

**FORMING WOMEN LEADERS:
THE EFFECTS AND INFLUENCES OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the extent to which Catholic education affected and influenced the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. Rooted in the distinctive nature of Catholic education, the research focused on Moral Formation in the Faith, Search for Excellence towards Service, Respect for Human Dignity, Solidarity with the Community, and Education for the Common Good. It examines how moral formation in the faith contributed to the ethical and moral disposition of women leaders. It also explored the pursuit of excellence towards service and considered the values of respect for human dignity, solidarity with the community, and the education of the common good, especially in addressing the preferential option for the poor.

A key focus of this study is leadership as a sacramental vision drawing on Jesus Christ's examples as a model for leadership formation, emphasising the principles of discerning authority, servant leadership, and inclusive leadership. Given the historical and cultural significance of women leaders in the Philippines, the study also highlights their evolving roles in leadership across different historical periods.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the research employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, triangulating survey data, interviews, and literature review to capture a holistic perspective on Catholic education's impact. The study identifies key variables influencing leadership development, including formal faith formation, extra-curricular engagements, and the role of educators. Additionally, external factors such as family influence and societal context are examined as potential contributors to leadership formation.

Findings indicate that Catholic education fosters leadership qualities through faith-based moral guidance, structured educational programmes, and experiential learning. The study also identifies challenges and limitations, including variations in educational experiences and external socio-cultural factors. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of Catholic education in forming leaders who embody the Christian values of discernment, service-oriented leadership, and inclusivity. Recommendations for further research and educational policy reforms are provided to strengthen Catholic education's role in leadership formation and development.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I. RATIONALE

The Catholic Church is particularly sensitive to the call from every part of the world for a more just society. It tries to make its own contribution towards the promotion of the common good in various sectors but in the context of this thesis in the educational field. Catholic educational institutions see the vocation of every Catholic educator not only as a faith formator but also as a leader patterned in the leadership of Christ for social development. Catholic education's mission includes forming men and women to be ready to take their place in society, by preparing them to make a social commitment that will enable them to work for the improvement of social structures, and by making these structures more conformed to the principles of the Gospel (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education [SCCE]; 1982:19).

Around the world, there is a growing demand and clamour for a more gender-equal society. Political participation and women's leadership are limited if not restricted in all sectors of society. To truly achieve a balanced and just society, it is important to give equal opportunity to everyone, no matter what race, religion or gender they may come from, to take up leadership positions (UN Women; 2020a: Online). In the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, it shows a positive progress on gender equality and women empowerment for the past decades. More girls are going to school, fewer girls are forced into early marriage, more women are serving in the government and positions of leadership, and laws are being reformed to advance gender equality (United Nations; 2021: Online).

In the Global Gender Gap Report released by the World Economic Forum 2018, the Philippines is ranked 8th most gender-equal country worldwide with equal opportunities for political and economic leadership for women and men. Closing the gender gap means that full parity indicators of gender equality are already a reality, especially in political empowerment, educational attainment, and acquiring managerial positions (World Economic Forum; 2018:10).

More and more especially in recent years, the Catholic Church sees the importance of the role of women and has called for greater roles for women in Church leadership. In the Apostolic Exhortation on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world, *Evangelii Gaudium* reads:

The Church acknowledges the indispensable contribution which women make to society through the sensitivity, intuition and other distinctive skill sets which they, more than men, tend to possess... Demands that the legitimate rights of women be respected, based on the firm conviction that men and women are equal in dignity, present the Church with profound and challenging questions which cannot be lightly evaded. (Pope Francis; 2013: 104)

Pope Francis reiterated this desire to give women greater weight in the Church in his prayer intention for October 2020. Pope Francis asks everyone to pray that women be given greater leadership roles in the Church and in social structures. He said that women have kept the Church alive through their remarkable devotion and deep faith and asks that more lay people especially women be given participation in "areas of responsibility in the Church" and "in the various other settings where important decisions are made" (Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life; 2020: Online).

In January 2021, Pope Francis modified the canon law to open the lay ministries of lector and acolyte to women. He has also taken steps to increase women's leadership at the Vatican, most recently with the appointment of six laywomen as members of the Council for the Economy, as well as numerous others in key roles in various Vatican bodies (America The Jesuit Review; 2021: Online).

With this growing gender-inclusive progress in society, it is very important to know the role that Catholic Education plays in the development of women towards leadership. It is an opportune moment to study the formation provided by Catholic education to women and how it affected and continues to influence the social, moral and ethical disposition of the current women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in order to gather insights on how to improve the formation and guidance that Catholic schools and universities provide for their student and better prepare them in taking leadership roles.

II. Aims and Objectives

The main objective of this research is to investigate the extent of the effects and influences of Catholic Education on the formation of women leaders from the Philippines.

This research aims to:

1. To examine what the Catholic Church teaches through Catholic educational institutions about the formation of women towards leadership and how they can take up their role in society.

The research aims to understand the role and importance of the moral formation mandated to Catholic educational institutions as part of its mission to society (Second Vatican Council; 1965a:7). It will investigate the teachings of the Catholic Church related to upholding the dignity of every individual particularly women, the special role of women in society and the Church, and the formation of women towards the sacramental vision of leadership. This will include an exploration of the impact of Faith formation classes such as mandatory Religious Education and Theology subjects to the moral disposition of women leaders.

2. To identify the effects and influences of Catholic education in the formation of women leaders from the Philippines.

Since education is an important means of improving the social and economic condition of the individual and the society, it is important to identify the role of Catholic education in advancing gender equity in Philippine society. The research will investigate the historical perspective of the effects and influences of the Catholic Church through education on the empowerment of women. The study will also gather insights into how the formation in Catholic education affected and influenced the moral disposition, leadership style, and leadership outlook of women who are now in leadership roles in the Philippines and internationally.

The research will try to discover if there is a correlation between the effects and influences of the formation that female students received in Catholic education and how these students who are now women leaders exercise their leadership roles such as commitment to their duty, their decision-making, and pursuit of a certain profession or vocation.

3. To provide possible recommendations on how to improve the educational practices and formation programmes in Catholic education which can aid the empowerment of women and preparation for leadership roles.

The research project aims to come up with possible proposals on how to improve the existing curriculum content, pedagogy, and policies within Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines that will address the growing demand of providing greater opportunities for women to be in leadership roles.

The research aims to provide recommendations for Catholic educational institutions on educating and nurturing future women leaders. While Catholic schools worldwide often focus on providing education for the underprivileged, in the Philippines, all Catholic educational institutions are privately owned. This presents a unique opportunity to shape students who are from privileged backgrounds to not only focus on personal success and development but also become agents of positive change in society, especially in a developing country like the Philippines, leading and serving as nation-builders and advocates of the common good.

Additionally, the context of the Catholic culture in the Philippines is not unique, therefore the research may serve as a research model and initial investigation for other predominantly Catholic nations and Catholic educational institutions that are seeking to improve existing practices who are

looking for ways on how to empower women and develop them as future leaders.

There is a wide range of research studies and published work on the topic of Catholic education, formation towards leadership, women's leadership, and Catholicism in the Philippines. Most of the published related literature discusses women empowerment, the role of religious women in Catholic education, and recently the widely discussed and debated topic in the Catholic Church regarding the ordination of women to priesthood. While a lot of studies have focused on various aspects of the topic or subject area, none of them deal with this particular research idea.

The focus of this research is unique because it focuses on women who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines, the biggest Catholic nation in Asia and how the formation of Catholic education played a role in the disposition of women who are in leadership roles and how it can further contribute in closing the gap between gender inequality in the country guided by its Catholic identity.

It will endeavour to understand not only the assumed positive contribution of Catholic education in the Philippines and how it influenced and affected the empowerment of women in the country but also try to understand what other contributing aspects of Catholic education in a richly Catholic country which allow or disallow women to advance and flourish as a leader. This study is also unique due to the intention of the research to gather insights from women leaders who are in high-ranking positions both nationally and internationally. This will provide an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their leadership roles that they associate with the formation they have received in Catholic education.

III. CONTEXT

A. Catholic Faith in the Philippines

In the year 2021, the Philippines celebrated its 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the country. Thanks to the Chronicler Antonio Pigafetta, who was part of the Spanish expedition and witness of all the events, Pigafetta was able to document the first Mass and conversion of the natives from tribal religion to Christianity.

It all began when the great 16th-century Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan led a Spanish expedition to the so-called “East Indies”, from 1519 to 1522, intending to bring 3 “G”s – God, Gold, and Glory for the king of Spain. The Spanish explorers reached one of the islands of what is today known as the Philippines on 16 March 1521.

Just two weeks after arrival on 31 March 1521, the Spanish explorers, sailors, and missionaries celebrated the first Catholic Mass on Filipino soil, during their stay on the island of Limasawa, located in the southern islands of the Philippines. Shortly a few days later, Magellan presented the queen of the island named Hara Humamay, the statue of the Holy Child Jesus and a wooden cross. Hara Humamay was overcome with contrition upon seeing the image of the young Christ and later asked to be baptised into Christianity. On 14 April 1521, the Queen was baptised together with the King and their companions. 800 natives were also baptised to Christianity and formed the first Catholic community in the country (Pigafetta;1519-1522).

The Pope recognises the deep faith and religiosity of the Filipinos, and their desire to pass on their faith to their children and others. On 14 March 2021, during the celebration and mass at St. Peter’s Basilica for the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines, Pope Francis in his homily urged the Filipino people to persevere in their duty to evangelise by continuously bringing the good news and

“the joy of faith through humble, hidden, courageous, and persevering service to others” (Pope Francis; 2021: 1).

"Dear brothers and sisters, five hundred years have passed since the Christian message first arrived in the Philippines. You received the joy of the Gospel: the good news that God so loved us that he gave his Son for us. And this joy is evident in your people. We see it in your eyes, on your faces, in your songs and in your prayers. In the joy with which you bring your faith to other lands.

I have often said that here in Rome, Filipino women are “smugglers” of faith! Because wherever they go to work, they sow the faith. It is part of your genes, a blessed “infectiousness” that I urge you to preserve. Keep bringing the faith, the good news you received five hundred years ago, to others. I want to thank you, then, for the joy you bring to the whole world and to our Christian communities.”

Up until today, the Philippines is still a predominantly Catholic nation with an estimated 83 million baptised Catholics or roughly 80% of the entire population (Philippines Statistics Authority [PSA] 2019: Online). It is not surprising to see that there is a great cultural and societal influence of the Catholic faith and Christian values that is evident in various social issues. Concrete examples of this are the recent study, which indicates that many Filipinos have strong views that are in line with the Catholic Church's teachings, such as its views on the sanctity and sacramentality of marriage. Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents say that getting a divorce is morally unacceptable - three times the share of Americans who say this (22%). To date, The Philippines is one of the last two remaining country that still do not legally accept divorce, the other nation is, of course, the Vatican (The Economist; 2020: Online).

Teachings of the Catholic Church on the sanctity of life and the protection of the unborn are also evident in the views of the Filipinos. In the 2015 survey conducted by The Pew Research Centre, Filipinos also have a very strong and overwhelming view that having an abortion is immoral (93%); no country among the 40 surveyed is more universally opposed to abortion on moral grounds (The Pew Research Centre; 2015: Online).

At the other end of the spectrum, despite the deeply rooted Catholic values and culture as a nation, corruption is perceived to have worsened in the Philippine government according to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) survey for 2020 conducted by Transparency International as it ranked 115th of 180 countries studied on their perceived political integrity. The 2020 CPI report highlighted the impact of corruption on government responses to COVID-19 and compared nations' performances on health care and democratic norms and institutions (Transparency International; 2020: 1).

The Catholic Church hierarchy in the Philippines is still respected and honoured by many. Despite this, whenever there is an important and pressing issue in society, and the Catholic hierarchy through its bishops, cardinals, and Catholic educational institutions pronounces a view on it, many free thinkers invoke the principle of separation of Church and State. While the principle has its proper application, in a developing country like the Philippines with a predominantly and historically Catholic population and culture, it is much more important to foster cooperation between these two elements of the society than to simply hold them apart.

Instead of speaking only about the separation of Church and State, the Philippines can cultivate a healthy and responsible partnership between the Catholic Church and the Philippine government; after all, both are serving the same people. Part of that cooperation, of course, would also require pursuing and insisting on respect for the rule of law and upholding the rights and dignity of all people of other faiths, such as the sizeable population of Muslims and a growing number of other Christian denominations in the Philippines. It is also important that the Catholic Church stands as a prime mover for the promotion of the common good and protector of the basic human rights of those most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society, especially the poor. Catholic educational institutions have a great responsibility to instil these Christian values and principles in the future generation.

B. Catholic Education in the Philippines

The Philippines is a significant focus for this research, consistently ranking as one of the world's most gender-equal countries according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report. Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Philippines ranked 8th worldwide in gender equality (WEF; 2018: 10), and post-pandemic, the Philippines, it ranked 16th in 2023 (WEF; 2023: 11). This report considers factors such as educational attainment, political empowerment, and women's access to leadership roles.

Catholicism remains deeply embedded in Philippine society, with 80% of the 112 million population identifying as Catholic (PSA; 2023: Online). This significant Catholic presence shapes cultural and social dynamics and plays an influential role in providing education across the country. Catholic educational institutions are some of the largest private education providers in the Philippines, with approximately 1500 member schools under the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines. Unlike some countries, Catholic schools in the Philippines operate independently of government funding, typically sustained by religious orders or dioceses.

The Catholic Church's role in education is widely acknowledged by the Philippine government. However, despite the country's promising gender equality rankings, it faces an educational crisis marked by uneven access to high-quality education, which could hinder the leadership potential of its citizens. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has reported that the Philippines struggles to produce competitive educational outcomes globally (OECD; 2022: Online). Studies by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS; 2022: p7) indicate that private schools tend to outperform public schools¹, revealing educational inequities, for instance, in 2019, only 17% of the poorest students accessed higher education compared to 49% of the wealthier students.

¹ Public Schools means state owned educational institutions in the context of the Philippines.

In December 2023, the Philippine Department of Education launched a public-private education complementarity framework to address these challenges. Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte emphasised the “pivotal role” of private education in tackling the educational crisis. She recognised that state-run schools alone cannot meet the country’s educational needs and highlighted the contribution of private schools in shaping Filipino society (Philippines News Agency; 2023: Online)

There are around 1,500 Catholic schools and universities (Catholic Education Association of the Philippines [CEAP] 2019: Online) spread across the country. These Catholic educational institutions, provided classrooms, facilities and quality education around the country, not only in major cities but also in remote towns and the peripheries while relying mainly on their private resources and efforts.

For a developing country like the Philippines, it is not surprising that quality education is almost always appended to private Catholic educational institutions. Many of these Catholic education providers have been recognised as top-performing schools or universities nationwide and internationally.

They are known to be providers of quality education, initiating advanced studies and sociological and scientific research contributing to the advancement of the Philippine society. Many of the current and past leaders of the Philippines both Catholics and peoples of other faiths - whether in business, politics, medicine, environmental protection, or any other field - are Catholic-school educated. Furthermore, some Catholic educational institutions are dedicated to out-of-school youths, the handicapped, cultural minorities, and those in the periphery (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines [CBCP]; 2012: Online).

The Catholic Church, through its educational institutions, hold a significant opportunity to shape the character and social vision of its students. By intentionally cultivating moral integrity, Christian accountability, and a commitment to ethical leadership, Catholic educational institutions can prepare their students to embody the Christian values instilled through their education. These qualities are reflected in

their sense of social responsibility and their dedication to promoting the common good as future leaders who live out the principles of the Christian faith.

C. Women's Leadership in the Philippines

Women holding leadership positions is not unusual in the Philippines. The country is generally characterised positively in various international metrics of gender equality. Since the end of the Marcos dictatorship (1986), Filipinos have already installed two female presidents and two female vice presidents.

In the 2017 study conducted by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), in terms of education, Filipino girls and women are more likely to obtain a high school diploma, more likely to enter college, and more likely to graduate than their boys and male counterparts. While in the workforce, although still accounting for a lower proportion of the total workforce, jobs that tend to have higher paying positions like supervision/management, professionals, service, and sales are more likely to be done by women than men (PIDS 2017: Online).

The findings from the study conducted by PIDS were confirmed by the result of the latest survey conducted by a global consultancy firm Grant Thornton in 2020. It showed that businesses in the Philippines have the highest number of women holding senior leadership positions in midmarket businesses among 29 other economies and 48 per cent of senior corporate positions in those businesses are held by Filipino women. It also stated that in highly specialised professions, like law, medicine and business management, Filipino women have shown they can go toe-to-toe with their male counterparts and even perform better (Inquirer 2021: Online).

IV. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCHER

In 2015, I began teaching theology at Assumption College San Lorenzo, a prominent private Catholic women's college in the Philippines. Theology is a core subject for all students in Catholic higher education, much like Religious Education or Christian Living subjects at primary and secondary levels. Assumption College San Lorenzo, which offers education from pre-school through university, is renowned for educating daughters of prominent figures in Philippine society, including prominent presidents, influential business leaders, politicians, and artists. Notable Alumnae include former Presidents Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Corazon Aquino, and business magnate Teresita Sy-Coson.

As a Catholic educator, I am keenly aware of my responsibility to serve as a Christian role model for my students, who may go on to become leaders in the Philippines. I view my role not only as a teacher of theology but also as a guide in their moral formation. I aim to instil a commitment not only to understand Christ's teachings but to embody them in whatever paths they choose.

My own educational journey unfolded within the Catholic education system, from primary school through university. I attended Miriam College, a prestigious Catholic institution, where I learned the importance of respecting every individual's dignity, promoting gender equality, and advocating for marginalised communities. These shaped my perspective on leadership and social responsibility.

Throughout my formative years, I was taught that every person has a role to play in society and that even the most vulnerable contribute to the common good. Although my family did not share the financial advantage of many of my classmates, my parents deeply valued education as a tool for empowerment. My father, a former political prisoner during the Marcos dictatorship and a human rights lawyer, taught us that true success is defined not by wealth but by one's contribution to society. He instilled in me the belief that gender should never limit one's potential and goals.

While studying at university, I served as Vice President for Socio-Political Affairs of Youth for Christ, which initiated what is now the Gawad Kalinga Foundation. This movement, founded on Christian principles, seeks to eradicate poverty by restoring the dignity of the poor, inspiring me to dedicate a year of voluntary service to teaching literacy to indigenous handicapped youth in Mindanao. This experience marked the beginning of my nine-year commitment as a full-time mission worker with the Catholic lay organisation Couples for Christ Foundation Inc., which has over 300,000 members in 66 countries. In this role, I organised leadership trainings, pastoral programmes, fundraising initiatives, and corporate partnerships to support the organisation's mission worldwide.

My work in this capacity underscored the profound impact that Christian values can have on people's willingness to contribute their resources and influence for the greater good. Today, I continue to champion this mission in my role as a Project Manager and Partnership Development Officer at the Catholic Mission of St. Mary's University, Twickenham. In this role, I am responsible for ensuring that St. Mary's Catholic identity and mission remain vibrant and integrated across campus life. Our office initiates and oversees projects and partnerships that reflect the values of St. Mary's and of Catholic higher education, cultivating a community dedicated to spiritual growth, moral and ethical leadership, and social responsibility.

Beyond this role, I remain engaged with a liturgical Bible study group that includes Filipino leaders capable of enacting significant societal change. Among them are former Vice President Jejomar Binay, legal experts like Atty. Felicitas S. Aquino-Arroyo from the 1986 Constitutional Commission, finance professionals, doctors, and diplomats. This group, an outgrowth of a pilgrimage group to the Holy Land in 2017, now funds scholarships for seminarians and catechists, and sponsors youth leadership training programmes.

Through my family's guidance, my formative education, and the Christian responsibility instilled in me, I have come to see Catholic education's role in developing socially conscious leaders as paramount. Guided by my faith, I am

committed to fighting inequality and advancing the common good, a mission I am to pass on to the next generation. Inspired by St. John Bosco's call for students to be "honest citizens and good Christians," I believe that nurturing moral integrity and social responsibility is central to forming future women leaders in today's world.

V. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research examines the formation of women leaders who studied at Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines. Specifically, it explores the role and mission of these educational institutions in fostering women's leadership and commitment to service. The study aims to understand the distinctive nature of Catholic education and the sacramental vision of leadership that Catholic education aims to inculcate in its female students. It will also identify how these teachings and formations affected and influenced female students who are now women leaders how they exercise their leadership roles and the values they uphold.

The research will investigate the experiences of female students who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines, including the pastoral formation programmes offered within the institution, acknowledging that the context and system of Catholic education in the Philippines may differ from other Catholic educational institutions in other parts of the world.

This project will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining literature review, quantitative data collection, and qualitative research methods. Triangulation of the data will be used to enhance the accuracy and validity of the findings by comparing results to identify corroborating and contrasting findings across all sources (Oliver-Hoyo and Allen; 2006: 43). This approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of how Catholic education influences and affects the formation of women leaders. The triangulated findings from the literature review, quantitative data, and qualitative data will be used to formulate recommendations for improvement of practice and for future research.

