

The Minor Seminaries in the Philippines through the Lens of RA 10533

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Abstract — This study assessed the key performance indicators of the implementation of the K-12 Program in the minor seminaries in the Philippines. The key performance indicators are access, quality of education, efficiency, and governance. These four key performance indicators are extracted from the implementing rules and regulations of the Republic Act 10533, Republic Act 9155 and from the Updated Philippine Program for Priestly Formation (2006).

The researcher-made questionnaire was validated by five (5) expert and answered by lay-teachers in the minor seminary. The respondents have different perspective in their assessment of the key performance indicators in the implementation of the K-12 program in minor seminary in terms of access, quality of education, efficiency and governance. During the focused group discussion and interview, the researcher found out that there were lots of concerns regarding the implementation of the K-12 program in the minor seminary. The challenge of implementing the K-12 program is summed up into three (3) F's: Formation, Facilities and Finance.

Keywords — Minor Seminary, Seminary Formation, K-12 Curriculum, Quality Of Education

I. Introduction

T In the midst of an educational crisis, the K-12 program created too much noise that it turned the Philippine education system to a debate and a controversy. Can the schools really produce skilled workers who are globally competitive? Can the present education system really match the quality of education of those countries with 12 – year basic education plan? Is the Philippines ready for this huge change? Is the Roman Catholic Minor Seminary ready for the change? As to what extent does the Minor Seminary Program welcome the implementation of the K-12 Program? These were the questions that pushed the researcher to create this paper.

Looking back, the word seminary comes from the Latin word for “seed”. A *seminarium* is a seedbed, the place where seedlings are prepared for eventual planting in the garden, field or vineyard. Historically, the origin of the seminary (Anello 2011) can be traced back to the patristic period—an 1,800-page manual of seminaries published on the eve of the Second Vatican Council described St. Augustine as *primus seminariorum adumbrator* for having gathered candidates to holy orders around him in his household—the true beginnings of theological education in seminaries is found in the Council of Trent’s 1563 decree *Cum Adulescentium Aetas*, which commanded that specialized institutions of formation for those aspiring to the priesthood be established in every diocese.

The Tridentine minor seminary formation is composed of 6 years and 6 years major seminary formation. Thus, this is the 6-6 model. Today with the K-12 program, minor seminary will go back to 6 years – 4 years junior high school and additional of 2 years senior high school. This two additional years as senior high school will now differentiate the Tridentine formation which is very informal and the K-12 formation which is formal education in accordance with the mandate of the State.

The seminary system took the more institutionalized form when Pope Pius IV established a seminary at Rome in 1565 as a model of what the Council of Trent proposed for all dioceses. The minor seminary, the first six (6) years of formation, began after elementary school, when an adolescent boy reached thirteen or so. This six (6) year school, approximating, high school and the first two years of college, taught the seminarian the fundamentals of faith, Latin, the humanities and comportment. The young men generally lived a community life and boarded at the school - gathered daily for morning prayer, evening prayer, meditation and mass.

With the wisdom of Vatican II by opening the Church into the world (*Gaudium et Spes*), her vision on priestly formation changes too. *Optatam Totius* gives more specific directives concerning the modernization of the method of the seminary education. With further elaboration of priestly formation on *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the K-12 program finds its link to this decree. The K-12 program is the answer to this challenge of modernization the seminary formation.

The minor seminary is a special school for boys dreaming to become priest. Thus, minor seminary is a specialized program and not generalized. It has its own way of enhancing the K-12 program by incorporation and innovation of the seminary program that is suited for the minor seminarians. The minor seminary follows the Department of Education minimum requirements to operate as private school specially to operate the Senior High School Program.

II. Methodology

This study used embedded mixed method research design which covered the twenty-seven (27) minor seminaries in the Philippines. The respondents of the study were seminary priest-formators and seminary lay teachers. The total number of the expected respondents were 216 from 27 seminaries with 3 priest-formators assigned in every minor seminary (due to scarcity of qualified priests-formators) and 5 lay teachers in every seminary. However, the researcher gathered only 145 total respondents, both priest-formators and lay teachers. This researched only covered 67.12% of the total population due to data gathering constraints which the researcher experienced maximizing the power of the social media such as Facebook, email, LBC and via cellphone calls and texts.

The study maximized the assessment of the key indicator performance such as access, quality of education, efficiency and governance for monitoring and evaluation. The access and quality of education was extracted from implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act

10533, Section 8 and section 10.2. The efficiency and governance were extracted from the Republic Act 9155, an act instituting a framework of governance of for basic education establishing authority and accountability and Updated Philippine program for priestly formators.

