

The Catholicity of the University of Saint Louis

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Abstract – *As it celebrates its 50th year of life of mission and excellence, the University of Saint Louis, Tuguegarao City, Northern Philippines is facing challenges posed in the education apostolate, and one of which is to uphold a good institutional image of being a truly Catholic institution. This study aimed to assess the level of Catholicity of the university along the five key area standards which are communicated vision and mission, religious curriculum, prayer and liturgy integration, service and social justice, and ecumenical initiatives as perceived by the respondents. Two thousand six hundred twenty respondents across the Louisian community were considered in the study through a descriptive survey and Focus Group Discussion. Results show that the respondent school manifests a Very High level of Catholicity along the five key area standards. Moreover, results of the independent sample T-test and Analysis of Variance test reveal that gender, religious affiliations, and student's educational level affect the level of Catholicity of the respondent school. The study concluded that the University of Saint Louis is a Catholic institution forming and training Jesus' disciples of today. As an offshoot of the results of the study, a three-year sustainability program for the Catholicity of the institution was developed.*

Keywords— *Catholicity, communicated vision and mission, ecumenical initiatives, prayer and liturgy integration, religious curriculum, service and social justice*

INTRODUCTION

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” [1].

These are the words uttered by Jesus when He commissioned His disciples to continue His ministry and mission on earth, which they accepted and handed on to the whole Church. Today, the Church continues to fulfill its mission of evangelization. To realize this herculean task, the Church now has diverse ministries and apostolate. Such are the ministries of Catholic Education.

As stated in the second article of the second council document, *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education)[2], Christian education has as its principal purpose: that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced into the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of faith they have received, and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23) especially in liturgical action, and be conformed in their personal

lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:22-24). Also, they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13) and strive for the growth of the Mystical Body. Moreover, aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to hope that is in them (Pt. 3:15) but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society.

In addition, a document issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education [3], states that, “the Church establishes her own schools because she considers them as privileged means for promoting the formation of the whole person. It further states, that the school is a place of integral formation, by means of a systematic and critical assimilation of culture.”

Catholic education then plays a vital role, as emphasized in *Gravissimum Educationis* [2] and in the *The Catholic School* [3], in forming Jesus' disciples today: people who know Christ and make him known. Therefore, the principal purpose of catholic education is on the Christian formation of

students who can integrate their faith in their lives. And as a result, every Catholic institution must uphold one's Catholicity in order to uphold the challenge posed by these two documents.

Clemente [4] defined Catholicity as universal characteristics of a Catholic institution of learning envisioned by the Catholic Church. This refers to how the institution manifests its Catholic identity and characteristics set by the Catholic Church.

However, it is a fact that Catholic schools have undergone a series of changes in the years since the Second Vatican Council. In our contemporary time, most of the Catholic schools are being manned and staffed by lay people, unlike in the 1960s that they were staffed exclusively by religious priests, nuns, and brothers. Another shift that happened is that Catholic schools opened their doors with the acceptance of non-catholic students [5].

Looking at the present situation in the Philippines, Catholic schools are faced with many challenges that need to be addressed. Aside from the above mentioned issues that the Catholic schools are encountering, Msgr. Fernando Capalla, DD, [6] former chairperson of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) pointed out the kind of graduates that Catholic Schools are producing. He said that it is very discouraging to note that most of the lawmakers who are products of Catholic institutions are the ones who are making bills that are detrimental to the moral values. In addition, this notion about the kind of graduates that Catholic schools are producing has been reiterated in a study conducted by Alejo [7] which revealed that many of the corrupt officials are actually products of Catholic schools.

The University of Saint Louis, a CICM institution shares with the mission of the Church for evangelization especially in the education and Christian formation of the youth. This is specifically expressed in the University's Vision-Mission which states that "the university is a CICM Catholic Educational institution called for the generation and advancement of knowledge, skills, and values towards the integral formation of persons for the building of humane communities, locally and globally. Inspired by God and guided by the CICM Educational apostolate, the institution continues to be a beacon of excellence through its committed efforts for Christian Living, Excellence, Professional

Responsibility, Social Awareness and Involvement, and Innovation, Agility, and Creativity [8].