A. Literature Review

The initial step of this research involves conducting a comprehensive literature review. This review will map the scholarly landscape by identifying relevant studies, facilitating comparisons and providing insights essential for addressing knowledge gaps within the subject area. Additionally, it will contextualise the research within the framework of Church documents, allowing for an examination of how Catholic educational ideals align with actual practices (Verma and Beard; 1981:10).

A thorough review of the existing body of work, particularly Catholic Church documents on formation within Catholic education, will be conducted to assess current knowledge and identify areas for further exploration. This will include a systematic and comparative analysis of existing studies on Catholic education, leadership theories, and the historical perspective of women's leadership in the Philippines. Through this analysis, the research aims to test hypotheses and develop new theories that could inform the study's objectives.

To evaluate the validity and quality of existing literature, the review will summarise, analyse, and synthesise findings, assessing them against inclusion criteria drawn on what is useful and necessary for the study to understand the strengths and weaknesses, and consistencies and contradictions within the existing literature (Xiao and Watson; 2017: 93).

The literature review will serve as a basis for formulating the quantitative and qualitative research tools that will be employed for data gathering. The combination of the two research paradigms will provide a deeper insight and enhance the validity of the study's conclusions, thereby strengthening the basis for the proposed recommendation.

B. Qualitative Research Paradigm

The qualitative research component will utilise interviews as a primary data-gathering method. These interviews may be conducted through various formats, including video conferencing, teleconferencing, written correspondence, or face-to-face meetings when necessary. Interviewees will consist of prominent women leaders, both past and present, from diverse sectors of Philippine society who were educated in Catholic educational institutions. Importantly, these leaders do not need to identify as Catholics, they may belong to other faiths or have no religious affiliation, provided they received their education at a Catholic institution during their formative or tertiary years.

The Targeted respondents will represent a wide range of fields, including but not limited to:

1. Learning and Education
2. Communication and Media
3. Arts and Culture
4. Business and Economics
5. Peacebuilding and Foreign Relations
6. Justice and Constitutional Affairs
7. Health and Wellness
8. Food and Water Sustainability, and Environmental Issues
9. Public Service, Politics and Governance
10. Science and Technology

The qualitative data collected from these interviews will be analysed through an interpretative perspective paradigm, focusing on the impressions, ideas, opinions, experiences, and attitudes of the respondents (Lydon; 2011: 35). By encompassing a diverse range of sectors, this research aims to emphasise that it is not solely confessional and does not prioritise theological and religious studies. Instead, the thesis seeks an unbiased, comprehensive interpretation of how women formed in Catholic educational institutions perceived their formative experiences and how these shaped their leadership values and dispositions.

Finally, in adherence to best practices in qualitative research, confidentiality is of utmost importance. The privacy and personal rights of all interviewees will be respected and protected, following the ethical research guidelines established by the Philippine government, the United Kingdom government, and St. Mary's University, Twickenham.

C. Quantitative Research Paradigm

The quantitative methodology will employ survey questionnaires as a secondary research instrument to reach a broad and diverse pool of respondents. These survey questionnaires may be distributed through online survey platforms, emails, alumni group messages, and social media platforms to participants when possible. Respondents will include women leaders educated in Catholic educational institutions across the Philippines, with support from alumni associations at various institutions to facilitate outreach. The quantitative approach will provide statistical data, offering measurable insights to complement the more detailed, subjective impressions derived from the qualitative data (Cotgreave; 2000: 5).

While quantitative methods can capture descriptive data across large populations, they do not provide insight into the motivation underlying respondents' answers. Thus, they cannot fully explain the reasons behind specific responses (Bell and Waters; 2018: 26). By integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study aims to achieve a holistic understanding of the impact of Catholic education on the development of women leaders in the Philippines. The use of both methods helps to mitigate the limitations inherent in each when used independently.

All data collected will contribute to "triangulation", a key advantage of using a mixed-methods approach. Triangulation will facilitate a dialogue between quantitative and qualitative data, integrating these findings with insights from the literature review. This approach tests the validity and credibility of the research by enabling cross-verification across data sources, thus enhancing the reliability of

findings and highlighting the interplay between quantitative and qualitative insights. Ultimately, triangulation supports a more comprehensive understanding of the study's research questions (Bell and Waters; 2018: 25).

VI. CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter outlined the rationale and objectives of this research: to explore the extent to which Catholic education affects and influences the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. It provided an overview of the historical and cultural context of Catholicism in the country, along with a discussion on the current impact of Catholic education on gender equality and women's leadership.

The chapter also introduced the researcher, offering background on her experiences within Catholic education and the personal, familial, and professional influences that have inspired her interest in women's leadership and formation in Catholic educational settings.

Additionally, the chapter presented an overview of the research methodology, which combines qualitative and quantitative data collection methods targeting women leaders educated in Catholic educational institutions. Data will be analysed and synthesized using triangulation to ensure validation of the findings.

In alignment with the study's purpose, the next chapter will explore the distinctive nature of Catholic education, grounded in Christian principles and teachings, with a focus on moral formation in the faith, the search for excellence towards service, respect for human dignity, solidarity with the community, and the education for the common good. It will also delve into the sacramental vision of leadership, drawing on Christ's examples as a model for leadership formation. Additionally, the next chapter will provide a historical perspective of women's leadership in the Philippines, highlighting the influence and contribution of the Catholic faith and Catholic education to its development.

The research will analyse data gathered from interviews and surveys with women leaders educated in Catholic institutions to assess the effects and influences of their education on their leadership aspirations and roles in society. Findings from this research will inform recommendations on policies, pedagogical approaches, and formation practices within Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines, particularly regarding women's leadership, social justice, and the promotion of the common good.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

I. INTRODUCTION

To fully grasp the effects and influence of Catholic education in the Philippines on the formation of women leaders, it is essential to begin by defining what it means to be a leader. Leadership has been the subject of extensive research and various interpretations. For the purpose of this discussion, we define a “leader” following the basic definition from the Cambridge Dictionary (2021) as someone who is in control of a group, community, or situation. Leadership, however, goes beyond mere control, it is also a form of service. Leadership is also a set of mindsets and behaviours that align people in a collective direction and common goal. Effective leaders are also tasked with identifying the needs of both individuals and the group that they are entrusted to lead. They enable people to work together to accomplish shared goals, help them adjust to the changing environment, and harmonising their efforts in service of a shared mission (Maor, Kaas, et al; 2024: 1)

In the context of Catholic education and the formation of their students to become leaders, this raises important questions: What is the collective direction and mission of all Christians? What is the true mission of Catholic education as a Christian institution? Who then is their true leader? And crucially, what role does Catholic Education play in preparing and guiding its students towards fulfilling the collective goal and mission of the Christian faith in this present environment?

A. Christian Mission

The Catholic Church’s mission is to carry out and continue the work of Jesus Christ on Earth for the glory of God, the Father. All baptised Christians share in this divine mission to bring more people to God, help those in need, and follow and live the example of Jesus Christ to all (Second Vatican Council; 1965b: 2).

In the Gospel of Matthew, the resurrected Jesus Christ gave an instruction and left an imperative command to His disciples before His ascension into heaven.

"Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

The word "disciple" and cognates appear regularly in the New Testament and are cited 24 times in St Mark's Gospel alone. The Greek word rendered 'disciple' is μαθητής (mathétēs), which literally means "learner" or "apprentice". The noun is closely related to *'matheteuo'* meaning "to become a disciple" or "to be disciplined" (Strong 1984:274). *'Mathetes'* in a purely 'technical sense' implies a direct dependence by the one under instruction upon another who is superior in knowledge. Thus, it carries the connotation of one who is a student in the sense of being a follower or adherent of another (and so by extension a disciple). Other citations (e.g. Phi 5:4, I Tim 5:4,13) do, however, connote "acquiring a custom or habit" (Moulton 1977), resonating with the Pauline notion of "imitation".

In the context of the group of people constituting the "disciples", Charles Cranfield (1959:104) makes the point that, while the term can connote a circle wider than the "Twelve", often it seems to be the latter who are meant. If that is the case, then the concept of discipleship must be closer to "imitation" and "commitment", rather than simply learning and understanding, a theme retrieved subsequently in relation to the sacramental perspective and servant leadership. Suffice it to state at this point that Jesus' call of the Twelve is certainly challenging. Lydon (2011:65) makes the point that:

Analysing the characteristics of the Gospel narratives of the call of the first disciples demonstrates that the accounts make it abundantly clear that the vocation to follow Christ "along the road"² does not begin with a choice but a call. The accounts also make it clear that the lives of those called are transformed dramatically and they are called to what Pope John Paul II describes as trusting abandonment. (1992:1)

² see Mark 10:52

Lydon (2011:65) goes on to make the point that, in terms of the Gospels it could be argued that John's Gospel more than any of the others develops the theme of imitation. This is expressed most clearly in the symbolic discourse The Good Shepherd. Just as Jesus imitated the understanding of the Father expressed in Ezekiel, he now is the model shepherd. Raymond Brown (1982:386), interestingly, suggests "model" as a more appropriate translation of the Greek "kalos" than the normal rendition of "good", reflecting the earlier emphasis on "model" as opposed to 'learn' in the context of discipleship.

Lydon (2011:70ff) goes on to suggest that one significant implication of the Good Shepherd narrative focuses on the reference to the shepherd "knowing" the sheep. The shepherd's in-depth knowledge of the sheep reflects God's intimate knowledge of his people referred to in both the Old and New Testaments (cf. Nah 1:7; 1Cor 8:3; Gal 4:9) By implication, therefore, since the actions of Jesus are patterned on those of the Father, Jesus' care for the sheep mirrors that of God. Earlier in the Gospel Jesus states that "I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me" (John 8:28). The purpose of this knowledge is made clear in verse 16 of the parable when Jesus states that "there will be one flock and one shepherd." This notion of unity around a leader has implications for the formation of future leaders.

C K Barrett (1978:376) points to an equally important implication for the formation of future leaders when he explores the interrelation between shepherd and sheep. The care of the shepherd reaches its zenith in the shepherd "laying down his life for his sheep", emphasising the sacrificial nature of the shepherd's care and, possibly, reminding us of Paul's reference to the "ekenosen" (self-emptying) of Christ in the letter to the Philippians (2:5-11)

The "Great Commission" has become a tenet of Christian theology on ministry, mission work, and evangelisation. There are four "call to action" words in the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. These are: Go, Make disciples, Baptise, and Teach. Jesus instructed His apostles not just to be recipients of the faith but also to put it into action by passing on whatever they have received from Him to all. The apostles abide by these commands as they go to do their ministry to the ends of the earth and pass on Christ's teachings from generation to generation.

The Church was founded with the collective mission to spread the good news of the gospel and proclaim the kingdom of God throughout the earth for the glory of God, the Father. This mandate of Jesus Christ was passed on by the Apostles to the hundreds of disciples, then to the "Fathers of the Church", then to the Church Magisterium, to missionaries of the faith, and to all believers. The Apostles of Jesus Christ did not just baptise Gentiles but also went out to teach the faith "to the ends of the Earth" (Acts 1: 8), with the strong belief and hope that everyone would have the opportunity to know and love God through Christianity.

Teaching has become part of the mission evangelisation of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. The Christians believe that by mandate given by Jesus, the Church empowered all believers to share in Christ's saving redemption, and through their faithfulness to the call of evangelisation, and by teaching the Word of God, with the goal that the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ (Second Vatican Council; 1965b: 2).

How then are they to call on him if they have not come to believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard of him? And how will they hear of him unless there is a preacher for them? And how will there be preachers if they are not sent? As scripture says: How beautiful are the feet of the messenger of good news? (Romans 10:14-15)

In carrying out the work and mission of Jesus Christ, its end goal is to build a personal relationship with God and bring people to an eternal life with God, which is defined by believers as Heaven. Christians' duty is to save souls and to make this lifetime a foretaste of Heaven.

The "Kingdom Theology" or the "already but not yet" paradigm developed by a Princeton theologian named Geerhardus Vos early in the 20th century explains that the Kingdom of God has already begun and inaugurated by Christ. Vos states that Christ is already ruling from Heaven in eternal life, but the full glory of the Kingdom of God has not yet been realised here in this mortal life. He further explained that

man still suffers the effects and consequences of man's fall and sinfulness (Vos; 2020:36).

The teaching of the Kingdom Theology means that the Kingdom of God calls for "metanoia". Metanoia comes from the Greek word *μετάνοια* which means "changing one's mind or heart", "conversion" or "repentance". For Christians to preach about the Kingdom of God is to be able to make present "Heaven" in this lifetime. One must acknowledge that Heaven is not a location, but rather a vocation and mission of making God's Kingdom present. Therefore, Christians must live out each one's mission and covenant with God of mutual love. It is part of the responsibility and call for every Christian to manifest his or her love for God by taking care of himself, and others, especially those who are in need by being concerned for the welfare of the common good (Towey; 2013: 109).

The Catholic Church is concerned with the totality of every person's life. It focuses on forming every individual as a whole person in pursuit of the ultimate good as a child of God and to educate them to be a good member of society, by sharing in the mission and obligation in both the spiritual and secular aspects of this life (Second Vatican Council; 1965a: 1).

The Catholic Church through its educational institutions, play a very crucial role in educating the whole person and fulfilling this mission of forming individuals in the faith and improving society through education. Catholic schools are tasked to educate and guide their students towards the fulfilment of their Christian vocation. It acts as an irreplaceable source of service not only to the students but also for the society. It encourages efforts to establish and create a community that is working towards the same goal, which is to improve society and enhance the lives of its people. Thus, it offers a glimpse of the fullness of the Kingdom of God and makes this lifetime a foretaste of Heaven (SCCE; 1977:47).

The mission activity of the Catholic Church engages not only in the spiritual concerns but also in the temporal and earthly needs of the people. The Church strives to alleviate the earthly sufferings of all. It has a long history of assisting those who

need practical aid, whether it be in the education of the young, the care of the sick and elderly, supporting the disadvantaged, advocating for the displaced, and promoting the care of the environment. These efforts are evident in the various charitable institutions founded by different religious congregations, religious orders, and lay organisations, 65 per cent of which are located in underdeveloped and developing countries. According to the Vatican – Catholic Church Statistics 2020, the Church runs thousands of educational institutions and therefore takes care of millions of students all over the world. Data indicated the following numbers:

73,164 kindergartens with more 7,376,858 pupils;
103,146 primary schools with 35,011,999 pupils;
49,541 secondary schools with 19.307.298 pupils.
2,251.600 high school pupils
3.707.559 university students.

Charity and healthcare centres run by the Church around the world include:

5,192 hospitals,
15,481 dispensaries,
577 Care Homes for people with Leprosy,
15,423 Homes for the elderly, or the chronically ill or people with a disability,
9,295 orphanages,
10,747 creches,
12,515 marriage counselling centres,
3,225 social rehabilitation centres
and 31,091 other kinds of institutes.
(Agenzia Fides; 2020)

Social involvement has always been part and parcel of the mission of the Catholic Church. It always seeks to assist with the needs of the materially and spiritually challenged. At a time when the secular society believed that only the wealthy should receive an education, the Church provided education for the poor. At a time when the sick and elderly were looked after solely by those family members who were in a

position to help, the Church opened hospitals and homes for those who were neglected and abandoned. At a time when the industrialists and capitalists had the monopoly of the riches of the world, the Church also fought for fair remuneration of labour (Pope Leo XIII; 1891: 28-30).

Therefore, Christians are called to proclaim the Kingdom of God by living out their Christian faith in everyday life and following the example of Jesus Christ. It is not limited to preaching the Gospel within the Church and to the faithful, rather it involves living amid society, overcoming challenges of the world, and assisting others. Pope Francis challenged all Christians to live out the Gospel values and live out the common mission of making present the Kingdom of God in this life. He emphasised that this call requires continuously and faithfully working for peace, harmony, justice, human rights, and mercy (Pope Francis; 2020: 168).

B. True Leader

The fundamental message of the Gospel is the revelation of God's love and the fullness of God's presence, through the incarnation of His Son – Jesus Christ. God has fully revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. Keeping in mind the Great Commission of Christ, all Christians are considered leaders called to lead others to a relationship with God and make present the Kingdom of God. For this reason, all Christians, based on the name itself, should look to Christ as the one true leader and lead their lives following His example (Lydon; 2011: 60).

To achieve the aim of truly modelling one's life to Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as the One True leader, it is but right to begin with a search for the answer "Who is Jesus Christ?". Expanding on various ways one can come to know the answer to this question, it can start when Jesus himself asked His disciples "Who do people say I am?", as Matthew, Mark, and Luke record in the synoptic Gospels (Mt 16:13-20, Mk 8: 27-30, Lk 9:18-22). Answers from His disciples came up with various accolades like "some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others; Jeremiah or one of the prophets." But Jesus then proceeded to ask them, "But what about you? Who

do you say I am?". It was Simon who got the answer correctly when he responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Hence, a Christian may model their life and leadership according to this identity. First, to live a life as a Child of God and heir of His Kingdom. Everyone is invited to become heirs of His blessed life and heirs to the Kingdom of God.

To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In His Son and through him, he invites all to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life (CDF; 1994: 2).

The second is to be "Christ". Christ comes from the Greek word **χριστός** (**christós**), meaning "anointed one" (Towey; 2013: 88). Upon the declaration of Simon, who he believes Jesus is, he recognised the faith of Simon and anointed him as leader of His Church. Simon was given a new name "Peter", which means "rock". Christ further declared to Peter that "on this Rock, I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it" (Mt 16: 18). This Biblical and theological interpretation then became the basis of the Catholic Church for the doctrine of continued apostolic succession (CDF;1994: 77).

In the Christian faith, before the ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven, He also anointed His apostles to continue proclaiming His teachings and mission not only to the early Christian community but to the rest of the world; "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Guided by the Holy Spirit, they were anointed with the same authority, but also called to serve others especially those who are rejected and neglected by society, witnessing the great love of God for His children.

Christians from all generations, by virtue of baptism, received the same anointing to be Christian leaders called to be witnesses of God's love, to teach with authority the message of Christ's salvation and to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to all. However, the way individuals exercise this calling varies, as each person

responds according to their unique gifts and vocation within the Church and society. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, all are invited to be in full integrity a living representation of God's love and mercy to all nations (Second Vatican Council; 1965e:7).

The Characteristics of Jesus Christ as a true leader will be discussed further in the later chapter, Leadership as a Sacramental Vision.

II. THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The milestone document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights drafted by world leaders and declared during the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948, affirms that education is a fundamental human right for everyone. This right was further detailed in the Convention against Discrimination in Education in 1960.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. (United Nations; 2021b: p1)

However, not all are given the same fundamental human right to education. In some parts of the world, education is a privilege. It is reserved for those who can afford it and many are still left uneducated. In the 2018 data from UNESCO, 258 million children are out of school. 8.2% of primary school-age children do not go to primary school. Only six in ten young people will be finishing secondary school in 2030. The youth literacy rate of ages 15-24 is 91.73%, though the number looks promising it still means 102 million youth lack basic literacy skills (UNESCO; 2020: Online).

In the Philippines, without being short-sighted to the many mission schools in urban poor and far-flung rural areas established by the Catholic Church, there exists a general perception that Catholic Schools are wealthy or are accessible only to the wealthier social classes due to the fact that all Catholic Schools in the country are privately owned (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines [CBCP]; 2012). This is a phenomenon that is also true in other countries. This was recognised by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in the 1970s. The Congregation acknowledges the fact that in some countries, because of the lack of financial subsidy from the government, Catholic schools have been obliged to restrict their educational activities to those who can pay tuition fees, thus giving an impression of social and economic discrimination in education (SCCE; 1977:21).

However, it is worth noting that, many Catholic schools in the Philippines either offer a certain percentage of their student population to be scholars or the fee-paying Catholic schools normally have a mission school counterpart in the urban poor areas or remote areas of the Philippines. The operational expenses of the mission schools are normally subsidised by the fee-paying Catholic school. In the two comparative studies commissioned by the World Bank in 2014, on the differences between private secular, state-owned, and faith-based education, it deduced that faith-inspired schools tend to reach the poor slightly less than state-owned schools, but much more than private secular schools (World Bank; 2014:1). Furthermore, Wodon (2022) in his study on measuring the contributions of Catholic schools globally, explained that many of the largest Catholic school networks are located in countries with substantial poverty, contributing to the mission of the Church to serve the poor (Wodon; 2022: 134).

However, from the field data gathered by World Bank, it is worth noting that it was observed that a greater number of Islam parents (75-84%) are sending their children to Islamic school on the account of the religious and values formation provided by the school, compared to Christian parents, who give less priority in religion and values when they choose to send children to Christian schools at 33-50% (World Bank; 2014: Table O.4). Rather, their most mitigating factor for

choosing to send their children to Christian school is because of its academic excellence and teaching quality.

