused the quality of Catholic

education to be compromised. Religion was not the core of the Catholic school curriculum (Madrigal & Oracion, 2018).

The Association of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Iba (ACSDI) is also facing problems regarding quality Catholic education. It includes limited financial resources, low compensation to employees, a decrease of enrolment, weak marketing program, inadequate instructional support (in some ACSDI schools), lack of collaboration, commitment and support of employees especially in religious activities, limited involvement of faculty and staff in Research and Innovation, low involvement of the academic community in community extension programs and services, limited linkages, and low involvement of alumni. One way of recovering from these problems could be to create a Continuous and Quality Improvement Plan. For this study, it was of interest to investigate the different domains of operation among ACSDI schools. This study has made some significant contributions to the field of Catholic education. The result of the study will be the basis of Quality Improvement Plan that will address different issues concerning quality Catholic education and will help the ACSDI to realize its goal of having one system.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive survey research design. The design was employed to address the problems and purpose of the research (Yilmaz, 2013). Using the domains of the NSBECS instrument as a tool, the design was used to statistically describe and analyze the assessment of the respondents on the quality of Catholic education in the Diocese of Iba.

The study was conducted in the different Catholic schools in the Diocese of Iba. The researcher used the convenient sampling method in gathering data. Much as the researcher wanted to use the population as a method of determining the respondents of the study, due to the outbreak of the CoViD-19 pandemic, from the population of 559, there were only fifteen (15) admin, one hundred sixty-seven (167) teaching, and twenty-eight (28) non-teaching staff of ACSDI schools, for a total of two hundred

ten (210) respondents, who were able to answer the questionnaire. They were chosen as participants since they were the ones operating the Catholic schools.

The researcher adopted the questionnaire from National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NCBECS) questionnaire as a tool in gathering the data needed in the study. NCBECS provides the context and measures which can assist Catholic schools in revisiting their institutional practices for a highly effective Catholic school (NCBECS, 2012). Part I is the profile-variables of the respondents that include sex, designation, and years of service in their respective Catholic schools. Part II is the assessment of the quality of Catholic education in the Diocese of Iba using the four domains of school operation: mission and Catholic identity, governance and leadership, academic excellence, and operational vitality. In rating these domains, the researcher used a 4-point Likert Scale. Since the instrument was adopted from identified sources and it was already available on the internet, validation was no longer needed. The tool was constructed and validated by authorities and experts in the fields of research. It was utilized by thirteen (13) academic articles and forty-nine (49) dissertations representing twenty-one (21) different universities (NSBECS, 2012). In checking the readability, clarity of words used, consistency of style and likelihood of target participants being able to answer the questions, the NSBECS questionnaire was face-validated by the former Superintendent of the Association of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Iba (ACSDI), Rev. Fr. Ernesto C. Raymundo, PhD. He also assessed content validity to establish whether the content of the questionnaire was appropriate and relevant to the context. Prior to conducting the study, the researcher asked permission from the ACSDI Superintendent. After the letter of permission was signed, the researcher asked the permission of the principals of each ACSDI school to float the questionnaire to the respondents. Participants were given an information letter detailing the purpose of the study and were requested to sign a consent form which will be returned to the researcher. No force or

compulsion was posted on any respondent for responding to the questionnaire. Participants are informed about the academic nature of the research and respondents' information was anonymous so that there was no fear on part of the respondents.

In the collection of data, the researcher obtained first the permission of the Association of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Iba (ACSDI) Superintendent. Upon approval, the researcher obtained the permission of the school heads in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Iba to conduct the study. The constructed questionnaire was floated to the respondents by the school heads. The researcher allotted one week before returning to the respective schools in retrieving the questionnaires. But because of the CoViD-19 outbreak, questionnaires were not retrieved, especially from those who were residing in Zambales. As an alternative in retrieving data, the researcher opted to use the google form and sent to the different group chats of the ACSDI schools. The collected data were organized and processed through Microsoft Excel (2013) and Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS v 20) respectively. The data gathered were tabulated. Variables were grouped accordingly. The researcher used Weighted Means to describe the domains of school operation. The following rating below was used for the interpretation of the results: 4-always; 3-sometimes; 2-seldom; and 1-never. One-way Anova was used to determine the degree of variations as mentioned in the hypothesis of the study at .05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1. Mission and Catholic Identity. Table 1 shows the overall mean of Quality of Catholic Education Among Schools in terms of Mission and Catholic Identity. According to *The Religious Dimension in a Catholic School*, faith must be illuminated in the environment of the Catholic schools. This responsibility rests with the stakeholders of the schools. (Mayotte, 2010). Every member of the school community must be a witness of faith, both in words and in deeds. It makes the identity of a Catholic school.