The Vision-Mission of the University gives a general perspective of the kind of education every Louisian receives which is cogitative of the CICM-RP Province Mission Statement in Education, as cited by Centeno (2010) which states that, "CICM Education envisions an integral human formation of the youth who will become mature Christians and active members of the Church. This integral formation is directed towards a Christian Development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which is geared towards service in church and society by witnessing the values of God's kingdom."

Throughout the years, the University continues its mission of preparing the youth in becoming mature Christians and citizens through solid and holistic Catholic Education. Being identified as an autonomous institution by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and granted Level IV re-accreditation in six programs by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU), USL claims to be one of the most outstanding educational institutions in the region and in the entire country offering quality and relevant Catholic education [10].

As it celebrates its 50th year of life of mission and excellence, the University is facing challenges posed in the education apostolate, and one of which is to uphold a good institutional image of being a truly Catholic institution. Hence, this study attempts to assess the extent to which the Catholicity is observed and felt in the University particularly to its members such as the administrators, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, students, alumni, and the parents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Being a Catholic university, born from the heart of the Church and having Christian Living as one of its core values, this study sought to determine the Catholicity of the University of Saint Louis, Tuguegarao, City, Philippines as perceived by the administrators, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, alumni, students, and parents. Also, this study aimed to see if there is a significant difference on the level of Catholicity of the University as perceived by the respondents when grouped according to profile variables such as age, gender, religion, respondent's status, and student educational level. Moreover, the result of the study will serve as a feed backing data on

the prevailing Catholicity of the university which will be useful for the school administrators to be provided with necessary intervention.

Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents in the Catholicity of the respondent school when grouped according to profile variables.

METHODS

Research Designs

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative types of research using a descriptive survey method.

Participants

The respondents of this study were the administrators, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students from the elementary, secondary, college, and graduate school who are currently enrolled for the Academic Year 2014-2015, Alumni, and Parents (For Group Discussion Only) of the University of Saint Louis, Tuguegarao City, Philippines. The total number of respondents except for the group of parents was identified using the Slovin’s formula at 0.05 margin of error. Slovin’s formula allows a researcher to sample the population with a desired degree of accuracy especially that if it is not possible to study the entire population. It also gives the researcher an idea of how large his sample size needs to be to ensure a reasonable accuracy of results [11].

Table A. Participants of the Study

Participants	Frequency	Percentage
Administrators	10	0.38
Teaching Staff	60	2.37
Non-Teaching Staff	40	1.53
Alumni	80	3.05
Students	2410	91.99
Parents (For FGD Only)	20	0.76
TOTAL	2620	100.00

Instruments and Procedures

This study utilized two parts of questionnaire answered by the respondents except for the parents for the gathering of data. The first part was a self-made questionnaire for the profile of the respondents. For the second part of questionnaire, the researcher used a survey questionnaire that was patterned from

the questionnaires presented at the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools by the Center for Catholic Effectiveness, Loyola University, Chicago, U.S.A. (2012), and Catholic School Identity by Advanced Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools (2006) to assess the Catholicity of the University of Saint Louis – Tuguegarao. However, modifications were made by the researcher to suit to the current situations of the institution.

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants after the researcher oriented them on the objectives of the study. Retrieval and collation followed after the participants answered the questions. After the retrieval and collection of all the questionnaires, the researcher tallied the answers of all the respondents and the collated data was given to the statistician for processing.

To determine the extent of Catholicity of the university, the five-point Likert’s scale was used to guide the respondents in answering the questions.

Parameter Limits	Descriptive Equivalent	Description
4	Very Highly Evident	This means that the practice is very evident
3	Highly Evident	This means that the practice is evident.
2	Evident	This means that the practice is moderately evident.
1	Less Evident	This means that the practice is weak.
0	Not Evident	This means the practice is completely absent.