In both of these World Bank studies conducted in Africa and Latin America, it is recognised that not all parents seek the same standardised service appropriate for their children's education, however, it is certain that parents want their children to learn and benefit from a great education. Parents would have various reasons for choosing which school would provide greater education for their children such as location, academics, future job opportunities, religion, teacher quality, etc.

Though there is no mention of which specific Christian denominations the study was conducted, it rings true that a good number of Christian schools in Latin America and Africa are Catholic schools.

Having this in mind, it is natural to ask the question, what sets Catholic education apart from state-run schools and private secular schools?

The Catholic Church is aware of the various challenges which are an integral part of Christian education in a pluralistic society. Formation in the faith given by the Catholic Schools forms part of the saving mission of the Catholic Church and a concrete contribution to making present the Kingdom of God. It is precisely the reason why it is important that the Church safeguards the nature and distinctive characteristics of any school which would present itself as Catholic and re-emphasises the reason why they exist (SCCE; 1977:2).

The Congregation for Catholic Education released several documents outlining the distinctive natures and features of Catholic Education. This research will focus on the most commonly emphasised aspects of these features.

This chapter will explore the unique qualities of Catholic education as presented in the Second Vatican Council document, *Gravissimum Educationis* and other key Church documents. It is divided into five sections: (1) Moral Formation in the Faith, (2) The Search for Excellence towards Service, (3) Respect for Human Dignity, (4) Solidarity in the community, and (5) Education for the common good.

Identifying the distinctive nature of Catholic education helps us understand what sets it apart from non-Catholic educational systems. It also clarifies the goals and ideals of Catholic education, providing insights into its deeper mission. This literature review will serve as a foundation for the later chapters, where we will examine the experiences of women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines and how their formation in Catholic schools and universities influenced them in their leadership roles. These ideals of the distinctive nature of Catholic education will serve as a framework for evaluation.

A. MORAL FORMATION IN THE FAITH

In a predominantly Catholic nation like the Philippines, faith formation within Catholic schools, parishes and families revolves around the key elements of teachings of the scriptures and doctrines, the celebrations of the Sacraments, and the practice of popular devotion, such as those to Santo Niño de Cebu, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints. Christian traditions are deeply woven into the fabric of cultural life, as seen in the widespread observance of Christmas, All Saints Day and All Souls' Day, penitential practices during Holy week, and the numerous fiestas celebrating the feast days of the patron saints (CBCP;1992:12). However, amid the significant decrease in the number of Catholics practising their faith in the Philippines, and the growing secular mindset in society (Radio Veritas Asia; 2023: p1), it is vital to give a stronger emphasis on the moral formation and social dimension of the faith and not just limit faith formation on the religious practices and traditions.

One of the key characteristics of Catholic education is its commitment to moral formation, rooted in the Christian faith. This foundation helps individuals develop a well-formed conscience, enabling them to discern what is morally right and understand their social responsibilities. The Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasised the importance of the formation of conscience, recognising it as a lifelong task. From their earliest years, children should be formed to the knowledge and practice of interior law or the formation of conscience. It will allow children to

grow in Christian virtues such as integrity, discernment, humility and compassion. It prevents tendencies to sin and human weaknesses and faults. The education of the conscience is what guarantees real freedom, peace of the heart, and social responsibility (CDF;1994:1784).

Catholic educational institutions form part of the Church's mission of salvation, especially for education in the faith. One of the key responsibilities of Catholic schools as an institution for education, is to introduce students to God and nurture their faith. This Christian faith serves as a basis for their ethical and responsible upbringing, guiding them towards moral freedom as they acquire and develop various skills, knowledge, intellectual methods, and social attitudes (SCCE;1977:30).

However, it is also important to recognise that families are the foundational roots of the moral upbringing of every individual. Students who come to a Catholic school come from different family backgrounds and faith upbringings. Therefore, a good Catholic education should require a strong alliance and collaboration between parents and educators. Educating not only the students but also providing support and seeking help from parents. The school environment should present a life to the students and their parents that is centred on God – one that is good, rich in meaning, welcoming to all, and aware of the social realities of the world. This alliance and collaboration with parents and their families are necessary because education is a journey that reveals the transcendental elements of faith, family, Church, and morality. It highlights the communal character of the Christian faith and the desire to build personal relationships with God and others (CCE;2014:1).

Close cooperation with the family, especially the parents who are the first educators, is very important. This is specifically true when treating and discussing sensitive issues such as religious, moral and sexual education, orientation toward a profession, or a choice of one's life direction. In the Congregation for Catholic Education's 1988 document, it mentioned that young people, who are outstanding in every way - in religious attitude, moral behaviour, and academic achievement - are often discovered to be coming from excellent family backgrounds with reinforced

formation from both the Church and schools. This connection between Catholic schools and parents is not just for the purposes of convenience, but also a partnership based on mission and formation in the faith (CCE;1988: 18).

In the Second Vatican Council document on Christian education *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Council Fathers gave weight and emphasis to the responsibility of diligently caring for the moral and religious education of all the children. Through its mission in Catholic education, the Church presents a special affection and help for the great number of students who are being educated in Catholic schools who are from different faiths or no faith at all. The reality that Catholic educational institutions are educating not only Catholic students, gives emphasis on the call for Christian teachers to become witnesses of Christ in the school community. This can be exhibited through the exercise of their faith in the moral sense, with the hope that through their way of life, they will be a source of inspiration to others especially the students under their care.

The living example of Christian teachers can also be an inspiration to other teachers and school leaders who are not Christians. In this way the whole school community will have a common mission and direction that would lead their Catholic students to be witnesses of Christ to others, especially their peers who may not know Christ yet (Second Vatican Council; 1965a: 7).

Unfortunately, it is easier said than done. There is a great challenge that Christian families and educators are facing in this modern world. There are roughly 1.1 Billion people around the world who identify themselves as “irreligious or religiously unaffiliated”, which belongs to the whole spectrum of atheists, agnostics, and people who simply do not identify with any particular religion (World Population Review; 2021: Online). There is a widespread phenomenon of lack of interest in the fundamental truths of human life, individualism, moral relativism and utilitarianism, that permeate above all rich and developed societies. These countries are what underdeveloped and developing countries are looking up to. In addition, the rapid structural changes, globalisation and the application of new technologies in the field

of information increasingly affect daily life and the process of formation which makes educating in the faith much more challenging (CCE; 2007:1).

Despite the many changes that the world is facing, the goal of moral formation in the faith is that students should still be able to find the meaning and importance of living out the Christian values and morality in the secular world. It is only possible if they are presented with role models who are living out the faith in the modern world. Aside from assisting parents in forming their children, providing role models is an important component of formation in Catholic education. Students should see in their teachers and everyone involved in the school community the modelling of Christian attitudes and behaviour. This is encapsulated in the following citation from the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education's 1982 document:

Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation period of students. The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated. For it will then be seen as something reasonable and worthy of being lived, something concrete and realizable. It is in this context that the faith witness of the lay teacher becomes especially important. Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behaviour that is often so conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live. Without this witness, living in such an atmosphere, they may begin to regard Christian behaviour as an impossible ideal. It must never be forgotten that in the crises "which have their greatest effect on the younger generations", the most important element in the educational endeavour is "always the individual person: the person, and the moral dignity of that person which is the result of his or her principles, and the conformity of actions with those principles". (SCCE:1982: 32).

Other important stakeholders in the moral formation in the faith in Catholic education are the priest, religious, and consecrated persons. Many Catholic educational institutions around the world are still under the administration of dioceses and religious orders. Priests, religious, and consecrated persons perform an important role in the mission of educating in the faith. Their distinct way of life and sincere commitment to their extraordinary ministry is an example of the uniqueness of each individual's vocation. They are to present an alternative way of life that is

counter-culture to the secular mentality and is freely choosing to live a simpler lifestyle by giving oneself for the mission of Christ. They serve as tangible models and modern-day witnesses of the lifestyle chosen by Jesus Christ in His earthly life (CCE;2002:10).

The compounded efforts and services of the parents, educators, priests, religious, and consecrated persons involved in Catholic education form part of the moral formation of the students. The formation that the students receive in Catholic education hopefully enables them to take a responsible role as lay people within the Church, and greater participation not only in the liturgy, or greater familiarity with the Scripture but more importantly in greater readiness in contributing to the good of the society and the transformation of the world because they see these tasks as a God-given mission (Sullivan; 1998: 4).

B. SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE TOWARDS SERVICE

Catholic education extends beyond the explicit proclamation of the Gospel and Christian faith formation. Educational institutions such as schools and universities, provide outstanding environments for nurturing and developing student's commitment to expressing and living out their faith through interdisciplinary areas and integrated approaches as a form of service to others. It also involves promoting and fostering commitment to the evangelisation of culture in contemporary contexts. Catholic educational institutions offer faith encounters and formation within professional, scientific, and academic circles directed towards service to society (Pope Francis; 2013: 132).

One of the most compelling and tangible examples of the Catholic church's commitment to serving society is the provision of many educational institutions dedicated not only to Christian faith formation but also to different academic disciplines. One important contribution of the Catholic church is the development of the university system. The Church established universities as formal institutions for higher learning, with early Catholic universities including Bologna (1088); Paris (c 1150); Oxford (1167); Salerno (1173); Vicenza (1204); Cambridge (1209);

Salamanca (1218-1219); Padua (1222); Naples (1224) and Vercelli (1228). By the mid-15th century, over 50 universities existed across Europe, all these more than 70 years before the Reformation (Pinsent and Holden; 2011).

This system of higher learning spread globally through the efforts of religious orders and missionaries. In the Philippines, for instance, the Dominican missionaries founded the University of Santo Tomas in Manila in 1611. Notably, this Catholic university holds the distinction of being the oldest university in Asia and in the Philippines (University of Santo Tomas; 2021).

In a pastoral letter released by the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines, the long and rich history of Catholic education in the country was highlighted, quoting from the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* #56, reminding the faithful of the nature of Christian Education - It is not self-seeking. Catholic education strives to form students to become their best selves and be at their best, by educating and developing a full understanding of themselves and their identity as children of God. This education is not just for personal gain or power, rather it teaches that knowledge should not be pursued solely for material prosperity and success but as a vocation to serve and a call to be responsible for others (CBCP;2012:12).

This distinctive nature of Catholic education of constantly searching and striving for excellence, and teaching the students to be excellent in all aspects of their lives places significant demands and great commitment on those involved in educating students. Educators in Catholic schools and universities, along with the entire school community, are entrusted to be accountable for the great responsibilities, influence, and power they hold. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) set out expectations for educators and stakeholders involved in forming the students in Catholic education calling for professional dedication, commitment to truth, justice, and freedom, openness to diverse perspectives, a spirit of service, fraternal solidarity with everyone, and moral integrity in all aspects of life. Educators especially lay Catholics are called to embody all these qualities, for them to become a living reflection of the Gospel values in the educational community. (SCCE; 1982:52)

Similarly, the search for excellence is not limited to those who are working within the school community. The search for excellence is also expected in the policies that the schools implement and the quality of education they provide. Many Catholic educational institutions worldwide, whether state-funded or privately owned, adhere to the standards and requirements set by the State. In the Philippines, most Catholic educational institutions whether owned and governed by religious congregations, dioceses, or lay people, voluntarily submit to inspections and accreditation by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and University (PAASCU). While these institutions are privately owned, they adhere to the secular standards of quality education. PAASCU is a private, voluntary, non-profit, and non-stock service organisation that accredits and ensures the quality of academic programmes offered by its member schools and educational institutions (PAASCU; 2021: Online).

However, Lydon (2019:35) argues that there is a challenge with the notion of “quality in secular terms,” emphasising that if students do not achieve their potential in secular standards, two key characteristics of Catholic education are compromised: the search for excellence and the recognition of the dignity and uniqueness of each individual. This echoes the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education’s 1977 statement: “In this setting [the Catholic school] the pupil experiences his dignity as a person before he knows its definition” (SCCE; 1977:55).

Therefore, it is crucial for Catholic educational institutions to maintain a balance between school quality improvement efforts and their distinct Catholic identity, encapsulated in the phrase “in all aspects of their lives”. The Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines warn that an overemphasis on excellence, when misguided, can lead to many reprehensible and harmful practices and dispositions such as “faculty and staff piracy, elitism in education, and consumerism” within Catholic educational institutions. In pursuit of prestige and high ranking, these practices and behaviours foster unhealthy competition among Catholic Schools, educators, and the whole school community (CBCP; 1992:213).

Catholic school leaders are therefore entrusted with the responsibility to recognise and take into heart that their educational institutions are more than just business entities, rather they are given a true mission of becoming a co-formator of their

students. The task of finding suitable educators goes beyond professional and academic qualifications; school leaders must also consider the teacher's moral integrity, and commitment to excellence in both academics and formation to ensure the excellent upbringing of the students. Part of the responsibility of the teachers and school community is to look after the holistic well-being of their students, this includes safeguarding their health and safety while setting them in the right direction of promoting and living out the Christian mission of the school (Second Vatican Council; 1965a:6).

In addition to pedagogical skills in teaching and qualifications, teachers in Catholic education must be well-prepared and equipped with spiritual and religious knowledge of the faith. Their teaching vocation should embody the true essence of academic excellence for service to others, which is central to Catholic education. Since they interact most frequently with students, Catholic educators must be formed and prepared not only professionally but also in service of the Kingdom of God. As the Second Vatican Council states in the declaration on Christian education *Gravissimum Educationis* - "Teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher" (Second Vatican Council; 1965a: 8).

Teachers hold a unique position and crucial role in forming the minds and the hearts of their students. This makes it imperative for them to understand that the ultimate goal of Catholic education is to guide students towards total commitment to Christ, help them develop and improve their God-given talents, and prepare them to fulfil their Christian duty to society. This reflects Catholic education's duty to prepare students not only within Catholic upbringing but also to help them reach their full potential in serving society. This formative influence requires integrating faith with culture and social responsibility. Every subject and specialisation should be taught according to its particular methods without abandoning the real goal of educating its students not only for personal advancement but more importantly for the service of society and the common good (SCCE;1977:40).

C. RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

Education of the whole person requires recognising and honouring the dignity of every individual. The position of the Catholic faith is centred on the teaching that every person possesses a basic and inalienable dignity of man that comes from God and is therefore worthy of honour and respect. It is rooted in the identity of man as the only creature created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 27).

In the Christian belief, everyone possesses the image and likeness of God without exception. No matter what gender, race, religion, and background; every individual possesses the inalienable dignity of man because of the image and likeness of God that dwells within everyone (CDF;1994: 2334). Therefore, to truly respect and honour human dignity as the image and likeness of God, the Church must actively take part in providing a society where everyone can live a dignified life.

Respect for human dignity is fundamental to Catholic education and moral formations as emphasised in Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, 1891, §28 and the Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, §27. This means that part of the mission of Catholic education is to educate its students in preparation for a dignified life, enabling them to contribute in the future to ensure that everyone can live with dignity. Students of Catholic educational institutions should be able to experience in the school setting this Christian principle; that everyone possesses this dignity as children of God, even before they fully comprehend it (SCCE; 1977:55).

Catholic schools are expected to become a true Christian community filled with respect for every individual and each one's uniqueness. It should strive to be far from being divisive or presumptuous. It does not exacerbate differences but rather aids cooperation and collaboration with others. Catholic education must open itself to understanding others and respect other ways of thinking and living. It wants to share both its victories and challenges. It continues to hope and share its students' present and future lot in this world (SCCE; 1977:57). Only through inclusion, respect, and openness that Catholic educational institutions can truly become

“Catholic”, derived from the Latin word *catholicus* or from the Greek adjective *καθολικός* (*katholikos*) which means “universal”.

A key aspect of respecting human dignity is ensuring that “all students are valued and respected as individuals so that they may be helped to fulfil their unique role in creation” (Catholic Education Services; 2014:3). This principle aligns closely with the Church’s teaching on the “preferential option for the poor” which emphasises the responsibility to care for all individuals, especially those who are marginalised. The Church focuses on “the least, the last, and the lost” – the poor, neglected, and most vulnerable of society.

In the context of this thesis, this teaching reinforces the importance of accompaniment, as it calls for intentional efforts to support and uplift those who may otherwise be overlooked. Just as individuals exercise their baptismal calling in different ways according to their gifts, the preferential option for the poor challenges Christian leaders to discern how they can best respond to the needs of the marginalised within their own contexts.

James Dunn (2003:517) in his commentary on the Greek word “*ptochos*” frequently used in the Gospels to describe the “poor” expands the concept and meaning that encompass those who are materially and economically stable - those who lack economic base. Rather, Dunn explained that *Ptochos* are individuals like widows, orphans, and migrants, who occupy particularly vulnerable positions, often without the means to protect or sustain themselves. In this context, the term signifies more than economic poverty; it reflects the broader social and existential fragility that Jesus sought to address.

The Second Vatican Council, through its document *Gravissimum Educationis*, underscores the Church’s responsibility to assist Catholic schools and universities in prioritising its mission to educate and serve the poor. Catholic educational institutions are entrusted with a special commission to offer their services first and foremost to the poor and primarily those in need. The document defines the “poor” not only as individuals who are lacking in material resources but also extends the

care for those who experiencing other forms of poverty. These include individuals who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family and others – *psycho-social poverty*, as well as those who are strangers to the gift of Faith, suffering from *spiritual poverty* (Second Vatican Council; 1965a: 9).

i. Material Poverty

The Catholic Church has been at the forefront of the field of education, with a commitment deeply rooted in its teaching on human dignity and the preferential option for the poor (Pope John Paul II; 1997:42, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004, §182). This mission has been evident since the Middle Ages, largely through the service of religious congregations and missionaries. They have established ecclesial universities, cathedral schools, and monastic formation centres. These institutions were not only focused on academic instruction but were also deeply committed to the educational apostolate, particularly those who were economically marginalised and disadvantaged. As such, many of these educational missions of religious congregations were dedicated to serving children of the poor who could not afford to receive a systematic education due to financial difficulties. This mission reflects the Church's teaching on the inviolable dignity of every person, allowing them to be educated and fully realise their dignity and equipping them to handle the complexities of modern society (CCE; 2002:30).

This is also to recognise the countless religious orders and congregations established and dedicated to the majority of Catholic educational institutions as a mission response to assist the growing number of individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Catholic schools have their roots in the mission of providing education for all, with preferential options for the poor and weakest to take them out of poverty. The mandate of the Church to prioritise serving the poor is a manifestation of Christ's love for those treated by society as the least. By offering education opportunities, vocational training, and Christian formation in marginalised areas, Catholic education seeks to uplift individuals and entire communities, enabling them to rise out of poverty and social exclusion (CCE; 1997: 15).

Even for Catholic schools who not necessarily located in marginalised areas, the preferential option for the poor is still present. Stephen McKinney (2021:200) highlights in his case study of Catholic schools that these institutions placed the most vulnerable young people especially those who are suffering material poverty at the heart of the educational mission by providing the special support they require. Catholic schools made deliberate decisions to allocate substantial professional and material resources to assist these students, and by doing so, act in solidarity with the poor and the most vulnerable - those who might otherwise be excluded or even self-exclude. Catholic educational institutions ensure that these young people remain fully included in the life of the Catholic schools. The concept of the preferential option for the poor, central to the ethos and distinctive nature of Catholic education is rooted in the scriptural call to care for the poor and the marginalised, embodying the Church's commitment to social justice and the dignity of every person.

ii. Psycho-Social Poverty

As previously discussed, the Church's teaching on the preferential option for the poor is not limited to those who are materially impoverished. Another key aspect of respecting human dignity is acceptance and belonging within society. In its recent document, the Congregation for Catholic Education (2021) addresses these principles in its instruction on the use of distance learning, acknowledging the evolving academic culture and practices in our modern digital world. The document emphasised that Catholic education must adapt to the "signs of the times" in order to continue its mission to the new stage of Spirit-filled evangelisation and continue the goals of Christian formation. It calls for a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform in renewing the educational systems in a way that reaches more people, especially those on the peripheries – those who are experiencing various forms of psycho-social poverty.

The Congregation for Catholic Education described this type of poverty as:

The human peripheries, which include those conditions of existence marked by marginalization, abandonment, pain, deprivation, loss of meaning and hope. The poor, the sick, the marginalized, migrants, itinerants, circus

workers, stateless people, prisoners, people who are alone, and those who live and work on the sea or on the streets are those who should be assisted; taken care of; and humanly, socially and spiritually helped (CCE;2021:5).

The Catholic Church is persistent in encouraging more lay Catholic teachers to engage more actively in the mission of education and formation, both in Catholic education and in broader educational settings. The daily efforts of these educators whether in formal academic pedagogy or informal pastoral guidance, serve as a living testimony of God's love for young people, especially those who feel unloved and excluded. The Church encourages Catholic educators to actively reach out to students and young people who are most affected by social isolation, bullying, and discrimination. These young people in need of love are considered living in another form of poverty. The love and care shown by educators exemplify the words of St. John Bosco, "Young people not only need to be loved but should know they are loved" (CCE;2019:57).