TABLE 1 QUALITY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AMONG SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Mission and Catholic Identity	WX	DR
1. The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the Philosophy, Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives (PVMGO) statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.	3.70	Always
2. The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the PVMGO statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.	3.62	Always
3. The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni(ae) to clarify, review and renew the school's PVMGO statement.	3.46	Always
4. The PVMGO statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.	3.56	Always
5. All constituents know and understand the PVMGO statement.	3.42	Always
6. Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time and the selection of texts and other curricular materials.	3.63	Always
7. Faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.	3.55	Always
8. The school's Catholic	3.60	Always

identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects including religious education		
9. Faculty use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.	3.42	Always
10. Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.	3.61	Always
11. Every student is offered timely, regular, and age appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.	3.63	Always
12. Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.	3.50	Always
13. The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.	3.67	Always
14. The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents/guardians in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.	3.54	Always
15. Every administrator, faculty, and staff member visibly supports the faith life of the school community.	3.64	Always
Overall	3.57	Always

In the Diocese of Iba, there is a school-based review of the Philosophy, Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives to ensure that the stakeholders are aware

of these. Yet, one of the common problems on this matter is the awareness of the Catholic school stakeholders on the awareness of the P-V-M-G-O of the ACS DI. Also, there are instances that the curriculum in some ACS DI schools are not aligned in the lenses of Scriptures and Catholic intellectual tradition because of the absence of having one system.

Theme 2. Governance and Leadership. Table 2 shows the overall mean of Quality of Catholic Education Among Schools in terms of Governance and Leadership. Under the supervision of the bishop, a catholic school must prepare adequate high-quality school programs that will equip the school administrators and teachers to be knowledgeable in faith matters, to be professionally nurtured, and be committed to the Church.

In the ACS DI system, there is a consistent collaboration between the superintendent and the ACS DI principals to ensure that the operation among schools will be efficient and effective through meetings. Yet, in some ACS DI schools, there were no specific guidelines in selecting the next leadership successors once the term in service of ACS DI principals ended.

TABLE 2 QUALITY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AMONG SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Governance and Leadership	WX	DR
1. The governing body, representing the diversity of stakeholders, functions according to its approved constitution and by-laws.	3.49	Always
2. The governing body systematizes the policies of the school's operations to ensure fidelity to mission, and continuity and sustainability through leadership successions.	3.47	Always
3. The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with	3.59	Always

the Bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Bishop's legitimate authority.		
4. The governing body engages in formation and ongoing training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.	3.54	Always
5. The leader/leadership team meets national, state and/or (arch)diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leader(s) of the school.	3.53	Always
6. The leader/leadership team articulates a clear mission and vision for the school, and engages the school community to ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.	3.57	Always
7. The leader/leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including recruitment, professional growth, faith formation, and formal assessment of faculty and staff in compliance with (arch)diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies.	3.52	Always
8. The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.	3.55	Always
9. The leader/leadership team	3.56	Always

assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.

Overall	3.54	Always
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Theme 3. Academic Excellence. Table 3 shows the overall mean of Quality of Catholic Education Among Schools in terms of Academic Excellence. As stated in the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools, an excellent Catholic school should have a curriculum aligned with standards that are equipped by 21st -century skills, inclined to the Gospel message, and implemented to create a holistic instruction (NSBECS, 2012). Academic excellence is a feature in Catholic schools.

TABLE 3 QUALITY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AMONG SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic Excellence	WX	DR
1. The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards, and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Catholic values.	3.64	Always
2. Standards are adopted across the curriculum, and include integration of the religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects.	3.61	Always
3. Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical, and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers, and socially responsible global	3.63	Always

citizens.			faculty performance.		
4. Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning prepares students to become expert users of technology, able to create, publish, and critique digital products that reflect their understanding of the content and their technological skills.	3.57	Always	10. Faculty use a variety of curriculum-based assessments aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to assess student learning, including formative, summative, authentic performance, and student self-assessment.	3.60	Always
5. Classroom instruction is designed to engage and motivate all students, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student, and accommodating students with special needs as fully as possible.	3.57	Always	11. Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to monitor individual and class-wide student learning through methods such as common assessments and rubrics.	3.60	Always
6. Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to develop, implement and continuously improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction to result in high levels of student achievement.	3.57	Always	12. School-wide programs for parents/guardians provide opportunities for parents/guardians to partner with school leaders, faculty, and other parents/guardians to enhance the educational experiences for the school community.	3.52	Always
7. Faculty and professional support staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity and modeling of Gospel values.	3.56	Always	13. Guidance services, wellness programs, behavior management programs, and ancillary services provide the necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program.	3.53	Always
8. Faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.	3.53	Always	14. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities outside the classroom for students to further identify and develop their gifts and talents and to enhance their creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical, and spiritual capabilities.	3.60	Always
9. School-wide and student data generated by a variety of tools are used to monitor, review, and evaluate the curriculum and co-curricular programs; to plan for continued and sustained student growth; and to monitor and assess	3.52	Always			
			Overall	3.57	Always

The ACSDI schools are ensured that their curriculum is aligned and rooted in Catholic values and standards. It is evident in the learning materials and instructions, wherein there are Gospel values incorporated. Yet, there is a lack of evaluation tools for student learning. Also, some ACSDI schools that lack in parents' involvement in the implementation of different school activities.