The researcher used researcher-made questionnaire check list which consists of the following parts:

Part I – was about the profile of the priest-formators and lay teachers which includes: age, gender, highest educational attainment, baccalaureate degree, licensure examination for teacher passers, number of years in the seminary and number of years in teaching.

Part 2 – was all about the assessment of the respondents on the key performance indicators in the implementation of the K-12 program in terms of access, quality of education, efficiency and governance in the minor seminaries in the Philippines. The respondents were asked to assess the implementation of the K-12 Program by checking the questionnaire using the following scale : 4- 3.50 – 4.0 High Extent (HE) 3- 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate Extent (ME) 2- 1.50 – 2.49 Low Extent (LE) 1- 0.50 – 1.49 No Extent (NE)

Part III – dealt with significant difference in the assessment between the priest-formators and lay teachers on the key performance of the K-12 program in terms of access, quality of education, efficiency and governance in the minor seminaries in the Philippines was treated by T-Test.

Part IV - The challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of the K-12 program in the minor seminaries in the Philippines was extracted from the focused group discussion and interview conducted by the researcher.

III. Results and Discussion

1. The profile of the priest-formators in terms of: age, sex, highest educational level, baccalaureate degree, licensure examination (LET), number of years in the seminary, and number of years in teaching.

The researcher found out that the majority of the minor seminary priest-formator belongs to the ages 36-60 with a total respondent of 57 or 86.4 % and the minority belongs to the ages 20-35 with a respondent of 9 or 13.6%. All priest-formators are male, however 11 or 16.7% are females. All the priest-formators are bachelor's degree holder. Most of them are pursuing further studies, 21 or 32% are pursuing doctoral programs and 7 or 11% are full pledge doctor degree holders. Majority are graduate of bachelor of art in philosophy. Six (6) of them or 9% are graduates of secondary education and 4 or 6% are nursing graduates. Surprisingly, 30 or 45.5% of the priest-formators are teacher's licensure exam passers.

Majority of them have been staying in the seminary for 6-10 years already as signified by 25 or 38% priest-formator and 21 or 32% have been staying in the seminary for 1-5 only. In terms of teaching experience, 38 or 57.59% of priest-formators are with 6-10 years teaching experience already and 22 or 33.33% having 1-5 years of teaching experience.

2. The profile of the lay-teacher formators in terms of: age, sex, highest educational level, baccalaureate degree, licensure examination (LET), number of years in the seminary, and number of years in teaching.

The researcher found out from the profile of lay teachers from different minor seminaries in the Philippines that the majority of the minor seminary lay teachers belongs to the ages 36-60 with a respondents of 42 or 53% % and the minority belongs to the ages 20-35 with a respondents of 33 or 42%. Almost all of the lay teachers are female with 43 or 54.4% and the rest are male, with 36 or 45.6%.

All the lay teachers are bachelors' degree holder and 30 or 38% are with master units and nine (9) or 11% are pursuing their doctoral program. Majority of them are bachelors of secondary education graduates with 44 or 56% respondents and the least with 2 or 3% are nursing graduates. Moreover, almost all are licensure examination passers with 64 or 81 % and only 15 or 19% are not licensed teachers.

In terms of the years teaching in the seminary, 50 or 63% of them are teaching in the seminary for 1-5 years and only 3 or 4% have been in the seminary for 16-20 years already. Majority of the lay teachers, 33 or 42% of them has 1-5 years teaching experience and only 4 or 5% with 6-10 teaching years experiences.

3. The extent of implementation of the K-12 Program in the Minor Seminaries as assessed by the respondents in terms of: access, quality of education, efficiency, and governance.

The researcher found out that the assessment of the respondents regarding the key indicator performance in the implementation of the K-12 program in minor seminary in terms of access, quality of education, efficiency and governance varies.

In terms of access, the priest-formators has a grand mean of 3.81 which is *high extent* while the lay teachers had a grand mean of 3.22 which is *moderate extent*. In terms of quality of education, priest-formator has a grand mean of 3.69 which is *high extent* while the lay teachers had a grand mean of 3.51 which is *high extent* also. In terms of efficiency, priest-formator has a grand mean of 3.70 and lay teachers has a grand mean of 3.55 which is both *high extent*. In terms of governance, priest-formators has a grand mean of 3.55 and lay teachers has a grand mean of 3.52 which means that both of them has an equivalency of *high extent*.

From the grand mean, the difference is 0.23 (3.68 less 3.45). Although both the grand mean has a qualitative interpretation of *high extent*, still there is a significant difference in their perspectives.