Catholic education is not removed from wider modern problems concerning schools and society today. It aims to promote the full development of each person - male and female – in accordance with their unique dignity. Differences in gender are part of the uniqueness and diversity of God's design. No gender is inferior to the other. Catholic education encourages mutual understanding and recognises the complementary nature of men and women; different yet equal in dignity. It seeks to create an understanding that there is reciprocal completion in their diversity. Males and females are similar and dissimilar at the same time; not identical but the same in dignity as a person (SCCE; 1983: 25).

Catholic educational institutions are called to bravely serve all students, including those who experience same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria³. In Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* underscores the importance of respecting the dignity of every person "regardless of sexual orientation", and stresses the need to avoid "every sign of unjust discrimination" and "any form of aggression and violence". It encourages respectful accompaniment to students and their families so

³ Gender dysphoria is a term that describes a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. (NHS UK)

that individuals with homosexual orientation can receive the necessary support to understand and fulfil God's will in their lives (Pope Francis; 2016:p250)

Supporting these students requires special attention and delicate care, balancing the Christian values of inclusion and respect for human dignity with fidelity to the Christian faith. Catholic educators must uphold the truth of the Christian faith while sincerely accompanying students in their personal journeys. This includes recognising their struggles without confusing Christian love with false compassion. Educators must resist the pressure to compromise their faith, even in the face of public criticism or legal challenges, and instead present the Christian message with clarity and charity through their actions. (Guernsey; 2016: 135).

iii. Spiritual poverty

In contemporary society, a different kind of poverty is prevalent, not the poverty of material deprivation but the poverty of having no one and the absence of God in their life. There are more and more people experiencing poverty of isolation, loneliness and spiritual emptiness or the absence of God in one's life. Pope Francis (2016:43) described this as a profound poverty of our time, where individuals suffer from being "strangers to the gift of faith." This spiritual poverty is often rooted in the breakdown of families, social injustice, exclusion, and the widespread loss of faith in modern culture (Pope Francis; 2016: 43).

Catholic schools play a vital role in addressing this contemporary kind of poverty – spiritual poverty. Educational institutions are increasingly the central feature of the life of the Catholic Church due to the reality that many baptised Catholics, particularly those who are baptised but distanced from the Church and those who do not belong to any religion and faith, serve as the primary and only encounter with Christian faith and spiritual nourishment (Whittle; 2017: 1). The commitment of Catholic education to serve the poor extends beyond the materially disadvantaged to those experiencing spiritual poverty of being far from the faith and in need of spiritual renewal. This mission is integral to the Church's goal of building up the kingdom of God (Grace; 2016:71).

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education has long emphasised that Catholic schools should prioritise the spiritual formation of all students, including those who are distant from or unfamiliar with the faith. The Catholic School (1977), the Congregation states that the preferential option for the poor must include those who are spiritually poor or of different faiths. Catholic educators are called to serve students with openness and respect, acknowledging the spiritual and moral values found in various cultures, upbringing, and religions.

In the certainty that the Spirit is at work in every person, the Catholic school offers itself to all, non-Christians included, with all its distinctive aims and means, acknowledging, preserving and promoting the spiritual and moral qualities, the social and cultural values, which characterise different civilisations (SCCE; 1977: 85).

Furthermore, the Congregation for Catholic Education (2013) highlights the importance of fostering dialogue with people of other faiths and cultures. Catholic schools must be places of inclusion, pluralism, and acceptance, where students learn to engage in respectful dialogue and share universal values such as solidarity, tolerance and freedom. The document stresses that understanding and respecting the beliefs of others is essential for creating a school environment that is open and welcoming to all.

The values of other cultures and religions must be respected and understood. Schools must become places of pluralism, where one learns to dialogue about the meanings that people of different religions attribute to their respective signs. This allows one to share universal values, such as solidarity, tolerance and freedom (CCE;2013:63).

As the world continues to change rapidly, Catholic schools must remain steadfast in their commitment to the spiritual and religious formation of the young generation. This responsibility requires serious dedication and should not be taken lightly. Catholic educators must be duly prepared for the challenges posed by contemporary ideologies and cultural shifts. They need to adopt new methodologies, communicate in accessible and non-threatening language, and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively accompany students on their journey of faith (CCE;2007:20).

D. SOLIDARITY IN THE COMMUNITY

While Catholic education aims to uphold the dignity of every individual and provide services, especially to the most vulnerable, it is also true that many of the well-known and prestigious Catholic schools in the Philippines primarily serve the wealthy. Catholic education in the Philippines largely relies on tuition fees to sustain its operations. As a result, schools frequently raise tuition annually to cover operational costs. This creates an ongoing challenge of balancing the need to increase tuition to maintain the quality of education and ensure the institution's continued operation. This has contributed to a notable decline in student enrolment driven by rising tuition fees that many families cannot afford making it more exclusive and catering for the wealthy. However, despite financial challenges and limited government support, Catholic educational institutions bear a moral responsibility to instil in the students an awareness of their privilege. This awareness comes with a sense of duty to use their advantages for the greater good, nurturing a socially aware and responsible attitude among students.

At the heart of Catholic education is the commitment to forming the whole person. – intellectually, morally, and spiritually. In *Newman: The Heart of Holiness*, Mgr. Roderick Strange (2019:113-129) insists that Newman adopts such a holistic (whole person) perspective, especially in the context of the interrelationship between intellectual and moral or spiritual formation. Newman himself (2023:12-13) stated:

Devotion is not a sort of finish given to the sciences; nor is science a sort of feather in the cap, if I may so express myself, an ornament and set-off to devotion. I want the intellectual layman to be religious, and the devout ecclesiastic to be intellectual.

Commenting on this citation, Strange (2019:125) insists that “Newman’s incarnational vision was evident, the intellectual and the moral, the secular and the sacred, the seen and the unseen, united to the benefit of them both.”

Relating a holistic perspective specifically to schools, James Arthur (1995:246), in *The Ebbing Tide*, argues that “the documents of Vatican II overwhelmingly support a holistic model of Catholic education, providing a statement of philosophy and goals which express the holistic principles to which the Catholic school should be committed.”

Contrasting the holistic model with two others (“dualistic” and “pluralistic”, both of which he critiques extensively), Arthur (1995:233) maintains that:

The holistic approach is concerned with the transmission, from generation to generation, of the Catholic faith and culture – its beliefs, values, character and norms of conduct – within a Catholic educational setting. It aims for a deep interior acceptance of the Catholic faith, so that as the pupil matures, they accept it as true and freely use it to guide their conduct.

While recognising the seminal influence of Vatican II in articulating a holistic vision, Lydon (2011:18) asserts that, in the context of education for all (mass education), such a vision emerged with the founding of teaching religious orders in the 19th century. St John Bosco, for example, believed firmly that to educate means to prevent the exclusion of young people from the social, cultural and political life and to enable young people to play their role in the transformation of society. Such empowerment presupposed a holistic approach to education, integrating both religious and human formation, enabling each individual to fulfil their unique calling. It also presupposes a willingness on the part of the educator to accompany young people on their journey of discernment.

For Lydon, accompaniment constitutes *the* significant characteristic of a holistic perspective. In *The Perennial Impact of Salesian Accompaniment in a Context of Detraditionalisation* (2023:8) he insists that:

In a Salesian context, there is a consistent focus on the value of engagement beyond the academic curriculum, reflecting a holistic perspective that focuses on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the student alongside the academic curriculum. In the atmosphere engendered by constructive extra-curricular engagement, the spiritual development of students was architectonic, encapsulated in the aphorism “honest citizens and good Christians”. Within this system, as in the case of that of other religious

orders, the teacher must aim to be a role model, breathing life into individuals and groups which make up the educating community.

The Synod of Bishops on Young People (2018) appeared to encapsulate St John Bosco's vision in maintaining that accompaniment does not stop simply with the spiritual but must have a wider holistic impact:

Accompaniment cannot limit itself to the path of spiritual growth and to the practices of the Christian life. Equally fruitful is accompaniment along the path of gradual assumption of responsibilities within society, for example in the professional sphere or in socio-political engagement (para. 94).

This sentiment resonates with the maxim of Salesian education to form *good Christians and honest citizens*⁴ and with St John Bosco's insistence on the importance of good adult role models. Louis Grech (2019:78) encapsulates Bosco's insistence in the following terms:

St John Bosco, with his gift as an accompanier of young people, has left the Church and his Salesians a rich tradition...Bosco believes that it is not doing something for young people that counts but being someone to them. It is not what we do for them, it is *who we are to them*.

The notion of accompaniment is especially significant in the context of this thesis which seeks to explore the effects and influences of Catholic education in the Philippines in forming women leaders.

This holistic formation, therefore, seeks to educate students not only for personal success but also for active participation in the community. Solidarity in the community is another distinctive nature of Catholic education. It aims to instil solidarity among students, guiding them to engage meaningfully with others within their community. Catholic educators must teach students the importance of collaboration and respect for others, recognising that they are part of a bigger community and broader society. In doing so, Catholic schools help shape individuals

⁴ This seminal aim of the Salesian educational system permeates primary and secondary Salesian sources. The phrase first appeared in St John Bosco's 'Plan for the Regulation of the Oratory' in 1854 and was cited in Lemoyne, G., ed. 1989. *Memorie Biografiche di don Giovanni Bosco/The Biographical Memoirs of St John Bosco*. New Rochelle: Salesian Publications, Volume II, p. 46).

who are not only educated but also committed to building a more just and collaborative society.

Intercultural dialogue and relationships are important components of the distinctive nature of Catholic education of solidarity in the community. It involves stakeholders in the education formation, including students, parents – as the first educators, teachers, school leaders, and the Church such as ecclesiastical commissions, and other organisations and groups involved in the pastoral formation and care of the students. The Congregation for Catholic Education (2013:i) emphasised that this dialogue fosters a sense of belonging to one human family, where solidarity is rooted in justice and peace.

The experience of intercultural relationships, just like human development, is profoundly understood only in light of the inclusion of individuals and peoples in the one human family, founded on solidarity and on the fundamental values of justice and peace (CCE; 2013:37).

In the Catholic perspective, education is an inalienable right of every individual. Part of this right is the responsibility of Catholic education to form students as individuals who, beyond personal achievement, are capable of living in solidarity with others as members of the community. With the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and sciences of teaching, to foster a well-rounded development of students' physical, moral, and intellectual abilities. This holistic formation equips them with a mature sense of responsibility as Christians, recognising their obligation to contribute to the welfare of society (Second Vatican Council;1965a:1).

There are a number of key partners who contribute to the success of Christian formation. First, families play a foundational role, as parents are the primary educators of their children. They are called to create a family environment centred on God's love characterised by respect for others. Second, the Church's mission and duty to preach the Gospel supports parents by providing guidance for the Christian formation of their children. Lastly, civil society plays a role in promoting the common good, emphasising the shared responsibility of all sectors in educating responsible citizens (McKinney; 2011: 150).

Sincere solidarity in a community requires the collaboration of multiple sectors, including local and national governments, faith-based organisations, and Catholic educational institutions. Addressing major societal issues such as poverty demands cooperation setting aside theological, political, and social divides. Catholic schools and Church-based organisations must look both inward and outward, assessing where they can improve and identifying partners that can help and complement their efforts. This approach is exemplified by organisations like CAFOD, Caritas Internationalis, and Catholic Relief Services (Timms; 2019: 184).

Solidarity in the community in its fullest sense extends across religious, political, social, economic, and professional realms. An inclusive environment of Catholic schools and universities where students come from different backgrounds opens an opportunity to break boundaries and form students to be in solidarity with each other and the wider community. This distinctive nature of Catholic education presents an alternative to the growing sense of rivalry and indifference that pervades a globalised world, where individuals may live increasingly disconnected lives despite technological advances (CCE; 2013:5)

A compelling example of Catholic education's solidarity in action is the *Fe y Alegría* (Faith and Joy) network schools for the poor, established by the Jesuits in Latin America and the Caribbean. The schools operate under a partnership between the Catholic Church and the government, where the Jesuits build and oversee the schools, and the state covers the teachers' salaries. This agreement allows Jesuits to provide quality education to thousands of poor children who would otherwise lack access to such educational opportunities (Klaiber; 2013:144). It demonstrates how cooperation between the Church and civil authorities can alleviate educational inequities.

Catholic educational institutions, as members of the wider community, should maintain cordial and constructive dialogue with state and civil authorities. This relationship should be characterised by mutual respect, with each side recognising the other's role in serving the common good (CCE; 1997:17) Building partnerships

for education is not a new concept, but sustaining successful collaboration requires continuous efforts. Through shared visions, mutual support, and collaborative leadership among stakeholders, Catholic educational institutions can build the capacity for students to be resilient and be in solidarity with the community (Aefsky; 2017: 97).

Strong partnerships between Catholic education and families must also be prioritised, not only to address academic concerns but also to support the holistic education of the student. These partnerships are crucial in addressing sensitive issues such as religious and moral education, vocational guidance, and personal development (CCE; 1988; 42). According to the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988), students who are outstanding in their religious, moral, and academic lives often come from excellent family backgrounds that actively participate in their formation, within the Church and school providing complementary support to their upbringing solidarity (CCE;1988:18).

Ultimately, the Catholic school's influence on education is most clearly seen in its ability to create a school environment centred on Christian values. Educators and school leaders, in partnership with parents, guide students to grow in their faith while developing their unique personalities. As students acquire knowledge and skills, they are encouraged to be in solidarity with others and contribute meaningfully to society while fulfilling their Christian vocation (Second Vatican Council; 1965a: 8).

E. EDUCATION FOR THE COMMON GOOD

The ministry of Jesus Christ has always emphasised inclusivity and unity. His ministry was focused on the poor, the outcast, and the marginalised, grounded in the desire for unity (see John 17:20-21). In His prayer, Christ asked for unity not only among His disciples but for all of humanity, likening this unity to His relationship with the Father through the Holy Spirit. This call for unity is vividly reflected throughout the Gospel of John.

The early Christian community embodied this unity in their way of life. They did not see their resources as their own but shared them for the common good of the entire community. Acts 2:44 – 45 illustrates this beautifully. “All who shared faith owned everything in common. They sold their goods and possessions and distributed the proceeds among themselves according to each one needed”. This early model of shared life underscores the Christian commitment to the common good.

The concept of the common good has been further explored by theologians and academics, including Sullivan, who defined it as the network of social conditions that allow individuals and groups to flourish and live fully human lives. He describes this as an “Integral Human Development” and emphasises the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. The principles of subsidiarity are crucial in educational leadership formation, as decisions should be made at the most local level possible. Sullivan notes, “if solidarity is the principle behind the organisation of society from a vertical perspective, solidarity is the equivalent of the horizontal principle.” (Sullivan; 2001: 185)

The earliest written concept of the common good in the Christian tradition is in the Epistles of Barnabas written between 70 and 132AD, notes “Do not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourself, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together” (Staniforth; 1968, P.162, Chapter 4, verse 10 of the Epistles of Barnabas).

The distinctive feature of Catholic education is its mission and commitment to promoting the common good, as emphasised in the Second Vatican Council’s *Gaudium et Spes* §26. Catholic schools serve not only the needs of individuals but also the greater society by building up the Kingdom of God. Catholic school leaders and educators have a critical role in fostering a culture of unity and service, with special attention to the most vulnerable. Their mission is to ensure that education attends to the welfare of all, upholding the integrity in the daily operations of the education system (Oliva; 2022: 243)

Catholic educational institutions have historically contributed to scientific, technological, and societal advancements. Through their global presence, Catholic education has fostered a fruitful dialogue with people of all cultures, engaging in the search for meaning and purpose. However, Catholic education goes beyond intellectual achievements. As Pope John Paul II stated, Christian education must also integrate moral, spiritual, and religious dimensions to ensure the authentic good of both individuals and society (Pope John Paul II; 1990:7).

Catholic education takes part in the formation of a true community by educating its students to promote and work for the common good. True community is not formed merely by law or regulations but by the spirit of cooperation and responsibility. A community matures when it fosters values like solidarity and collaboration, always seeking to renew its commitment to the common good.

Consequently, it is not the law by itself or any juridical form that builds up a community and keeps it alive. Rather, the spirit of the law creates active and responsible citizens, precisely in the measure in which the law is at the service of the common good and puts everyone in a condition of reciprocity. Therefore, a community's identity is mature to the extent that it takes on and continually and faithfully seeks to renew the values of cooperation and solidarity (CCE;2013:49).

Recognising that parents are the primary educators of their children, Catholic education emphasises the importance of family in the educational process. However, the Church acknowledges that parents need the support of the broader community in preparing their children to become witnesses of Christ to society and contributors to the common good. This helps in understanding that education for the common good is especially important for families and parents who did not receive the same formation in Catholic education (Second Vatican Council; 1965a: 8).

Catholic education's commitment to holistic education and the common good is integral to its mission of building the foretaste of heaven on earth. Policies in Catholic educational institutions should reflect this mission by striving to work for the

improvement of society in service to the Kingdom of God. It is an irreplaceable source of service, not only to the pupils and its other members but also to society (SCCE; 1977: 60).

In forming citizens, Catholic education aims to develop the intellectual, moral, social, and political dispositions necessary for a just society. Catholic schools also seek to introduce a Christian perspective on social problems, encouraging believers and non-believers alike to work together for social justice (Bryk, Lee, & Holland; 1993: 42).

In the Philippines, extreme poverty and inequality are stark realities that challenge the conscience. The marginalised include unemployed parents with large families, inner-city scavengers, out-of-school youth, the sick, the elderly, and displaced Indigenous groups. Many live in makeshift dwellings in slums near public railways, creeks, or dumpsites. They are often the victims of corruption, environmental degradation, and social inequities.

In response to these challenges, Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines have embraced the “preferential option for the poor” as it’s way of contributing to the common good. Across all educational levels, students, faculty, and staff engage in projects that serve the poor, both as academic requirements and voluntary acts of service. This apostolate is a vital part of the educational mission, involving students, educators, and religious leaders alike (Gutiérrez; 2009: 137).

True Christian education must serve society by forming students who see themselves as social beings, prepared to work for the common good. The Congregation for Catholic Education has emphasised that the concept of the common good extends beyond the present to the future generation. Today’s citizens must foster inclusivity and fraternity, not only with their contemporaries but also with future citizens of the world. Catholic schools play an important role in educating leaders who will respond to current needs with foresight and concern for all, without prejudice towards future generations (CCE; 2017:21)

Furthermore, Catholic schools educate not only for Christians but also students of other faiths or none. The Church, recognising its limitations in isolation, partners with the State to promote public welfare. As both government and society share the responsibility for education, the State is a natural collaborator in shaping citizens for the common good. Jesus' words, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's but give God what is God's" (Mark 12:17) and St. Paul's teaching that "All true, good authority that exists is established by God" (Romans 13:1), underscores the role of the State as the key partner of Catholic education in this mission of educating for the common good (Campbell; 2019:192).

F. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have explored the five distinctive natures of Catholic Education:

(1) Moral Formation in the faith. Catholic education places a strong emphasis on forming students in the Christian faith, nurturing their moral development, and guiding them toward understanding the message of salvation. The goal is to equip students with Christian values that will shape their personal and moral lives, preparing them for the future.

(2) Search for Excellence in Service. This distinctive nature focuses on the commitment of Catholic education to fostering both academic and personal excellence, driven by the mission of the Church to be a living witness of Christ to the world. By striving for excellence, Catholic educational institutions aim to prepare students not just for personal achievement but for meaningful contributions to society.

(3) Respect for Human Dignity. Catholic education recognises the inherent dignity of every individual, grounded on the Christian teaching that everyone is created in the image and likeness of God. Regardless of students' religion, social status, race, or background, Catholic educational institutions foster an inclusive environment. This distinctive nature also aligns with Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the preferential option for the poor, as the schools serve the weakest and marginalised members of society by addressing various forms of poverty – material, psycho-social, and spiritual poverty. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principles are derived from key Church

documents including *Rerum Novarum* (1891), *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), *Centesimus Annus* (1991), and the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004).

(4) Solidarity in the community. This section discussed on the reality that Catholic education is not separate from the wider society. It recognises the need to be fully integrated into the wider community in order for it to be successful in its mission of forming the students and being of service to others. This is only possible with the collaboration and solidarity with the different stakeholders in the life of the students and the society.

(5) Education for the common good. Rooted in the mission of Christ, Catholic education seeks to form students not just for individual success but for the common good. This aspect extends beyond the boundaries of the Church, emphasising that students are educated to contribute to the common good of all.

While many other factors set Catholic education apart from other educational institutions, this chapter highlights its core identity and mission that its service and ethos are centred on Christ and His great commission to be the living witnesses of His love to all. The distinctiveness of being educated in Catholic institutions is a gift to and for the wider world, these gifts are not opposed to the welfare of society beyond the confines of the Church (Campbell; 2017: 31).