And to triangulate the findings of the data, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to twenty parents of this study.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the respondents were analyzed through the use of the following statistical treatment:

Frequency and Percentage were used to provide the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, respondent’s status, and religious affiliations.

Weighted Mean was used to determine the Catholicity of the respondent school based on the five area standards.

The scale of interpretation for the variables being measured to assess the Catholicity of the respondent school followed this range:

Range	Description on the Catholicity
3.20 – 4.00	Very High Level of Catholicity (VH)
2.40 – 3.19	High Level of Catholicity (H)
1.60 – 2.39	Moderate Level of Catholicity (M)
0.80 – 1.59	Low Level of Catholicity (L)
0.00 – 0.79	Very Low Level of Catholicity (VL)

Independent T-test and Analysis of Variance was used to determine if there will be a significant difference of the assessment of the respondents on the Catholicity of the respondent school when grouped according to profile variables.

The statistical outputs were presented in tables with corresponding qualitative interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.a. Profile of the Respondents

Profile Variable	Frequency	Percentage
GENDER		
Male	1070	41.15
Female	1530	58.85
AGE		
20 years old and below	2193	84.35
21-40 years old	336	12.92
41 years old and above	71	2.73
RELIGION		
Roman Catholic	2055	79.04
Islam	23	0.88
Protestants	344	13.24
Iglesia ni Cristo	75	2.88
Jehovah’s Witnesses	64	2.46
Aglipayan	35	1.35
No Religion	4	0.15
RESPONDENT’S STATUS		
Administrators	10	0.38
Teaching Staff	60	2.31
Non-Teaching Staff	40	1.54
Alumni	80	3.08
Students	2410	92.69
STUDENT’S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL		
Elementary	60	2.49
Secondary	800	33.20
Undergraduate	1500	62.24
Graduate	50	2.07
TOTAL	2410	100.00

Table 1.a shows the profile of the respondents. It was gleaned in the table that majority of the respondents are female in terms of gender, below 20 years old in terms of age, students in terms of respondent’s status, and undergraduate students in terms of student’s educational level.

In addition, in terms of religion, most of the respondents are Roman Catholics. The table also showed that there was a great number of Non Catholics present in the University of Saint Louis. The data further revealed that there were four respondents with no religious affiliation. Hence, the University of Saint Louis, being a Catholic institution responded to the call posed by the Second Vatican Council specifically the document, *Gravissimum Educationis* [2] with regard to the inclusion of non-Catholic students in a Catholic institution. As stipulated in paragraph 9 that the Church considers very dear to her heart those Catholic schools including those students who are not Catholics. This Sacred Council of the Church earnestly entreats pastors and all the faithful to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools fulfill this function, especially in caring for the needs of those who are strangers to the gift of faith.

B. Level of Catholicity of the Respondent School

Table 1.b. Level of Catholicity of the University of Saint Louis

Key Areas	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
a. Communicated			
Vision and Mission	3.24	0.63	Very High
b. Religious Curriculum	3.31	0.57	Very High
c. Prayer and Liturgy Integration	3.29	0.58	Very High
d. Service and Social Justice	3.27	0.62	Very High
e. Ecumenical Initiatives	3.38	0.60	Very High
Category Mean	3.30	0.60	Very High

Table 1.b presents the level of Catholicity of the University as assessed by the respondents. It can be gleaned in the table that in terms of Communicated Vision and Mission, the level of Catholicity of the university is very high as perceived by the respondents. This means that the respondent school

strongly upholds its identity being a Catholic Institution through its vision and mission. This affirmed the Congregation for Catholic Education document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* [12], which stated that the main mission of Catholic School is to uphold a good Catholic identity as a genuine and proper instrument of the Church. However, most of the responses of the parents negated the findings of the study. Ten parents claimed that they were not aware of any program or activity initiated by the school with regards to renewal and evaluation of the vision and mission statement of the school. Further, seven out of twenty parents said that they did not have any participation in activity. This implies that the programs and activities about the vision-mission were exclusive only to its member community without involving the participation of the parents.