Theme 4. Operational Vitality. Table 4 shows the overall mean of Quality of Catholic Education Among Schools in terms of Operational Vitality. The success of school operation depends on the school resources management by the administrators. Formal training for school administrators that will equip them with skills, capabilities, and knowledge needed to ensure that schools will run well (Alfante, 2015). A background on financial management will help the stakeholders in utilizing allocated funds in schools, maintaining low balance fees, proper governance of school budget, reducing school debts, having efficient financial plans, and generating incomes for schools (Chetambe&Sakwa, 2013).

TABLE 4 QUALITY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AMONG SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF OPERATIONAL VITALITY

Operational Vitality	WX	DR
1. The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in nonprofit management and funding.	3.36	Always
2. Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved who may include but are not limited to parishes, dioceses, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.	3.36	Always
3. Financial plans define revenue sources that include but are not limited to tuition, tuition assistance/scholarships,	3.39	Always
endowment funds, local and regional partnerships, public funding, regional cost sharing, (arch)diocesan and/or religious communities' assistance, foundation gifts, entrepreneurial options and other sources not listed.		
4. Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.	3.37	Always
5. Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.	3.37	Always
6. The governing body and leader/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.	3.40	Always
7. The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.	3.41	Always
8. Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e. central office, school office) and ensure	3.34	Always

full compliance with human resource policies.			requires school leader/leadership team and staff person(s) to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach targeted audiences, and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.
9. Human resource policies delineate standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, and benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning and retirement.	3.36	Always	
10. Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.	3.37	Always	16. The enrolment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrolment and retention patterns for all student groups.
11. Human resource policies ensure that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth, health care and retirement.	3.33	Always	17. The development plan requires school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni(ae), over time and when appropriate.
12. The school's facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.	3.39	Always	Overall 3.37 Always
13. The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacement.	3.28	Always	In the ACSDI system, one of the problems encountered is the transfer of teachers to a public school due to low salaries in private schools. Also, there are instances that due to lack of communication between the finance officer and the principal, other school-related problems are not addressed like improvement of school facilities, salary adjustment of employees, etc. Some ACSDI schools are not addressing concerns regarding these matters.
14. The school's purchasing, and physical and technological improvements are, by design, done in alignment with the mission and the school's planning and curricular goals, and consistent with environmental stewardship.	3.33	Always	Theme 5. Significant Variations in the Assessment of Stakeholders on the Quality of Catholic Education among Schools in the Diocese of Iba. The operation among schools in the Diocese varies in the effort of the stakeholders. As Mayotte (2010) stated, the quality of Catholic education is a shared responsibility of the stakeholders.
15. The communications/marketing plan	3.37	Always	

Table 5 ANOVA Table for the Significant Variations in the Assessment of Stakeholders on the Quality of Catholic Education

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Mission and Catholic Identity	Between Groups	7.303	18	.406	2.633	0.001	
	Within Groups	29.431	191	.154		Significant	Reject Ho
	Total	36.734	209				
Governance and Leadership	Between Groups	10.660	18	.592	3.138	0.000	
	Within Groups	36.042	191	.189		Significant	Reject Ho
	Total	46.702	209				
Academic Excellence	Between Groups	6.364	18	.354	1.896	0.018	
	Within Groups	35.621	191	.186		Significant	Reject Ho
	Total	41.985	209				
Operational Vitality	Between Groups	20.076	18	1.115	6.005	0.000	
	Within Groups	35.476	191	.186		Significant	Reject Ho
	Total	55.552	209				

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Significant findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the school leaders in ACS DI schools ensure the commitment of the Philosophy, Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (PVMGO) statements to the Catholic identity, that there is a harmonious relationship between the governing body of ACS DI schools and the Bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue and respect for the legitimate authority of the Bishop, that the curriculum is aligned and rooted in the Catholic standards and values to ensure quality education among students, and the development, and that the development plan of the school requires the school leaders and governing body to ensure that the key strategies are in track to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects. It was found out also that there were significant variations in the assessment of stakeholders on the quality of Catholic education across schools in terms of mission and Catholic identity, governance and leadership, academic excellence, and operational vitality.

The researcher recommends that the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Iba may use the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS), or the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS), a tool devised by the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), to enhance the different domains of schools, in response to the call of evangelization. Besides, a collaboration between administration and stakeholders will help the ACS DI schools in sustaining quality Catholic education. Furthermore, taking leadership training and further studies will help the ACS DI school administrators to sharpen their leadership and governance skills in managing the schools effectively and efficiently. Moreover, continuous professional and faith development programs must be offered to the stakeholders, especially to the teachers to provide a quality Catholic education. Catholic schools must sustain a Catholic learning environment to develop a holistic and integral Catholic formation for the students. Lastly, a unified comprehensive strategic plan must be devised to ensure the goal of having one system in ACS DI schools.

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