III. LEADERSHIP: A SACRAMENTAL VISION

To effectively prepare students in Catholic education to become good leaders, it is crucial to define the type of leadership they should embody. Given that Catholic education is deeply rooted in the Christian faith, understanding leadership from a Christian perspective is essential. One gains a full understanding of the true nature of leadership from the Christian perspective by seeing it from a sacramental point of view. Sacramental vision is seeing and experiencing the holiness and mission of the task of being a leader and making present the leadership of Christ in all aspects of their roles and responsibilities. This chapter will examine the sacramental vision of leadership by exploring how Jesus modelled authority, leadership, service, and relationship with others, offering a foundation for forming leaders in a way that aligns with the values of faith and service central to Catholic teachings.

The sacramental vision of leadership becomes real through the realisation that at its core is the communion of humanity with God, in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus the “Word made flesh” (John 1:14), is the sacramental presence of God in the world. He reveals that “God is with us” (Matthew 1:23) in everything He says and does. Through Him, the Church is called to full participation and to be a living sacrament of Christ, continuing His mission as the “Body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14) by manifesting God’s reign in the world. The goal of Catholic education is that, whether students are Catholic or not – and especially for those who are – they will be formed by a model of sacramental vision of Christ’s leadership that is reflected in their morals, ethics, and service to society.

The Catholic Church teaches that through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, priests and bishops are conformed to Christ in such a way that they act “In Persona Christi” – in the person of Christ (Second Vatican Council; 1965f; 2). However, the Church also recognised that in many regions of the world, where priests are few or lack the freedom to minister, the laity plays a crucial role in maintaining and advancing the Church’s mission not only in matters of the faith but also in different sectors of society (Second Vatican Council; 1965b:1).

The word “laity” comes from the Greek word *laikos*, **λαϊκός** meaning “of the people” and *laos*, **λαός** meaning “the people at large”. This term has deep Biblical roots, referring to the community of God’s people in both the Old and New Testaments (Schulyer; 1959: 291). By virtue of their baptism, all Christians – both clergy and laity, share in the mission Christ gave His disciples – to proclaim the Gospel and build a relationship with others as brothers and sisters in the faith and are invited to a sincere collaboration with one another. This mission extends beyond priests and Church authorities to every baptised person. Lay people are called to take up leadership roles within their families, professions, and communities, bearing witness to their faith and leading others especially those who are under their care toward Christ and make this life a fulfilment of God’s kingdom (Second Vatican Council; 1965d: 21).

Catholic education plays a vital role in preparing students for leadership by shaping them to model the example of Christ. To achieve this, it must provide an environment where students can have a meaningful encounter with Christ, fostering both personal growth and spiritual development essential for an authentic sacramental vision of leadership.

Pope Benedict XVI, then Cardinal Ratzinger (2001), emphasised that true Christian leadership can only emerge from an encounter with Christ. It is through this encounter that Christ initiates a relationship with the believer. Just as sacraments are received and not self-administered, leadership too is a gift bestowed by God. No one can baptise, ordain, or forgive their own sins. These actions require communion

with Christ and the Church. A true sacramental vision of leadership is recognising that leadership is a gift from God to oneself but also being a leader who is a gift of God to others. Therefore, one must move beyond the interior and self-fulfilment rather it should take a communal and Christ-centred form (Ratzinger; 2001:5).

Christian leadership is not merely a role to fulfil but an anointing from God and a call to do God's work in the world. It is a personal mission bestowed upon each leader, who is called to model their authority, service, behaviour, and relationship with others after that of Christ (Nuzzi; 1999: 261).

In following Christ's example, the laity exercises Christian leadership not only through religious acts but also through their daily lives. By virtue of their baptism and confirmation, they are anointed to carry out their apostolic mission of bringing the divine message of salvation to the world (CDF; 1994: 900). Through this anointing, individual Christians and communities of believers become a sacramental vision of Christ. They are called to live a life according to the sacramental presence of Christ within them. It is their sacred duty to manifest the Kingdom of God, engaging in both spiritual and temporal matters while guiding and leading others according to God's will (CDF; 1994:431)

Leadership from this sacramental perspective is not confined to Church or religious functions but extends into every aspect of life – authority, service, and communion with others. It requires seeing oneself and others not only as beings made in the image and likeness of God but as bearers of Christ Himself.

"And it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20)

They are in their own ways made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ (CDF; 1994: 897). This outlook transforms leadership into a divine authority, an act of service, and a relationship with Christ, especially in leading others and serving the least in society.

And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40).

Through Baptism, the lay faithful are made one body with Christ – the Church. Baptised Christians are at the front lines of the Church's life and are called to exercise Christian Leadership in their various spheres of influence. They are the animating principle of the Church and for the whole human society. Like the body, each one carries out its own part and function in the mission of the Church to the world (Pope John Paul II;1988: 9).

Leadership is ultimately a vocation, a call from God to participate in His mission of salvation and to make His Kingdom present in the world. Christians are called to actively take on leadership roles and be at the forefront of society's affairs. Leadership vocation is not merely a societal position or pursuit of a particular career path, but first and foremost a relationship with God. Christian leaders are called to embody the deep relationship within the Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (O'Malley; 2007:16) united in love. Their shared mission is to lead others in manifesting the love of God and making present the Kingdom of God here on earth (CDF; 1994: 989).

This chapter will explore the different ways Jesus demonstrated leadership, focusing on His Discerning Authority, Servant Leadership, and Inclusive Leadership. By studying these leadership approaches, we will gain insights into how these qualities can be embodied in contemporary leadership today and how Catholic education must prepare its students to exemplify the sacramental vision of leadership.

A. DISCERNING AUTHORITY

Throughout the Gospels, it is clear that Jesus exercised a unique and “*discerning authority*”. This sacramental vision of leadership can be understood in two key aspects: Authority and Discernment.

In many Gospel accounts, we see Jesus exercising His authority as the Son of God (John 5: 16 – 30). He taught with great authority, even in the presence of great scholars, and religious leaders of His time, drawing a multitude of followers. His words carried great power, as He commanded demons, restored sight to the blind, raised the dead back to life, and calmed the storm. His authority was so extraordinary that people marvelled, saying “What is this? A new teaching - and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” (Mark 1:27)

In a leadership role, it is easy to focus on the authority and power that comes with the position. However, Christ’s leadership goes beyond mere authority. Despite the magnitude of His power, Jesus’ authority was unique. The uniqueness of His power lies in His profound discernment, always guided by the Holy Spirit, knowing when and how to exercise His authority. He demonstrated an authority that was often expressed through acts of compassion as a manifestation of God’s love for all. For example, in Luke 5:12 -14, when a man with leprosy approached Jesus, pleading for healing, Jesus responded with both authority and empathy, “I am willing; be cleansed.” He healed this man instantly and instructed him to follow the law of Moses as a testimony to the priests.

Similarly, Jesus demonstrated His authority and compassion towards a grieving widow whose only son had died. As described in the Gospel of Luke, soon after entering the town of Nain, Jesus encountered a funeral procession for the widow’s son. Moved by her sorrow, He told her, “Do not weep” and with great compassion, He approached her and touched the bier. Then, with His authority, He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise,” bringing the young man back to life (Luke 7:11-14). This moment reveals Jesus’ deep compassion and power to restore life, both physically and spiritually.

Jesus also demonstrated discerning authority when He chose to dine with Zacchaeus, an outcast who was despised for his reputation as a sinner and his background as a tax collector. As He passed through Jericho, Jesus noticed Zacchaeus, a wealthy chief tax collector, who had climbed a sycamore tree to catch

a glimpse of Him. Despite Zacchaeus' unpopular status, Jesus looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." Though the crowd murmured about His association with a sinner, Zacchaeus, moved by Jesus' acceptance, declared that he would give half of his possessions to the poor and repay four times what he had cheated from anyone. Jesus responded, "Today salvation has come to this house, for this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:1-10). This encounter highlights Jesus' ability to see beyond social judgement, offering redemption, and grace to those deemed unworthy by others.

Jesus' discerning authority extended beyond healing the sick, comforting the suffering, consoling the poor, and reaching out to society's outcasts. He exercised His authority with a deep sense of justice, never resorting to intimidation or violence. Instead, He led through love and humility, as Girzone (1998:129) notes, His authority did not seek to dominate but to discern and inspire transformation. This is exemplified in the story of the woman caught in adultery.

When the religious leaders brought the woman before Jesus, citing the Law of Moses, which demanded she be stoned, they sought to trap Him. Instead of responding immediately, Jesus calmly wrote in the dust, allowing space for reflection. Then, He spoke: "Let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone." His words disarmed the crowd, leading her accusers to leave one by one. Left alone with the woman, Jesus asked, "Where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" When she answered, "No one, Lord," He responded, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more" (John 8:1-11). Through this, Jesus demonstrated a powerful and discerning authority that sought mercy, redemption, and justice, rather than judgement and condemnation.

In these ways, Jesus modelled a leadership that balanced power with discernment and authority with compassion, mercy, and justice demonstrating a transformative approach to leadership that continues to inspire today. This sacramental vision of Discerning Authority should be reflected in Catholic education, where educators and

school leaders play a vital role in shaping students for future leadership roles. While preparing students to exercise authority, it is crucial to instil in them the ability to discern how to use that power wisely, guided by the Holy Spirit and the values they have learned through their Catholic education. This approach encourages leadership that exercises authority but also has the humility to seek guidance and discern the right decisions and approach necessary for the situation.

Jesus' authority came from God the Father (John 5:43) and was guided by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1). He assured His disciples that they too were given this authority to perform great work in His name, promising the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit as their helper and advocate (John 14:16).

Jesus' "Discerning Authority" can be likened to the *Situational Leadership Theory* developed by and studied by Kenneth Blanchard and Paul Hersey. This leadership model suggests that effective leaders adjust their style according to the capabilities of their followers, the context of the situation, or the urgency of the task (Centre for Leadership Studies; 2021: Online). However, Jesus' discerning authority is not just merely adjusting leadership style according to the situation rather the focus of this sacramental vision of leadership is the value of discernment while in authority.

Discernment is the ability to recognise the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and a discerning leader should exercise it regularly, not only in major decisions but also in the everyday workings of the organisation or community. It guides how leaders relate to each person, recognising that every member of the community is entrusted to their care by God.

Moreover, discernment is not just an occasional practice but a way of life. It is essential not only in extraordinary moments, such as when resolving significant problems or making critical decisions but also in the small, everyday matters that reflect spiritual growth. It helps us remain attuned to God's timing, so we don't miss His grace or the opportunities He offers for growth. Often, discernment is exercised in seemingly minor or irrelevant situations, because the true greatness of spirit is revealed in the simple realities of daily life (Synod of Bishops; 2018b:111)

When leaders see their authority and power as a divine gift and mission, they are better able to model Christ's discerning authority and exercise the Christian principles of discernment. Discernment, which comes through grace and wisdom, enables a leader to choose the appropriate actions and approaches for each situation and individual under their care. Whether ordained or lay leaders, all Christians are called to engage in fruitful dialogue with others. Leadership decisions should be made in consultation with others and guided by the Holy Spirit and the desire to follow the will of God the Father. The authority given to leaders is meant to serve the process of discernment and well-being of the entire community. It involves listening attentively to the Spirit and responding to what is best for the community (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life; 2008: 20).

It is not only through the sacraments and ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and guides God's people, enriching them with virtues. God has endowed every individual with unique gifts, distributed according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:11). These gifts equip people for various tasks and responsibilities that contribute to the building of the Kingdom of God, both in spiritual and temporal matters. The Second Vatican Council (1964: 28) emphasises that God dispenses special graces to the faithful of every rank and vocation, enabling them to serve in their specific roles.

Christians are called to lead with the same "discerning authority" that Jesus exemplified. Leadership, in the Christian context, is a mission given by God. Each leader is entrusted with the responsibility to exercise discernment and authority, recognising when to act, how to lead, and how to inspire those in their care. This discernment is a grace that enables leaders to understand the needs of each situation and the individual they lead.

Every individual may exercise leadership according to her or his capacity and scope of influence. Leadership is not restricted to a single individual. It can also be

exercised by groups or communities, each providing service and guidance within their own contexts, whether in organisations, institutions, or society at large. Leaders are called to support, encourage and inspire others to achieve their fullest potential and work towards a common goal (Davies; 2005:2).

Despite the constant changes and complexities of society, it is still very important to hold on to something constant. Christian leaders must hold fast to enduring values in the Christian faith. It is crucial to discern and apply these permanent Christian principles and truth in a way that meets the needs of the contemporary world. Leaders have a duty to evaluate each situation, “scrutinise the signs of the times,” and interpret them in the light of the Gospel (Second Vatican Council; 1965c: 4).

Christian leaders, especially those who are tasked to educate, are called to exercise authority as witnesses of truth and goodness. Authority, in this context, is a fruit of both experience, personal integrity and goodness. It is an expression of one’s act of love for God. Leaders must remain aware of their own limitations, but they are also called to constantly seek alignment with their mission through conscious discernment (CCE; 2008: p3).

Christian leaders especially those who are tasked to educate should dispense authoritativeness as a witness of truth and goodness. The exercise of authority is the fruit of experience and competence, that is acquired above all with the coherence of one's own life, an expression of true love for God. Without unacknowledging the fact that one is fragile and can be mistaken, but should strive to constantly endeavour to consciously discern and be in tune with the mission (CCE; 2008; p1).

B. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

The second sacramental vision of leadership is “*Servant Leadership*”. Robert K. Greenleaf is often credited with coining the term “servant leadership” in his 1970

article "The Servant as Leader". According to Greenleaf (1977), the servant leader is a servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. Service is the driving force for his or her conscious choice to lead because of the desire to serve. The servant leader makes sure that other people's highest-priority needs are being served. The best test of servant leadership is effective when the people being served grow as a person and they themselves desire to become servants (Greenleaf; 1977: 27).

According to Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2010: 12), the very notion of "servant" and "leader" seems paradoxical, as these terms are often seen as opposites. Yet, when combined meaningfully, they create the concept of servant leadership. Wheeler (2012) further explained that the goal of this paradoxical leadership idea is to create a culture that promotes service, responsibility, and strong ethics within any organisation (Wheeler; 2012:14)

While Greenleaf is seen as a pioneer of the modern secular servant leadership movement, many find it remarkable that his concept of servant leadership was developed with little to no reference to religious frameworks or Christian traditions. However, Jesus has modelled a Christian leadership that centres on serving others throughout His ministry, especially those who are marginalised and neglected (Punnachet; 2009: 117 - 121).

Alongside Jesus' discerning authority, another defining aspect of Christ's leadership was His commitment to serving others. Although He is king and the Son of God, He emphasised that His leadership is not a privilege rather it is a service. In the Scripture, Jesus declared, "I have come to serve, not to be served" (Matthew 20:28), embodying the essence of servant leadership.

The sacramental vision of servant leadership is seeing it in the light of the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ. This is the model that Catholic education strives to form its students towards leadership. Jesus Christ taught and gave witness to how it is to be a servant leader. It is evident in His actions, relationships with His disciples,

and explicit teachings on service and humility that can be found in the Johannine Gospel and all the synoptic Gospels.

Jesus Christ exemplified servant leadership throughout His ministry. His actions, relationships with His disciples, and teachings on service and humility, as found in the Gospels, reveal a consistent commitment to serving others. In the Gospel of John, Jesus set a powerful example of servant leadership by washing the feet of His disciples. After completing this humble act, He told them:

“Do you understand what I have done for you?” You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (John 13:12-17)

In the synoptic Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus teaches that humility and servanthood are pathways to greatness in His Kingdom. When the mother of James and John requested that her son sit at his right and left hand, Jesus responded:

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:27-28; Mk 10: 44 - 45)

In another instance in the Gospel of Luke, during the Last Supper, when the disciples argued about who was the greatest among them, Jesus clarified that true greatness and authority come through service, not through domination:

“The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:25 -27)

In the Christian context, two distinctive characteristics of servant leadership stand out - humility and love. According to Chris Richardson (2011), humility, which is often absent in secular models of servant leadership, is a foundational element of

Christian servant leadership. Love, deeply rooted in Christian teachings, also shapes this form of leadership. Leadership, in this context, is exercised with benevolence, mercy, justice, self-sacrifice, and forgiveness (Richardson; 2011:120).

In today's world, it is increasingly important for the Church to prepare both clergy and laity – men and women alike, to take on leadership roles that promote the service for the common good. Catholic education worldwide plays an important role in equipping laypeople for this task. According to Pope John Paul II, formation towards leadership requires a deep understanding of the theology of the lay vocation along with the Church's social teachings, particularly the values that inform the Catholic understanding of natural law and the common good (Pope John Paul II; 1998: 6).

Catholic education is called to form students in the sacramental vision of servant leadership that is modelled after Christ's examples. A leadership that is not a privilege but a call to service. Catholic education should intentionally provide an environment and programmes that form future leaders whose primary focus is the well-being and good of others over self-centred interests. This formation should emphasise leadership that is wholly oriented toward serving the common good, driven by the works of the Holy Spirit.

School leaders especially the religious orders and priests who run the educational institutions play an important role in modelling the leadership of Christ. As Pope Francis (2014) explains, the heart of leadership is service. He stresses that leadership without service is meaningless: "If you have many qualities – communication skills, charisma, etc – but lack the spirit of service, your leadership will fail." True leadership, as modelled by Christ, is about doing the will of God for others in a spirit of humility, as illustrated by the many priests who tirelessly serve in their communities, even when it demands sacrifice (Pope Francis; 2014:15).

Though the term "servant leadership" was popularised by Greenleaf in the 1970's, the principles have long been central to Christian teachings. Jesus continually

emphasised that leadership is a form of service, prioritising compassion, humility, and self-sacrifice. He taught that true greatness is found not in dominance, but in serving others, especially those who are most in need – *the least, the last, and the lost*.

C. INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP - WELCOMING TO ALL

The Pentecostal experience of the first Christians lays the foundation for the Church's call to mission and its sense of evangelisation toward all. This mission is inclusive, inviting all to receive and to take part in the mission to bring the message of salvation to all. Following Pentecost, the Apostles gathered in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus and other disciples (Act 1:14), and were empowered as the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the form of tongues of fire (Acts 2:3). These flames are a symbol of God's divine love for all and an abundant gift of the Holy Spirit to fulfil the mission of spreading God's word (John 3: 34). It marked the beginning of the Church's missionary nature, established to extend God's love inclusively to all (Synod of Bishop; 2011).

Pope Francis, in his Jubilee Audience for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, speaks to the Church's role in embracing mercy through inclusion, stressing a welcoming approach devoid of discrimination. This inclusive love rejects labels based on social status, gender, race, language, or religion, seeing only "a person to be loved as God loves them" (Pope Francis; 2016b: 1). The Gospel invites believers to recognise humanity's shared story as one of inclusion by welcoming all, fostering a family of justice, solidarity, and peace within the Church as the Body of Christ.

Catholic education is called to form its students in the sacramental vision of inclusive leadership, rooted in the example of Christ's leadership that is welcoming to all and His desire to bring everyone to the kingdom of God. Jesus exemplified a leadership that is inclusive and without discrimination, by inviting each person to be part of the community and join in proclaiming the good news of salvation. His inclusivity extended beyond background, age, gender, or skills, calling to lead and take part in His mission.

Christ exercised His inclusive leadership when he called his first disciples. He chose ordinary fishermen rather than expected leaders like scholars or religious leaders to be His first disciples.

“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They responded immediately, leaving behind their nets to follow Him (Matthew 2:19 – 20).

Jesus also welcomed those who were considered inferior in society and looked beyond age. He embraced children, underscoring that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to all ages.

“Let the little children come to me... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs” (Matthew 19: 14 – 15)

This sacramental vision of inclusive leadership was lived out by the disciples by doing a mission beyond their comfort zone and extending the love of God to all. St. Paul underscores this inclusive model of leadership by affirming that, in Christ, no distinction of race, social status, or gender remains, rather uniting all in Him.

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

This sacramental vision of inclusive leadership further highlights that all are not only called to be part of the community but also called to be leaders, despite perceived inadequacies or differences. They are called to serve in the Christian community and wider society. Jesus overlooked human limitations, instead of focusing on each person’s willingness to respond to His call. This was exemplified by St. Paul’s reminder to the Corinthians that God calls even the weak and the unwise to serve, revealing divine strength through human limitations, “so that no one may boast before God”.

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:26 - 31)

St. Paul reminds us that the sacramental vision of Jesus' inclusive leadership calls every disciple, despite personal weaknesses, to a true Christian leadership that fosters unity and serves the common good.

Catholic education is invited to answer the inclusive call of Jesus Christ to form its students in an inclusive process that transcends the present generation, extending to future generations and encouraging them to be leaders who are also inclusive in their service by embracing the Christian value of respect and concern for all (CCE; 2017:21).

Jesus' inclusive leadership can be related to Purkey and Novak's Invitational Leadership Theory 1990, which encourages leaders to create environments that honour each individual's uniqueness and potential. Invitational Leadership affirms and fosters the potential of those they lead, creating an atmosphere that invites all stakeholders to succeed. In this approach, leaders send positive messages to inspire people to feel valued, capable, and responsible (Novak; 2005: 44).

According to Louise Stoll and Dean Fink (1997), effective invitational leadership is rooted in four essential principles: optimism, respect, trust, and intentionality.