Meanwhile, the level of Catholicity of the university in terms of religious curriculum as perceived by the respondents is very high. The finding shows that the university adheres to the challenge posed by the document *Catechesi Tradendae* [13] that the special character of Catholic school and the underlying reason for its existence is the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the overall education of the students. Hence, the finding means that the University upholds its identity as being a Catholic institution by emphasizing and prioritizing religious education subjects to be an integral part of the curriculum across all disciplines.

On one hand, the level of Catholicity of the university in terms of Prayer and Liturgy Integration is very high as perceived by the respondents. This finding affirms what Aduca, Cachola, and Gamboa [14] stated in their book that CICM educational institutions consider the practice of prayers and liturgies are at the heart of the life of all its members. Moreover, all parents affirmed the findings with regards to the practice of prayers and liturgies in the institution. All parents claimed that the university offers a lot of activities and programs with regards to prayers and liturgies. However, It is noteworthy that fifteen among the parents exclaimed that the programs and activities which are geared towards parent's faith development are not quite felt by them. The findings conform to the document, *Gravissimum Educationis* [2] which clearly states that parents must be recognized by the institution as the primary and principal educators of their children. Hence, the

involvement of parents and guardians in the education of their children should be given importance and there must be collaboration between the school and the parents in terms of the education of their children.

On the other hand, in terms of Service and Social Justice, the level of Catholicity of the university as assessed by the respondents is also very high. The finding implies that the respondent school adheres to the challenge posed by the document, *Justice in the World* [15] with regard to the promotion of Social Justice which states that the task of the Catholic Schools to work for justice and service to the world through establishing the Kingdom of God here on earth- a kingdom of peace, love, charity, and justice. More importantly, this also implies that the respondent school adheres to its identity being a missionary institution, which is expressed in one of the CICM-RP General educational objectives which states that the CICM is committed to the service of the people of God and human society in general, to study contemporary problems such as the dignity of human life, promotion of social justice and peace, and a just sharing in the world's resources [9]. However, in terms of the responses from the parents, they exclaimed that in terms of outreach and extension activities, they should also be given an opportunity to do such kind of acts not only through donations and giving, but also immersing themselves to the communities that are in need. And, majority of the parents also observed that their children do not have any avenues and opportunities to examine the different ministries of the Church because there are already CICM scholars who are tasked to do these things.

And finally, in terms of Ecumenical Initiatives, the university as assessed by the respondents manifests a very high level of Catholicity. The finding proves that the respondent school, being part of the CICM institution upholds one of its objectives that the CICM-RP Educational Apostolate is concerned not only among Catholics but also to non-Catholics and non-Christians [5]. Moreover, this implies that the respondent school cultivates an environment that is free from religious discriminations, prejudices and biases. It was also found out that fifteen parents affirmed the findings that there is no religious discrimination felt in the university. The finding also proves that the respondent school adheres to the challenge posed by the document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* [12]

that since not all the members of Catholic schools belongs to the Catholic Church, the religious freedom and personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected.

It is important to note that in general the respondent school manifests a very high level of Catholicity as perceived by the respondents. Hence, the University of Saint Louis responded to the call posed by the document *Gravissimum Educationis* [2] of being a true Catholic institution by providing quality and Christian education to all the strata of humanity, and most importantly, forming and training all the members of the institution to become Jesus' disciples.