4. The significant difference between the assessment of the priest-formators and lay teachers in the implementation of the K-12 program in Minor Seminaries in the Philippines.

The researcher found out that there is a significant difference between the assessment of the priest-formators and lay teachers in the implementation of the K-12 program in the minor seminaries in the Philippines. Using the T-test, the researcher found out that the computed t-value of 4.8385 is greater than the critical or tabulated value of 1.98 at .05 level of significance with 115 degrees of freedom, thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

In terms of access the grand mean shows that the priest-formators assessment is 3.81 or *high extent* and the lay-teacher assessments is 3.22 or *moderate extent* with 0.59 total difference. In terms of efficiency the grand mean shows that the priest-formators assessment is 3.70 or *high extent* and the lay-teacher assessments is 3.55 or *moderate extent* with 0.15 total difference. In terms of quality of the education the grand mean shows that the priest-formators assessment is 3.69 or *high extent* and the lay- teacher assessments is 3.51 or *moderate extent* with 0.18 total difference. In terms of governance the grand mean shows that the priest-formators assessment is 3.55 or *high extent* and the lay-teacher assessments is 3.51 or *high extent* with 0.03 total difference.

5. The challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of the K-12 Program in the minor seminaries in the Philippines.

During the focused group discussion and interview, the researcher found out that there were lots of concerns regarding the implementation of the K-12 program in the seminary. They were concerned regarding the programs of the seminarians and the programs for the teachers. The training of the teachers, the facilities of the seminary, that is, the improvement of the library, laboratories, study rooms and even the dormitories of the seminarians. In the end, one of the rectors summarized the challenges they have to face in the implementation of the K-12 program in the minor seminary, that is, the 3 F's: Formation, Facilities and Finance. Formation is to the totality of the program, which includes the community life, academic life, social life and apostolate life (CASA) of the seminarians. *Casa* is a Spanish term which means house or home. Facilities include all the infrastructures needed by the minor seminary for operations. Finance means money matters, the basic need that an institution must have to start the ball rolling. The seminary needs financial support to run the whole program and for their basic operations. Finance is equivalent to the whole budget used for expenses.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the profile of the respondents, majority of the workforce in the seminary formation is from ages 36-60. There is a good balance of male and female formators in the seminary. The researcher gathered 99 male respondents and 54 female respondents. The presence of some Nuns in the minor seminary are crucial in the daily transactions and needs of the seminarians. The Priest-formators and lay teachers have a very good educational background as shown in their highest educational attainment which makes them qualified in their own field of expertise.

As shown in the baccalaureate degree of the respondents, most of the respondents are bachelors' degree holder. Thus, most of the priest-formators are graduates of Bachelor of Arts major in philosophy. However, 6 percent of the priest-formators were nursing graduates. Indeed, God calls men from all walks of life and courses them to be His priest.

It is good to know that majority of the teachers in the minor seminary are licensed professional teachers. The priest-formators also taking their own share through further studies and some are LET passers too. This means that the minor seminary is already compliant with the minimal requirements mandated by the Department of Education.

The researcher also concludes that some lay teachers are dedicated to their work, as shown in the length of stay in the minor seminary as teachers. Indeed, money is not the criteria for work satisfaction. Some priest-formators also are obedient to their local ordinary by staying in the seminary for more than six years and beyond.

There is a significant difference in the assessment of the priest-formators and lay teachers in the implementation of the K-12 program in the minor seminaries in the Philippines. Using the T-test, the researcher found out that the computed t-value is greater than the critical or tabulated value at .05 level of significance with 115 degrees of freedom. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected.

With the significant difference in the assessment of the respondents, the researcher concludes that there are things that the lay teachers see something important in terms of access, quality of education, efficiency and governance which the priest-formators do not.

V. Recommendations

From the foregoing conclusions, the following are the recommendations offered by the researcher:

1. Recognition of the lay teachers as formators too. As teachers, they play an important role in the formation of the seminarians. Encouragement from the Local Ordinary to let their priests

continue their studies, especially in the field of education so that there will be a continuity of qualified seminary priest-formators.

2. Priest-formators must establish open communication with the lay teachers.
3. With the Formation program, still the words from Optatum Totius, *Pastores Davo Vobis, Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionalis Sacerdotalis* is still the best source.
4. Sustain and deepen the camaraderie of SangKan (Isang Angkan kay Kristo)

Aggressive solicitation and increased budget for procurement coming from the office of the Local Ordinary for the minor seminary.

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