1. Optimism – a belief in each person's ability to contribute to the group's success, seeing inherent potential in every individual.
2. Respect – Honouring the dignity of each person regardless of background with courtesy and care, even amidst dissent.
3. Trust – As "the highest form of human motivation," trust fosters an environment where people feel empowered to act with integrity. This trust is nurtured through supportive relationships, policies, and practices.
4. Intentionality – Maintaining a clear, unified mission. An inclusive leader supports ideas and practices aligned with the group's goals. (Stoll and Fink; 1997: 109)

Through this lens, invitational leadership mirrors Jesus' inclusive approach, creating a welcoming environment where diversity is celebrated, and everyone is encouraged to participate meaningfully in the group's mission. This inclusive leadership style is rooted in respect, empowerment, and intentionality reflecting a sacramental vision of leadership that aligns with Jesus' teachings and unifies people in purpose and service.

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter examined three sacramental visions of leadership modelled by Christ: Discerning Authority, Servant Leadership, and Inclusive Leadership. Each of these dimensions embodies how Christian leadership can be rooted in Christ's example while remaining relevant to the contemporary context.

Discerning Authority explored how Jesus, guided by the Holy Spirit, discerned how He exercised His power and authority with great compassion and empathy in challenging situations. This sacramental vision highlights the importance of discernment encouraging Catholic education to form leaders to act with moral clarity. By comparing Jesus' discerning authority to the modern Situational Leadership theory, we see how this sacramental vision of leadership values adaptability and responsiveness to the needs of others.

Servant Leadership underscored service as a cornerstone of Jesus' ministry, especially in His commitment to those who are marginalised and vulnerable. Christ's example teaches that leadership is rooted in humility, love, and deep commitment to the welfare of others. The sacramental vision of servant leadership was compared and finds a parallel in the secular concept of Servant Leadership as developed by Robert K. Greenleaf, where leaders prioritise service as an essential expression of their role, aiming to uplift and empower those who are under their care.

Inclusive leadership examines Jesus' welcoming approach, emphasising that His ministry was open to all, regardless of age, gender, race, or background. This vision of inclusivity is grounded in God's love for all and recognises the inherent dignity of

each person, created in God's image and likeness. The sacramental vision of Inclusive Leadership aligns with the principles of Invitational Leadership, which seeks to create an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute.

As part of their vocation, lay Christians are called to actively participate in societal structures, taking on leadership roles that promote the common good through religious, social, and political actions. Lay leaders are encouraged to ensure that their actions align with Gospel values and Church teachings, emphasising justice, peace, and respect for human dignity. Their task is to "animate temporal realities with Christian commitment, by which they show that they are witnesses and agents of peace and justice" (CDF; 1994:2442).

Lay Christian leaders serve a vital role in shaping the community, not only through direct leadership but as models of Christian values and faith. The relationships they foster inspire and guide the attitudes and actions of those within their communities or organisations, cultivating a sense of service for the common good (Second Vatican Council; 1965c: 37). The effectiveness of this leadership is evident in the quality of relationships within the community, the shared work ethics, and collective commitment to mission.

IV. WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN THE PHILIPPINES – A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the Second Vatican Council (1965b) decree on the apostolate of the laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, encourages wider participation of women both in the society and the Church. The document states: "Since in our times women have an ever more active role in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various fields of the Church's apostolate (1965b:9).

Until the nineteenth century, in many countries around the world, there was no conscious recognition or awareness of women's experiences in most intellectual and theological works. Gradually, however, women became more self-conscious about their role in society by agitating for change, and proper recognition and engaging more in the legal system, politics, business and the Church. As the participation of women in society expands, changes in their roles and leadership in society raise fundamental questions about how women lead and how their leadership is perceived by the greater community (Zikmund; 1985: 22).

Understanding the role of women, their leadership capacity, and their contribution to the ever-changing society is not an attempt to discredit the contribution of male leaders, nor to swing the pendulum of leadership towards the women's side exclusively. According to Richard Bauckham (2002), When we consider the roles of women in the Church and society, there are two sorts of possibilities. One is to view the role of women outside of their expected historical social role and the other is understanding and recognising that women play a special role and leadership within the historically and socially expected framework of their lives and the society (2002:xiv). It is important to recognise these two possibilities, to have a broader

view of the leadership role that women played in various stages of history. It can be reviewed from a radical and conservative point of view.

In recent history, There have been women who made a great mark and impact that transcended boundaries and time. These women have been admired for their strategic leadership, assertive communication, and ability to influence and inspire other people for the greater good. We have women like Mother Teresa, a Catholic nun who inspired the world with her dedication and service to the poor, her inspiration goes beyond any borders of religion; Marie Curie, a Polish-born chemist and physicist known for her research on radioactivity and contribution to science. She is the first woman to receive a Nobel Prize and went on to become the first person to be awarded a second Nobel Prize; Rosa Parks brought hope to the notion that one day, black and white people would be able to live together in harmony by insisting on her civil rights in a skin colour segregated bus. She soon became one of the most notable figures of the Civil Rights Movement, and Temple Grandin has become the voice of those who have special needs. She has become known for being a spokesperson and representative of people with autism spectrum disorder (Center for Management and Organization Effectiveness [CMOE] 2022: Online). These are just a few of the notable and inspiring women, who are leaders in their own rights. They were given opportunities to showcase the capabilities of women and make a mark in the roles that they played in society.

There are many ways to provide more opportunities for women to thrive and lead. Countries around the world are pushing the agenda of providing a gender-equal society. According to the United Nations, opportunities for women to be formed as leaders and valued members of society need to become a norm, sustainable, and accessible to all. One of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations (2021) is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The international organisation explained that “gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world”. It acknowledged the progress over the last decade more than ever more girls are being educated, women achieving more leadership positions, and

decreasing the number of forced early marriages. However, there is still a lot to be done (United Nations; 2021: Online).

A. WOMEN AS LEADERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines has consistently been ranking generally well in the international matrix of gender equality studies regularly being conducted by the World Economic Forum. The study looks into the different opportunities for women in various sectors of society. "The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the evolution of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions namely Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment and tracks the progress of each country towards closing these gaps over time.

In the 2018 global ranking result of the gender equality study indicated that the top four countries that achieved the most in closing the gender gap are the Nordic Countries, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland, respectively. The Philippines is ranked 8th in eliminating up to 80% of the gender disparity, while the United Kingdom ranked 15th, the United States at 51st and China at 103rd out of 149 countries considered in the study (World Economic Forum; 2018: 8)

However, in a recent study released in 2021, The Philippines' ranking slipped nine notches compared to the 2018 pre-pandemic position, placing the country at 17th among 156 countries. The World Economic Forum said the pandemic brought about by Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has pushed back gender parity in several economies and industries, "due to women being more frequently employed in sectors hardest hit by lockdowns combined with the additional pressures of providing care at home" adding the extra responsibilities of childcare and homeschooling while schools are closed (World Economic Forum; 2021:10).

Although the Philippines may have declined in its ranking in gender equality, opportunities for Filipino women to lead in various sectors of society are still very evident. One of which is Science and Engineering, according to the data released by the World Intellectual Property Organization in 2021, the Philippines together with Cuba, has the highest shares of female inventors among applicants for international

patents out of 74 countries Worldwide. It further explained that worldwide, the share of women applicants stood at only 17 per cent. The Philippines very much exceeded the global average with 38 per cent of inventors being female and more than half of all registered patent applicants are women (World Economic Forum 2022: Online).

Opportunities to lead for Filipino women are also evident in the corporate world. According to Grant Thornton International (2022), in their 2022 research on Women in Business, the Philippines is third in the World ranking among the list of countries which recorded the highest number of women leaders in mid-size firms. According to the surveys, senior leaders from 5,000 businesses across 29 economies, the Philippines has 39 per cent of senior leadership positions in the businesses included in the study are held by women. Grant Thornton said that although the number of female leaders in senior management roles dipped from 48 per cent in 2021 to 39 per cent in 2022, the country still retained its good ranking as third among the economies surveyed, dropping from ranking first in the 2021 study (Grant Thornton International; 2022: 12).

Education is another important factor in providing opportunities for women to become future leaders. The Philippine Statistic Authority (PSA) released data in 2011 on the educational attainment of women and men in the Philippines as part of the national census on Gender statistics. The statistics were gathered for the purpose of the Philippine national government's "Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 2 which aims to achieve universal primary education for all. Its target is for children everywhere, boys and girls alike will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling". The study revealed that women are more educated in the Philippines in terms of completing elementary, and secondary, and with a higher literacy rate compared to men. The data shows that 69.8% of females completed at least elementary education versus 65.1% of male counterparts; 41.1% of females completed secondary level, compared to males at 36.4%; 98.5% of females versus

97% of males have basic literacy and 94% female vs 88.7% male in terms of functional literacy⁵ (Philippines Statistics Authority; 2011: Online).

B. WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINES DURING THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

In the pre-colonial Philippine society, local towns were composed of family-based dwellings called "*Balangay*" or "*Barangay*". These settlements are organised according to kinship. These pre-colonial social structures gave equal importance to maternal and paternal lineage. "Datus" were recognized as the leaders, rulers, and monarchs of the community while the major representation of the status accorded to women in a Barangay is the "*Babaylan*". Babaylans are usually referred to as priestesses, mystical healers, or spiritual leaders of a tribe. The Babaylans equalled the power and influence of the Datus. Philippine historians also explained that Babaylans are more than just indigenous herbalists. "The persona of the *babaylan* embodied the traditional role of women in pre-colonial Philippine society: They performed vital functions and were recognized for their social and cultural leadership." They were considered doctors of the community, and their spiritual guidance is valued in the tribal villages. They are the ruling leaders in terms of culture, religion, medicine, and other theoretical knowledge of society (Hega, Alporha, and Evangelista; 2017:1).

Since the social structure of the pre-colonial Philippines followed a bilateral kinship system, men and women were viewed as equals. The role bestowed on women within their clan and community is very vital. Wives were treated as companions, not as slaves. The mother enjoyed the exclusive privilege of naming the children. Women had the right to own property and manage the economic stability of the family. There is no prohibition for her to be involved in the decision-making and management of the family's resources. The practice of the right of succession and

⁵ **Basic literacy or simple literacy** refers to the ability of a person 10 years old and over to read and write with understanding a simple message in any language or dialect. In this survey, basic literacy status of an individual was determined based on the respondents answer to the question "Can ____ read and write a simple message in any language or dialect?" **Functional literacy** refers to the ability of a person 10 to 64 years old who can read, write, compute and comprehend.

inheritance regardless of sex allowed women to succeed their fathers as rulers of tribes (Torralba-Titgemeyer; 1998: 2).

Hilton J. Aguja (2013) explain that women enjoyed a respected status before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores. The equality of men and women in the pre-colonized Philippine society is predicated on the notion of partnership in family and social roles. This notion of equality is reflected in the pre-Hispanic folk literary version of the account of creation entitled "*Si Malakas at si Maganda*". Malakas was the first man and Maganda was the first woman. The term "Malakas" means "strong" in the Filipino language, while "Maganda" means "beautiful". Both Malakas and Maganda were created at the same time, coming out together from bamboo that was split-pecked by the bird form - Deity of Peace. Unlike the Christian version of the creation story, this folklore demonstrates the absence of gender precedence from the pre-colonial mind, evident in how males and females emerged simultaneously and with parallel characteristics and importance. The egalitarian status in pre-colonial Philippines is not exclusive to the legend of "Si Malakas at si Maganda", it can also be found in other folklore, mythology, and superstitions whose translation vary from region to region in the whole archipelago (Aguja; 2013: 49).

C. WOMEN DURING THE SPANISH COLONIAL PHILIPPINES

In the Chronicles of Antonio Pigafetta, the influence and leadership of the women before and during the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores in 1521 was evident in the accounts of how the Philippines became a Christian nation.

Antonio Pigafetta was an Italian scholar and explorer, who joined the expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan. He served as an assistant and kept a detailed journal of their exploration from the western hemisphere to the east. These men completed the first circumnavigation of the world. Pigafetta's surviving journal is the source for much of what is known about Magellan and Elcano's voyage (Boruchoff; 2009: 172).

A few weeks after they arrived in the islands of the Philippines, Pigafetta narrated in his journal how the queen of the island was the reason why the first baptism to Christianity was permitted by the local tribes. He recounted that to gain the good graces of the queen of the island of Cebu, the Spanish explorers gifted her with an

image of Mary, a statue of the Child Jesus⁶, and the cross. The queen was moved with contrition and asked to be baptised together with the other women of her family and around 800 members of the tribe. She was given the Christian name, Johanna. The whole narration of the event was witnessed and documented:

After dinner, the priest and some of the others went ashore to baptize the queen, who came with forty women. We conducted her to the platform, and she was made to sit down upon a cushion, and the other women near her, until the priest should be ready. She was shown an image of our Lady, a very beautiful wooden child Jesus, and a cross. Thereupon, she was overcome with contrition and asked for baptism amid her tears. We named her Johanna, after the emperor's mother; her daughter, the wife of the prince, Catherina; the queen of Mazaua, Lisabeta; and the others, each their [distinctive] name. Counting men, women, and children, we baptized eight hundred souls. The queen was young and beautiful and was entirely covered with white and black cloth. Her mouth and nails were very red, while on her head she wore a large hat of palm leaves in the manner of a parasol, with a crown about it of the same leaves, like the tiara of the pope; and she never goes any place without such a one. She asked us to give her the little child Jesus to keep in place of her idols, and then she went away. In the afternoon, the king and queen, accompanied by numerous persons, came to the shore. Thereupon, the captain had many trombones of fire and large mortars discharged, by which they were most highly delighted. The captain and the king called one another brothers. That king's name was Raia Humabon. Before that week had gone, all the persons of that island, and some from the other island, were baptized. We burned one hamlet which was located on a neighbouring island, because it refused to obey the king or us. We set up the cross there for those people who were heathen. Had they been Moros, we would have erected a column there as a token of greater hardness, for the Moros are much harder to convert than the heathen. (Pigafetta; 1519-1521)

The Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan claimed the discovery of the islands named the archipelago "Las Islas Filipinas" (the Philippine Islands) after King Philip II (1527-1598) of Spain. Within twenty-five years of the first baptism in the Island of Cebu, half of the entire population of the Las Islas Filipinas, about a quarter of a million Filipinos were converted from indigenous folk religion to Christianity. Filipinos learnt about the Christian faith through the aid of catechism books such as "Doctrina Cristiana" (Christian Doctrine). The wide circulation, publication, and translation of

⁶ The statue of Child Jesus is still preserved and venerated in the Island of Cebu, Philippines, known as the Santo Niño De Cebu.

the catechetical material to Tagalog and other local dialects aided the rapid rate of baptism and conversion throughout the whole archipelago. (Library of Congress: 2018; Online).

The women of pre-colonial Philippine society occupied a highly esteemed position in their community and tribe. However, Aguja (2013) explained that in the advent of colonization, the Spaniards were very vocal about their disdain for the status of women but recognised the great intellectual superiority of Indigenous women no matter what class or social status they belonged to. The colonisers however also considered native women to be serious and formal partners in terms of contractual agreements therefore also saw the importance of involving them in social and religious activities (Aguja; 2013: 49).

Spanish chroniclers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have written various accounts of the Spanish colonial Philippines and native cultural practices. Since women were wearing native clothes made from palm leaves and almost naked, many chroniclers made negative remarks about the local's sense of modesty and chastity. Marriage practices and gender norms of the natives were not compatible with the Christian norm and early European context. According to Marya Camacho (2007), the Spanish context during that time viewed the most important feminine functions were centred on family and home, therefore requiring education on the Christian and European ideal of civilized life which includes sexual conduct, feminine decency, and domestic roles (Camacho; 2007: 55).

Freddie Obligacion (1997) initially, like some Filipino historians and feminist scholars believed that the arrival of the Spaniards and the introduction of Christianity slowed down if not put to a halt, the existing leadership positions of Filipino women. Many scholars believed that the teachings and practices of the Catholic faith became detrimental to the ambition, drive, and achievement of Filipino women. Aguja (2013) postulated that women were taught the common ideology of how Europeans perceived women should be in the 15th century. From the perspective of Spanish conquistadores, women of the Middle Ages were expected to be tied to the house, whose main role was to bear children and take care of the family. Women in that generation devoted most of their time to religion and took inspiration from the

martyrdom of saints which cultivated forbearance, meekness, and submissiveness obscuring in the process their capacity for greater involvement in things other than the things outside of the home and Church. This viewpoint is concurred by Obligacion (1997) further explaining that this belief is rooted in the emphasis of the Catholic teachings on female domesticity through constant reminders that women should strive to become excellent daughters, housewives, mothers, and servants of God. These teachings from the Church pulpit were reinforced by Spanish Catholic education which stressed women's obedience and subservience to males such as priests, colonial officers, their fathers, husbands, and elder brothers. Though these teachings are not wrong, the education of women during the Spanish regime was limited to rudimentary readings and arithmetic, home crafts, and Christian doctrines (Obligacion; 1997:12).

Though it may seem that the arrival of the Spaniards and coincidingly, the introduction of Christianity brought gender equality in the Philippines backwards, it is important to consider that the establishment of various Catholic institutions provided other opportunities and formation for women. To provide a brief context of the European Catholic context during that era, Elisabeth Clark and Herbert Richardson (1996) described that during the Middle Ages, it was a norm that women were not given as many rights compared to men and there was a lack of opportunity to be leaders. In the twelfth century, numerous medieval women actively chose religious life as preferable to marriage, because nunneries offered women opportunities to read and be educated. In the cloister, they are given some limited degree of autonomy over men that would likely have been denied them in the world outside the monastery. In England, about 120 new communities for women religious were founded during the twelfth century alone. Alternative to the convent were other forms of lay ascetic life attached to the convent without taking formal vows. Clark and Richardson (1996) further explained that because of their pious practices and mystic lifestyle, religious women are sought by many as spiritual guides. They have "the authority to speak and be heard, to have followers, to act as spiritual advisors, to heal the sick and to found convents and hospitals." Though these religious communities believed and claimed that these services were done out of duty for the Church and that the power and authority came from Jesus Christ, their leadership

and influence were more “public” than it was viewed. A few centuries after, the establishment of universities throughout Europe remained closed to women, thus making Churches and monasteries centres for female education, and many religious because famous for their theological writings (Clark and Richardson; 1996: 91-95).

Similarly, during the same period in the Philippines, Spaniards were adamant about taking full control of the whole archipelago and putting greater influence on the natives, hence the wide-scale spreading of the Christian faith and implementation of Catholic education systems to the native Filipinos. The role of native women in the Spanish colonial Philippines soon changed and the education in the Philippines had been altered and was based on Catholicism. Spanish missionaries established convents, seminaries, schools, and universities, which led to a rapid conversion of natives to Christianity and the spread of Catholic ideologies. Just like the majority of Europe, opportunities for higher learning were given priority to men and some females were educated in vocational schools to learn sewing, cooking and other home crafts, therefore, most women are directed to prioritising duties at home. The Philippines soon was controlled by the Spaniards and the Catholic Church became the predominant religion. Changes in the rights and roles of Filipino women changed and consequently were no longer permitted to hold high positions and participate in political activities (Saldua; 2012: 1).

Catholic religious orders and missionaries soon arrived in the country and established educational institutions, convents, and seminaries. In 1565 the very first formal school was opened in Cebu by the Augustinian missionaries. The massive conversion and spread of Christianity prompted Bishop Domingo Salazar, O.P. in 1581 to express to the King of Spain the need for a higher educational institution to educate men to become priests which resulted in the opening of the Jesuit-run seminaries and colleges, Colegio de San Ignacio, Manila in 1596 and Colegio de San Ildefonso, Cebu in 1598. In the year 1611, the Dominican Fathers established the University of Santo Tomas, now the oldest university in Asia. The university continues to exist up to the present and still is serving not only in the field of Catholic Education, but also in various fields such as sciences, law, engineering, and the arts (CBCP; 2012: Online).

Religious sisters also came and established various charitable institutions that help the poor. Some convents were converted into schools of art, shops for carpentry, and cloth factories. One of the charitable institutions is the Hermandad de Santa Misericordia (Sisterhood of Holy Mercy). It began as a charitable institution dedicated to the care of the sick and the orphans of Spanish soldiers but soon realised that other Spanish dwellers also desired to ensure the safety and education of their daughters, so they proposed the establishment of a girls' college. The plan came into reality in 1632 with the foundation of the Colegio de Santa Isabel, named after the wife of King Philip VI, Queen Isabel de Bourbon, dedicated to providing education for the daughters of Spanish dwellers in the Philippines, and orphans of soldiers in Spain's most distant colony. By royal decree, the college's name was changed to Real Colegio de Santa Isabel. It is one of the oldest girls' schools in the world. In the beginning, it was exclusive for Spanish girls, but in the later years, opened its doors for Spanish - Filipina girls. The records of its establishment can be found at the Archive of the Indies in Seville, Spain (Santa Isabel College of Manila: 2022: Online).