C. Significant Difference on the Assessment of the Respondents when Grouped According to Profile Variables:

a. Gender

Results of the Independent T-Test revealed that there is a significant difference of the assessment of the respondents when grouped according to gender on the area on Ecumenical Initiatives. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The finding implies that female respondents have a higher extent of assessment with regards to ecumenical initiatives than the male respondents. Most importantly, females have a higher level of acceptability to Non-Catholics rather than males. Gallup, as cited by Donlevy [16] stressed that females have a higher level of acceptability rather than males because females tend to be more open to changes to the environment and can easily accepts diverse kinds of people.

b. Age

Results of the Analysis of Variance test showed that there is no significant difference on the assessment of the respondents on the Catholicity of the institution when grouped according to age. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

c. Religion

Results of the Analysis of Variance test reveals that there is a significant difference on the assessment of respondent's level of Catholicity on the area of Ecumenical Initiatives when grouped according to religion. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The findings reveal that Roman Catholics and Aglipayans have the highest extent of assessment with regards to ecumenical initiatives. This was attributed to the fact that both religions have similarities and both are

considered as Catholic Churches. The finding also supported the document, *Gravissimum Educationis* [2] that it was the task of the Catholic Church to unify the different churches by initiating ecumenical activities. Hence, the finding suggested that Catholics uphold the call of the Church document to help the Catholic Church in unifying the different Churches.

Meanwhile, it was also revealed that the lowest assessment under this area came from the Muslims and those who do not have religion at all. This implies that some members of the said religions are not familiar with Catholic practices and activities which are organized by the university.

d. Respondent's Status

Results of the Analysis of Variance test showed that there is no significant difference on the level of Catholicity of the institution as perceived by the respondents when grouped according to respondent's status. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

e. Student Educational Level

It is revealed that there is a significant difference on the level of Catholicity of the respondent school along the areas on Communicated Vision-Mission, Religious Curriculum, Prayer and Liturgy Integration, Service and Social Justice, and Ecumenical Initiatives. This implies that student educational level affects the level of Catholicity of the university. The results reveal that students from the Graduate School have the highest assessment along the areas of Communicated Vision and Mission, Service and Social Justice, and Ecumenical Initiatives. This was attributed to the fact that these students have reached a certain level of maturity. On the other hand, the table further shows that students from the elementary department have the lowest assessment of all the areas on Catholicity. This was attributed to the fact that these students have not been fully exposed to the Catholic practices. As such, their level of understanding was not as mature as those in the higher level.

Moreover, the findings also reveal that there is a significant difference on the assessment of the High School students and students from the College department. It was noted that the high school students have higher assessment among all the areas of Catholicity as compared to the College students. This was also supported from a study conducted by Gallup, as cited by Donlevy [16] which indicated that students were more religious during their early teen

years whose age ranged from 13-16 years old, and that religiosity began to decline when they reached the age of 17-20 years old.

CONCLUSION

The University of Saint Louis, being a CICM Institution, upholds the standard of being a Catholic institution as perceived by the respondents, as it is shown along the five area-standards of Catholicity which are communicated vision and mission, religious curriculum, prayer and liturgy integration, service and social justice, and ecumenical initiatives being a CICM Catholic school. In terms of significant differences, it was revealed that the perceived level of Catholicity of the university is dependent on gender, religion, and student's educational level. Hence, the University of Saint Louis responded to the call posed by the document *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) of becoming a true Catholic institution by providing quality and Christian education to all the strata of humanity, and most importantly, forming and training all the members of the institution to become Jesus' disciples.

RECOMMENDATION

The university administration must continue to sustain the level of Catholicity that the respondent school manifests. Together, with the University Chaplain, they must capitalize on these strengths of the respondent school in planning and creating programs and activities aligned in the promotion of Catholicity of the respondent school.

The university administration, together with the members of Pastoral Council and the Supreme Student Council must regularly review and evaluate the different programs and activities related to the Catholicity of the institution.

Parents must also be given an opportunity to participate in the different programs and initiatives related to them.

The proposed programs and activities must be evaluated after their implementation in order to sustain the level of Catholicity that the university manifests.

Further research must also be conducted through direct observation using a qualitative method to fully determine the Catholicity of the university since this pilot study was conducted through exploring the perception of the respondents.

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