During the Spanish colonial period, natives of the Philippines were considered second-class citizens and were called "Indios". In the view of some historians, Indios were treated as inferior and were not given equal opportunities. Education was also limited to those with Spanish blood and elite Filipinos who could afford to study in Spain. Spanish authorities feared that once the lower working class received more education, it would lead the Indios to seek independence and they would lose control over the locals which would mean a loss of revenue for the Spanish Crown and the Church. In the latter half of the 1800s, more and more Filipino intellectuals and Filipino clergy grew increasingly critical of the colonisers' lifestyle and discrimination. Elite-educated Filipinos such as Jose Rizal have become bolder in their criticism by highlighting the corruption and hypocrisy of Spanish clergy and Spanish authority. He wrote two novels "Noli Me Tangere" (Touch Me Not) and "El Filibusterismo" (The Filibustering) exposing the abuses of the Spanish colonisers (Library of Congress; 2018: Online).

The abuse of power by the Spanish colonial authorities and Spanish clergy led to tensions and social upheavals in the Philippines. Despite the instruction and inculcation of the Spanish culture, native Filipino women are naturally warriors and resilient. Filipino women participated in the revolution against the Spanish authorities. Many women attended to the sick and the wounded, provided food and solicited money for the revolution. Women fought alongside men for the independence of the Philippines. One key and dangerous role of some Filipino women involved in the revolution was to secretly transmit communications and hide documents for the revolutionaries. Few actively fought and reached the rank of general in the revolutionary army. The list of prominent Filipino women who fought for independence includes Gabriela Silang, Gregoria de Jesus, Agueda Kahabagan, Teresa Magbanua, Melchora Aquino, and Trinidad Tecson among others (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; 2001: Online).

D. WOMEN DURING THE AMERICAN REGIME

Spanish presence in the Philippines comprises 377 years (1521) from the first arrival and baptism in the country, and 333 years (1565-1898) of Spanish rule. Roman Catholicism and the provision of Catholic education is one of the lasting legacy of the Spanish Colonialism and still remains a vital force in shaping the Philippine cultural landscape even during the American rule. During the transition from Spanish Rule to American Rule in the 1900s, the Philippines already had more women who completed some form of vocational education, compared to other Asian countries and other parts of the world. Women were educated to have skills in sewing, weaving, and other home crafts. These enabled many Filipino women to acquire great skills in weaving, using different kinds of local fibre like abaca, pineapple, silk, and cotton, to make a variety of cloths. They also excelled in making hats, cigar cases, mats, baskets, slippers, purses, umbrellas, seat covers, and other home materials. At the turn of the 19th century, manufacturing industries became highly dependent on the presence of women employees. Mothers and wives urged to improve the economic status of their families turned weaving and embroidery into a profitable business. Soon handmade products of Filipino women developed into one of the chief exports of the Philippines during the American period. The sheer number

of export goods made by local women proved the importance of their role in the economic development of the country (National Historical Commission of the Philippines; 2015: Online).

The Americans see the importance of educating and creating opportunities for natives to learn how to manage their businesses to increase the economic potential of the country and ease of trading. They introduced the American public education system⁷ by providing free education for all, at least in primary education. Through the American-patterned school system, every child was given the opportunity to be educated regardless of gender. Additionally, an enormous amount of effort was exerted to make English the new national language of the country, to replace the lingua franca at that time – Spanish and Tagalog. The Americans became successful in doubling the proportion of literate natives compared to the number during the Spanish period. Natives were taught business and agriculture for trading and food security in America. Filipino women were also able to earn degrees and become professionals. They became qualified teachers, trained nurses and medical practitioners to care for soldiers, and other retired Americans which prompted the establishment of the Philippine General Hospital (Hunt; 1988: 354).

Many women already received the now-called “informal” education from the Spanish Catholic missionaries and institutions, and more women were given opportunities to receive formal training and education during the American period. Charles Hunt (1988) further explained that the Americanized education system focused on material goals and worldly gains of being educated, attracting more Filipinos to be educated. With the expansion of more American public schools and the arrival of American Protestant education, the Catholic schools started to evaluate their curriculum to be competitive but did not want to just focus on worldly growth. The existing Catholic schools in the country became motivated to improve and modernise their course content by launching leadership curricula that are values and faith-driven. Filipino women were given more responsibilities as managers in different industries because of their leadership skills and good work ethics (Hunt; 1988: 362).

⁷ Public education means State-managed educational system

Though the American's intention in prioritisation of education was primarily a response to the colonial bureaucracy and economic demand for trade and commerce, this became responsible for the increase of female literacy rate, and the improvement of the influence of women in the society. Women were able to gain access to new types of work and careers that broke away from traditional women's roles. Women were also given opportunities to be in managerial positions as heads of businesses and were able to enter industries that are male-dominated like law and science. This rise in opportunity became the guiding light towards the independent Filipino women that we see today. (National Historical Commission of the Philippines; 2015: Online)

More and more women became educated around the country. These educated Filipino women were already actively involved in religious activities and public life by establishing schools, orphanages, hospitals, charities, and other social institutions. At that time, only literate men were allowed to vote and run for office. Due to their active participation in various social actions, multiple women's movements sprang up in 1910. These women's movements started demanding their rights to vote in the hope of further shedding off their status as second-class citizens. Filipino women enjoined and organised other women to form a bigger movement and fight for the right to suffrage, which led to the plebiscite in 1937. That same year the Philippine Women Suffrage law was passed (Aquino; 1994:36).

When World War II (1 September 1939 – 2 September 1945) broke out and the Japanese occupied the Philippines, women again fought alongside the men. After the war, Filipino women became more politically and socially involved. Women participated in the post-war government through the national elections in April 1946 and on July 4, 1946, the Philippines gained independence from the United States, and the Commonwealth of the Philippines became the Republic of the Philippines. Women started working for the government and even entering politics. Between 1946 and 1971, 26 women were elected into public office: 11 Congress Representatives, 7 senators, 6 governors and 2 city mayors (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; 2001: Online).

Many Filipino women played significant roles in the United Nations to advance women's global agenda. There is also great involvement and occupying key roles in the Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee as Chair and Experts. As early as 1964, Filipino women already occupied high positions in the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. There are more female employees than males in the Philippine government bureaucracy. In 1971, the last year of free elections happened before Martial Law was declared by Ferdinand Marcos in 1972 (Japan International Cooperation Agency; 2008; 6).

During the time of Martial Law, there were numerous human rights violations, corruption, and abuses of power by the cronies of the Marcos family (Inquirer; 2021b: Online). From the transition from the American commonwealth system to the Philippine Republic, the political structure of the country is modelled after the American system. However, because of the more than 300 years of Spanish Colonialism, the political culture in the Philippines has its roots in the oligarch system established during the Spanish period. Many of the political leaders are coming from oligarch families, creating political dynasties all over the country. With almost ninety percent of the population as baptised Catholics, the Church leaders have become a strong conscientious voice and guiding force of the nation. In 1986, to end the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos and restore democracy, the then Archbishop of Manila Jaime Cardinal Sin, requested corrupt leaders to step down from power. He led the mass prayer rally and non-violent movement against corrupt leadership in front of a Catholic Church located at a major thoroughfare in Manila called Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA). The Church was also called for honouring the result of the snap election, electing Corazon Aquino, the wife of the assassinated former senator and opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr (Nepstad; 2011: 111).

Jaylyn Silvestre (2002) clarified that many scholars believed that the rise to power of Corazon Aquino would not have succeeded without the support of the Catholic Church. Though she came from a prominent family, the influence of the Church leaders to support a female candidate was crucial and the game changer. Many were questioning why the Church was pushing for a woman and housewife to replace the dictator. Corazon Aquino is the total opposite of the characteristics and image of the

pompous Imelda Marcos and her family despite coming from an oligarch background, she was characterised as morally upright and devout Catholic. Silvestre further claimed that The Catholic Church's concept of a woman being morally superior to a man perhaps explains the Church's support of women candidates in movements against corruption. This has also become the focal point of support for the Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in ousting the plunderer Joseph Ejercito Estrada (Silvestre; 2002: 166).

E. CONCLUSION

The initial hypothesis of Obligacion (1997) was that the introduction of Catholicism in the country was detrimental to the empowerment of women. He believed that homilies and Christian traditions instil the ideology and teaching of submissiveness of women, and blind full surrender to the will of God which resulted in laziness, abandonment of self-determination and lack of drive to pursue the desired life. However, after conducting empirical research, Obligacion found that the data suggests that faith and personal determination can co-exist. His research findings suggest that though the Christian faith teaches surrendering and entrusting one's life to God, does not mean abandonment of self-respect and control of one's life. He explained that it is important to have a reinterpretation of the notion of faith and confidence in God's plan as interpreted by devout Catholic Filipino women as acceptance of the things that cannot be changed. His research findings also suggested that Faith encourages a positive self-image. Through the Christian teaching that men and women are created in the image and likeness of God, women especially those who are marginalised, poor and suffering can draw motivation from the teaching that they share the qualities of God and can persevere, maintain self-confidence, and believe in their self-worth. He also explained that because of the Christian teachings, respect for human dignity and appreciation for one's abilities is potentially instilled. (Obligacion; 1997: 24)

Though the Catholic Church in the Philippines may have a history of abuses and shortcomings, through the spiritual guidance and introduction of institutionalised learning, together with its effort to instil Christian values in the Filipino people, the

Catholic Church has played an important role in the formation and empowerment of women in the country.

In the letter of Pope John Paul II to Women (1995b) during the Fourth World Conference on Women, he emphasized the importance of giving thanks to the role of women in society and the Church. He gave appreciation and gratitude to women for their role as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, women as workers, women as consecrated, and women for simply being women. He said that the insights of women enrich the world's understanding and help to make human relations more honest and authentic. He reiterated what he wrote in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988b)

"the Church desires to give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity for the 'mystery of woman' and for every woman all that constitutes the eternal measure of her feminine dignity, for the 'great works of God', which throughout human history have been accomplished in and through her" (Pope John Paul II; 1988b: 31)

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

I. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this research is to examine the effects and influences of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. It seeks to analyse the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education and how it forms students within the framework of a sacramental vision of leadership. This study will also investigate the role Catholic education plays in moulding female students who go on to become influential women leaders in the Philippines and around the world.

Educational research is an important contribution to understanding the teaching and learning process of both educators and students at all levels. James McMillan (2012:5) defined research as a systematic process of gathering, interpreting, and reporting information. Gathering information involves a disciplined and direct inquiry into individuals, groups, documents, and other sources. He further explained that research should exhibit several characteristics that distinguish it from other sources of knowledge. These characteristics are: Objectivity, Control of personal bias, precision, parsimony, tentative conclusion, verification, openness to scrutiny, and logic.

In recent decades, educational research has often been criticised regarding its validity, usefulness, and relevance because of its value-laden judgement. Its criticism stems from the system of belief, norms and context in the educational sector which may influence the researcher's political bias and values. However, Richard Pring (2015:10) explained that research is "any systematic, critical, and self-critical inquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge". Educational research draws upon the social sciences that encompass not only

empirical research, but also historical, documentary, and philosophical research. Its distinctive features are determined by the nature of the subject matter to be enquired into and how it can inform educators and policymakers.

Dimitra Hartas (2013:21) also argued that there is a fine line between value-laden and partisan research. The strife for absolute value-free research in education is not feasible, nor desirable, because beliefs and values constitute the basis of education. Hartas further explained that the researcher's identity, positionality and values often influence the motivation that shapes the research idea and objective. The researcher's values can be moderated by having an unbiased sampling process, triangulation of data and the adoption of a grounded approach to data analysis. Potential Researcher's bias can be mitigated by ensuring the research's ethical process, transparency of the research objective, and accurate representation of fieldwork experiences, and presentation of the results.

Since value-laden research may end up promoting particular values that may have important ethical or social consequences depending on how the judgement and conclusions are handled, Kevin Elloit (2019:6) suggests strategies for handling value-laden research and calls for a "value management ideal". He enumerates these value management ideals using these three principles:

- (1) value-laden judgements should be handled as transparently as possible;
- (2) these judgements should be made in ways that reflect social and ethical priorities; and
- (3) they should be made in a manner that is informed by engagement among interested and affected parties.

Though this education research is value-laden towards Christianity and Catholic values, the exploration of the effects and influences of Catholic education is relevant to the context of the historically and culturally Catholic country, the Philippines. This historical and cultural context of the Philippines was explained in the Introductory Chapter under the Context of the Study. The findings of this research will have immediate relevance to the educational policies of the Philippines rooted in the

Christian principles embedded in the 1987 Philippine Constitution⁸ and Core Values of the Department of Education⁹.

The potential researcher's bias will also be mitigated by taking seriously the ethical research process, and not discriminating any political or religious beliefs and ideologies of the respondents who will participate in the data gathering. It will also not eliminate articles, research and other literature that may be opposed to or differ from the personal convictions, views and opinions of the researcher.

II. EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The locus of this research sits within the context of the formation of women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines. The research will identify the effects and influences of the formation in Catholic schools or universities received by former students, particularly women, who are now in leadership positions. It will try to establish if the mission of Christian formation towards service and leadership made a lasting impression on the moral and ethical disposition of the current women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in their formative years.

Empirical research is the main type of research in education today. This study will cover both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Keith Punch (2011) explained the two empirical research approaches in education in simplified definition as quantitative data are in the form of numbers or measurements, while qualitative data are not in the form of numbers, most of the time, but rather words and expressed experiences (2011:3).

⁸ The Christian culture and values evident in the Preamble of the 1987 The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines: *"We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace, do ordain and promulgate this Constitution."* (Philippine Official Gazette; 2022)

⁹ Philippine Department of Education Core Values

Maka-Diyos (Godly)

Maka-tao (Humane)

Makakalikasan (Nature-Lover)

Makabansa (Patriotic) (Philippine Department of Education; 2022)

The essential idea of this empirical research is to “inform” educators and policymakers of Catholic education using observable data as a way of answering questions, developing ideas, and improving practices. The information collected will be used to identify the contributions and gaps within the Catholic schools and universities’ formation. The proposed recommendations will primarily be based on the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the respondents who participated in the research, including the previous research, articles, and studies conducted and cited in the literature review relating to Catholic education and women leadership in the Philippines.

To ensure the success of this research project, it is crucial to identify the most efficient means with which to gather data. To carry out the study efficiently, it is necessary to balance the practicalities of the research by considering the different opportunities and limitations of the researcher, the availability of funding and the permitted time allocated to do the research (Morrison; 2002: 4).

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of literature-based research is to identify relevant studies, academic articles, and previous empirical evidence related to the research problem. A literature review critically evaluates how earlier research has addressed questions related to the problem and highlights which questions remain unanswered. By synthesising existing theories and evidence, the review provides a comprehensive overview, uncovering consistencies, gaps, tensions, and contradictions within the field. This process enables the researcher to determine the study’s position within the broader context and identify the specific gaps and inconsistencies it aims to address (Punch; 2011:95).

The literature review serves to provide readers with a comprehensive framework of what is already known about the topic and how the research fits into the broader context. It is one of the initial tasks to undertake after selecting a research topic. By focusing on different aspects of the literature, the review helps clarify the research rationale, guide the research direction, inform the data-gathering processes, and develop potential recommendations for future action (Mertens; 2010: 90).

With the impossibility of reading everything, reading combined with critical analysis is as important as the development of research instruments and data gathering. This research will limit the review of databases by setting selection criteria that will be used for the selection of literature. The following elements of an article disqualify the study from inclusion in the review of literature:

1. Article was published in a language other than English and Filipino unless an official English or Filipino translation was provided.
2. The article was published on non-academic sources or unofficial sites such as Wikipedia, Fake News sites, Satire accounts, blog posts, and social media articles.
3. Article was published specifically for other faith schools such as Islam education, Hindu education, Buddhism education, and the like.

The included studies must focus on published research articles addressing Catholic education, leadership rooted in Christian teachings, and the formation of women leaders. These sources will synthesise and analyse earlier research on the historical perspective and development of women's leadership in the Philippines. The literature guides the research paradigm and facilitates the identification of areas requiring further investigation. Peter Newby (2014) emphasised that a literature review should establish a connection between ideas and evidence in the research literature, as well as the policy initiatives and practice development that it seeks to inform (Newby: 2014: 193).

The methodology of this research is structured around three key paradigms. The first chapter comprises a literature review, which is divided into three sections.

The first section of the literature review focuses on analysing various official documents from the Catholic Church and relevant research studies. It explores and discusses the unique nature of Catholic education, highlighting the characteristics that distinguish Catholic education institutions from their secular and other religious counterparts. This section also outlines the ideal nature and mission of Catholic education, emphasising its role in shaping values and identity.

The second section examines the sacramental vision of leadership. It delves into the Christian understanding of leadership, with Jesus Christ serving as the ultimate model. By exploring Christ's qualities as a leader, this section offers insights into how Catholic education aims to form leaders who embody these values. It underscores the integration of faith and leadership, illustrating how this vision shapes individuals to lead with humility, discernment, service, and integrity.

The final section investigates the historical evolution of women's leadership in the Philippines. It traces the progression of women's roles and status, starting from the pre-colonial period, through the Spanish colonisation and the introduction of Christianity, and into the American occupation. This section highlights how education for women evolved during these periods and examines the social, cultural, and historical developments that influenced women's leadership. It also considers the impact of more recent events that have shaped contemporary leadership roles of women in the Philippines.

This literature review creates a dialogue between the mission of Catholic education, the sacramental vision of leadership, and the historical and modern perspectives on women's leadership in the Philippines. The study of contemporary women's leadership will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding its development and significance.

B. FIELDWORK RESEARCH: TWO PARADIGM

The fieldwork research employs a mixed-method approach, integrating two paradigms to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the study. By considering both ontological and epistemological perspectives and adopting a reflective approach, the researcher aims to minimise the influence of personal social conditioning and unconscious bias. Combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies allows the study to leverage the strengths of both traditions, addressing the limitations of relying solely on one approach. This dual-paradigm strategy ensures that the research questions are aligned with appropriate tools,

facilitating more accurate and meaningful responses to the research problem (McMillan; 2012: 12).

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013) described a research paradigm as a framework of practices and beliefs that reflect fundamental assumptions about the nature of the social world (ontology) and the methods of acquiring knowledge about it (epistemology). Ontological assumptions examine whether social reality exists independently, imposing itself on individuals' consciousness, or whether it is a construct of individual consciousness. Epistemological assumptions, on the other hand, explore how knowledge about social behaviour is acquired and communicated (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2013:6).

Denscombe (2021) further elaborates that ontological assumptions argue that the social world exists independently of the researcher, with its own inherent realities and patterns. The researcher's role, therefore, is to uncover the pre-existing realities through qualitative data collection. Impartiality is less of a concern, as the reality being studied is presumed to exist regardless of the researcher's influence. Conversely, epistemological assumptions prioritise observable and measurable data, emphasising empirical evidence. This paradigm relies heavily on quantitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires for data collection (Denscombe; 2021:41).

While a mixed-methods approach may require additional time and effort due to the need to collect and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data, its value lies in the depth and richness of the insights it provides. By combining these two approaches, mixed-methods research offers a broader and more comprehensive understanding than a purely quantitative or qualitative study alone (McKim; 2015: 202).

To explore the contemporary effects and influences of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines, this study adopts the Life Stories Approach. This methodology involves the analysis and interpretation of data collected through questionnaires distributed to 300 women leaders across various fields, as well as in-depth interviews with 10 prominent women leaders who hold

significant positions nationally or internationally. These women have substantial influence within their respective areas of expertise.

All participants in this study have received education from Catholic educational institutions at the primary, secondary, or tertiary levels. Participation is not limited by religious background, provided the individuals were educated in Catholic schools or universities. This inclusive approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of Catholic education's impact on leadership formation.

i. Relationship Between Different Types Of Variables

A key aspect of mixed-methods research is understanding the various variables that will be considered in the study. McMillan (2012:40) explains that variables represent concepts or characteristics that take on different values and can be categorised accordingly. In this research, the variables will be divided into the following categories:

(1) Independent Variables - These variables are presumed to influence or predict the outcome. They are the cause of differences between groups and determine the Dependent Variables. For this study, the Independent Variables are the distinctive nature of Catholic education, and other specific aspects associated specifically with Catholic education. These variables represent the core teachings, ethos, and culture within Catholic education and serve as the antecedents or interventions implemented by Catholic institutions to foster the formation and development of women leaders.

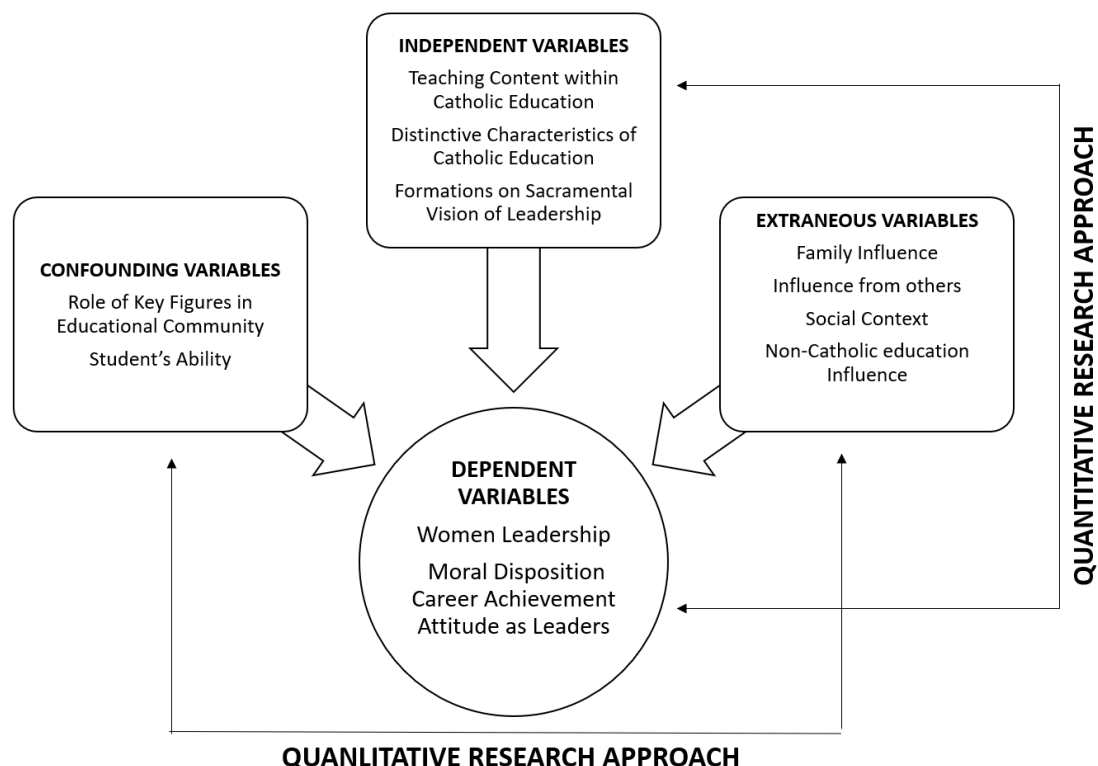
(2) Confounding Variable - These variables systematically vary with the Independent Variables, potentially affecting the relationship between the Independent and Dependent Variables. In this study, Confounding Variables are related to the varied teaching methods across different Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines, as well as the style, personalities, and expertise of individual teachers and key figures within Catholic education environment. Additionally, the students' abilities and personal contexts may also impact the Dependent Variables.

(3) Extraneous Variables – These are external factors that may influence the Dependent Variables but are not directly controlled or accounted for. They include conditions, events, occurrences or features that could affect the relationship between the Independent and Dependent Variables. In this study, Extraneous Variables include family upbringing, influences outside of Catholic education, social context, and combination of Catholic education and non-Catholic education.

(4) Dependent Variables - The Dependent Variables reflect the outcome of the Independent Variables. It represents the predicted or affected values, providing insight into the consequences of the Independent Variables. In this research, the Dependent Variables are the exercise of the sacramental vision of leadership, such as their leadership dispositions, attitudes, achievements, and practice of faith of female graduates from Catholic educational institutions.

For this study, the Independent and Dependent Variables can be easily statistically measured using the Quantitative Research Approach. However, to explore the relationship and effects between the Independent, Confounding, Extraneous, and Dependent Variables, the Qualitative Research Approach will be employed. This combination emphasises the value of a mixed-methods approach in providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

FIGURE 1.1 Relationship between different types of variables



ii. Quantitative Research Paradigm

A quantitative research paradigm is valuable in educational research as it provides statistical data gathered from quantitative research instruments such as surveys and questionnaires administered to targeted respondents. The data gathered will enable comparisons among and within the targeted population of respondents for the study. With the use of visual charts and graphs, it will be more efficient for the researcher to make comparisons and connections between the responses of the women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions. A summary of the data collected will facilitate the observation of statistical and numerical trends by relating one set of facts to another. Quantitative data provides measured quantities rather than subjective impressions of the responses from the targeted population (Cotgreave, Cloke, Rodd, and Sherrif; 2000: 5).

The process of collecting quantitative data consists of deciding who will be the participants suited for the study and how they will be targeted for data collection. It is important to identify the type of measures that will answer the research question

and to identify the instrument that will be used for the study. Specifying the population and sample that will be considered for the study should come from representatives of the entire group of individuals. The researcher needs to critically identify the population needed for the study. It is a group of individuals with similar characteristics who will provide the data needed. From the population, the researcher will select the sample who will participate in the data-gathering procedure. The sample is individuals who will be the representatives of the whole population (Creswell; 2008: 151).

Since it is generally impossible for researchers to gather data from the entire population needed for the study, it is crucial in the early stages of planning for the entire research to factor in the limitation of time, expenses, and accessibility of the entire population. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007: 100) suggest that in order to gain information from the whole population, data need to be obtained from a smaller subset of the total population. This way, the knowledge gained will be representative of the entire population.

The population needed for this research study are women leaders of the Philippines from any occupational background, and who received formation through Catholic education. These women leaders have studied in Catholic educational institutions whether in primary, secondary, higher education, or post-graduate studies. A small group of individuals belonging to this population will be targeted to participate in this research study as the “representatives” of the whole population.

For this study, the smaller subset of participants will be categorised by age groups: 20 - 29 years, 30 - 39 years, 40 - 49 years, 50 – 59 years, and 60 and above. These groups will represent different generations of women who studied in Catholic educational institutions. The researcher has chosen to target respondents from the three main islands of the Philippines – Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, as well as from the National Capital Region (Metro Manila). Metro Manila is intentionally considered separately from Luzon due to its high population density, ensuring a more accurate representation of women leaders across the country. This sampling approach ensures that the research study captures a diverse and comprehensive perspectives of the female leadership population in the Philippines.

The goal of the quantitative research approach is to determine the measurable and statistical relationship between an Independent Variable and a Dependent Variable within the population. It will examine degrees of association between variables and how much variance in a variable is accounted for by another. Dimitra Hartas (2013: 66) summarised that the purpose for doing quantitative research may have multiple purposes in educational research. It can be for various purposes such as a truth-seeking purpose, a developmental purpose, an intervention or change in practice purpose, and a public policy change purpose. Due to these possibilities and implications, Hartas (2013) advises that all claims should be supported by the research findings, and are located in the wider research context.

The quantitative research approach has the advantage of providing objective facts, and findings can be generalised to the whole population because it uses structured and pre-determined research questions, tools and design. Thus, this technique will likely produce a quantified and generalised conclusion. However, quantitative research poses some limitations and disadvantages. The research is dependent on the quantitative research instrument chosen and will be based solely on the statistical and numerical trends. Therefore, it will not be able to take account of reasoning for responses, human thoughts, and feelings.

It is also constrained to the specific direction and focus of the research where the designed tool will be pointed, and there is no opportunity to change direction in the middle of the study because it may invalidate the findings. The quantitative research approach can provide descriptive data of a large population but there can be difficulties with identifying reasons for the data and interpreting it. Using a quantitative tool, the researcher will not be able to gather information about the underlying motives and why representatives of the population have responded in a particular way. The respondents will not be given a chance to explain their opinions on each question and how these opinions may well change over time (Bell and Waters; 2018: 24).

The statistical analysis of the quantitative data gathered was performed with the aid of Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. The license of SPSS software and pieces of training on how to use the

statistical tool were provided by St. Mary's University, Twickenham. This tool provided practicalities in analysing the data because of its user-friendly interface. The IBM SPSS can assist in improving comprehension of vast data by processing and assigning properties to various variables. It also allows researchers to have the option of using the spreadsheet interface in Data View or Variable View. The software also has a large selection of charts and graphs that are very useful in saving researchers time and effort in manually calculating numerical data (Hartas; 2013: 329).

iii. Qualitative Research Paradigm

The qualitative research paradigm reveals an interpretative perspective that is deficient in the quantitative research approach. It can focus on impressions, ideas, opinions, experiences, comments, and attitudes of the targeted respondents that are representative of the whole population needed for the research (Lydon; 2011: 35). Qualitative research paradigm begins with the exploration of different themes, patterns, stories, narrative structures and language within the data collected from interviews, transcripts, field notes, documents, visual data, etc. It is primarily concerned with the process of how the data is collected and has a strong interest in the meaning of the data from the lived experiences of the respondents. Qualitative research enables the researcher to get complex layers of meanings and interpret human behaviour and experiences beyond surface value. It also provides substantive evidence of the behaviour and experiences observed (Cousin; 2009:31).

Unlike the quantitative research method, the qualitative approach enables the researcher to adopt a Life Stories Approach to explore the underlying reasons, motivations, and context of the respondents. This approach involves in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women who hold or have held leadership positions of national significance in the Philippines. These women come from diverse sectors, including business, law, science, medicine, education, creative arts, and more. Each has had a profound impact on the country, and all have studied in Catholic educational institutions during their formative years.

According to the Life Story Approach researcher Robert Atkinson (1998), respondents are given the opportunity to narrate their personal experiences through a guided set of questions during the interview process.

“A life story is a story of a person who chooses to talk about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what the person remembers of it and what he or she wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another (p.125)”

Atkinson (2012) further explained in his later publication that “life story interviews provide a practical and holistic methodological approach for the sensitive collection of personal narratives that reveal how a specific human life is constructed and reconstructed in representing that life as a story.” This approach is designed to allow respondents to serve as storytellers, with the researchers and the readers acting as listeners. It is a qualitative field research that seeks to gather information on the subjective essence of personal experiences, based on the narrative of one’s life or the relevant parts thereof (2012:116).

The qualitative research approach emphasises careful and thoughtful attention to the intricate dynamics of relationships and social processes within specific social settings. It provides the opportunity to explore situations in sufficient detail, helping to unravel their complexities. In general, it highlights the importance of understanding phenomena “in context”, offering a holistic view of the interconnected variables that may influence the relationship between the Independent and Dependent Variables. This approach allows researchers to explore the social realities and details that cannot be understood in isolation from their context, providing insights that may not be apparent through a quantitative research approach (Denscombe; 2021: 48).

The goal of the Qualitative Research Approach is to provide nuanced insights that can corroborate, contrast, or highlight inconsistencies with the statistical results obtained from the survey. It aims to delve deeper into the relationships between the Independent, Confounding, Extraneous, and Dependent Variables that may influence or alter the outcomes of the quantitative data. Since this research study seeks to examine the extent of Catholic education’s influence and effects on the formation of

women leaders in the Philippines, the qualitative data will offer valuable context by exploring Extraneous Variables such as respondents' family influence, social context, influences of individuals outside of Catholic education and the combination of non-Catholic education with Catholic education. It will also shed light on Confounding variables, including the influence of key figures in the educational community, as well as the students' abilities and contexts during their formative years. This approach ensures a holistic understanding by revealing areas where the qualitative findings align with, diverge from, or complicate the quantitative results.

Although the use of the qualitative approach would allow an "insider" perspective of the life stories of the respondents, this approach can only be used for a small number of participants because of the time-consuming nature of the data gathering. Findings from the qualitative research cannot be generalised to the whole population, due to the fact that it will explore theory of behaviour in the field, and will try to identify constructs that are hard to quantify. It also poses some disadvantages such as it may lead to unanticipated results that contradict the hypothesis and a greater risk of the researcher's bias affecting the result. Another limitation is that the findings cannot be tested with statistical significance because of the non-standard responses (Bell and Waters; 2018: 26).

Since the data for qualitative research will be derived from the life stories of respondents, providing rich contextual information for the study, it is essential to handle the collected data with the utmost ethical care. Qualitative research often yields detailed insights about specific individuals, making it easier to identify a "real" person from contextual elements such as direct quotations from interview responses. Therefore, transcriptions and reports must be managed responsibly to protect sensitive information about interviewees.

While the study will adhere rigorously to ethical research protocols, it is equally important to disclose any potential issues related to confidentiality or anonymity to participants beforehand. This is particularly crucial if personal contextual details could inadvertently reveal respondents' identities. Informed consent should include a clear explanation of any potential privacy risks, ensuring participants fully

understand how their data will be used and the safeguards in place to protect them (Flick; 2014: 59).

All Interview responses will be transcribed for analysis. The transcription process for online interviews will be supported by the built-in closed captioning and auto-transcribing features of platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Skype. These tools allow for the recording of meetings, with audio files transcribed immediately after the sessions. For in-person interviews, audio recordings and detailed interview notes will be used to ensure accurate transcription. In both cases, transcriptions will be carefully reviewed and verified for accuracy before being processed for analysis.

To manage and analyse the qualitative data, the researcher utilised NVivo, a computer analysis software. This tool is instrumental for storing, sorting, coding, and analysing transcribed data efficiently. NVivo, provided with licensing and training through St. Mary's University, Twickenham, is a robust data management platform that facilitates rapid coding, detailed exploration, and systematic analysis of qualitative data. It also enables the creation of text data matrices for comparison and the visual mapping of identified categories, enhancing the rigour and depth of the analysis (Cresswell; 2008: 250).

iv. Triangulation

The primary rationale for adopting a mixed-method research paradigm is to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. This approach combines the strengths of both the quantitative and qualitative methods while mitigating their individual limitations. Data collected from both methods will undergo a process of triangulation, which aims to provide complementary insights by integrating quantitative and qualitative data on the same topic. Triangulation capitalised on the distinct advantages of both approaches, ensuring that each method receives equal weight and is administered concurrently but separately. The results are then merged, analysed, and interpreted together to present a cohesive understanding (Punch; 2011:296).

Triangulation is a core strength of the mixed-method approach. It fosters dynamic dialogue between the quantitative and qualitative data, while also connecting these

findings to the literature review. This process enhances the validity of the research by confirming findings across multiple sources and highlighting how the strengths of each method inform and influence the other (Bell and Waters; 2018: 25).

Robert Coe (2021) further clarified that the term “Triangulation” originates from the field of land surveying, where the precise location of a point is determined by observing it from two distinct fixed points. Metaphorically, in research, triangulation helps pinpoint the “precise location” of the research question by employing multiple methodologies, sources of data, and methods of analysis (2021:46).

Triangulation involves examining information from multiple sources to assess the consistency and validity of the evidence gathered. For this study, data will be drawn from two primary sources: quantitative research outcomes obtained through surveys and questionnaires distributed to 300 women leaders across the Philippines, and qualitative research outcomes derived from in-depth, semi-structured life story interviews with nine prominent Filipina women leaders, all of whom were educated in Catholic educational institutions during their formative years.

Donna Mertens (2020: 282) highlights that while some researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (2000), critique the notion that triangulation solely serves to establish consistency across sources – since consistency is not always desirable or achievable, it is better viewed as a means to cross-check factual data and explore alternative explanations. This process allows for the identification of causal relationships and inferences by comparing data from different sources (2020:282).

By employing multiple methods in a single study, triangulation enhances the accuracy and validity of the research findings. It involves a meticulous review of the collected data to compare and contrast the results of the quantitative and qualitative research methods, identifying corroborations, discrepancies, and potential rival explanations. This cross-revalidation process helps address the inherent limitations and biases of each method, effectively compensating for their individual shortcomings. As Oliver-Hoyo and Allen (2006: 43) explain, triangulation averages

out the deficiencies of each method, resulting in a more reliable and comprehensive estimate of the findings.

Alan Bryman (2008) further emphasises that Triangulation allows results obtained from one research strategy to be cross-verified against those obtained from another. This approach fosters confidence in the validity of the interpretation and measurement of key concepts. However, Bryman also cautions that in certain instances, the application of mixed methods may highlight inconsistencies or even the failure to corroborate findings, which can provide valuable insights into the complexity of the research problem (2008:611).

Integrating qualitative and quantitative paradigms enables researchers to minimise, if not completely avoid, a paradigmatic preference for a single method. Zina O'Leary (2017) highlights two key reasons why a mixed-methods approach is advantageous. First, when researchers identify exclusively as either quantitative or qualitative researchers, they risk working within a limited framework that may predispose them to certain assumptions or biases in data interpretations. This preference can narrow the scope of inquiry and hinder a comprehensive exploration of the research question. Second, a mixed-methods approach offers expansiveness in exploring and understanding complex phenomena. It facilitates methodological diversity, complementarity of approaches, and the application of both inductive and deductive reasoning, enabling researchers to capture a broader range of perspectives (O'Leary; 2017: 165).

By comparing data across different methods, researchers can identify both discrepancies and confirmations in their findings. This comparative process involves examining the research topic from multiple angles using diverse methods and techniques, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding and more robust answers to the research problem. Triangulation, as a key component of mixed-methods research, reduces the risk of selective observation or premature conclusions. It strengthens the validity and reliability of findings by corroborating evidence across multiple sources and methods (Cohen, Manion and Morrison; 2013: 601).

Bourner and Millican (2016) suggest that during the data analysis, researchers should engage in reflective inquiry by asking themselves critical questions such as “Did I find what I expected?”, “Is there anything surprising in the data?” and “Could I have analysed this from a different perspective?”. These reflective questions ensure that key issues emerging from the data are addressed. Additionally, triangulating findings and verifying results against alternative sources help researchers clarify whether their interpretations are sufficiently grounded or whether they risk overanalysing the data (Bourner and Millican; 2016: 63).

C. DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

i. Population and Representatives - Participant Sampling and Pilot Testing

A *population* is a group of individuals or organisations that share the same characteristics that are of interest to the research study. In quantitative research data gathering, in identifying the population, it is necessary to determine the group to which the research will generalise the findings obtained. This research study is focused on the extent to which Catholic Education affects and influences the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. The targeted population for this research study are the women leaders in the Philippines who studied in Catholic educational institutions, whether at the Elementary, Secondary, or Tertiary level. However, so as to complete the research in the most efficient way and in considering the limitation of the resources, whether it may be finances, time, or manpower, it is imperative that research be carried out with a pragmatic population which will make the fieldwork accessible and feasible with careful consideration to the scope and parameters of the research study (Hartas 2013: 67).

To achieve the objective of this research, it is essential to prioritise and define the attributes of the target population. This process involves clearly specifying the inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants, which enhances the reliability and reproducibility of the study’s findings. Precise criteria help minimise resource wastage, reduce potential harm to participants, and protect

against the exploitation of vulnerable individuals. Yale University describes these criteria as follows: "Exclusion criteria are those characteristics that disqualify prospective subjects from inclusion in the study. Inclusion and exclusion criteria may include factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and the presence or absence of particular conditions" (Yale University; 2022: Online).

This study focuses on the formative experiences and life stories of women leaders in the Philippines. Consequently, the exclusion criteria for this research include male leaders and individuals who did not study in Catholic educational institutions. Ethnicity and religion, however, are not part of the exclusion criteria, ensuring inclusivity with the target demographic.

The inclusion criteria require that all participants must meet the following conditions: they should be of legal age, female, have studied at a Catholic educational institution and identify themselves as leaders within their respective fields or professions. These criteria are designed to ensure that the study remains focused on its central theme while accommodating a diverse range of perspectives within the specified parameters.

To ensure the representation of women leaders from across the Philippines, the quantitative aspects of this research will focus on a carefully selected sub-group of the broader population. This representative sample will be stratified into subsets based on age groups: 20-29 years old, 30 – 39 years old, 40 – 49 years old, 50 – 59 years old, and 60 years and above. Furthermore, respondents will be distributed across key geographic regions, encompassing the three major islands of the Philippine archipelago – Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, and Metro Manila, the National Capital Region.

Participants will provide quantitative data through survey questionnaires. To achieve a well-rounded representation, the study will employ a combination of purposive sampling and convenience (or volunteer) sampling techniques. According to Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008), purposive sampling enables the researcher to exercise judgment in selecting participants who possess the specific characteristics or traits relevant to the study's objectives. In contrast,

convenience or volunteering sampling allows the researcher to leverage personal and professional networks for easier access to qualified individuals (2008:47).

This dual sampling strategy ensures that the study incorporates a diverse range of participants while remaining practical and efficient in recruiting respondents. By combining these methods, the research will effectively gather data that reflects the perspectives and experiences of women leaders from varied age groups and geographical locations.

Table 1: Targeted Respondents for the Quantitative Research Data Gathering

AGE GROUP	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
20 – 29 YEARS OLD	60
30 – 39 YEARS OLD	60
40 – 49 YEARS OLD	60
50 – 59 YEARS OLD	60
60 YEARS AND ABOVE	60
TOTAL	300

For the qualitative data gathering, the researcher utilised both purposive and convenience (or volunteer) sampling techniques. Given that the researcher cannot observe the entire population of women leaders educated in Catholic educational institutions across the Philippines, a representative sample was selected to provide in-depth insight into the formation of women leaders. To ensure a comprehensive range of perspectives and avoid redundancy in the data, a maximum variation sampling strategy will be employed. This technique maximises diversity among respondents in key characteristics, enhancing the breadth of understanding (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, and Walker;2019:382).

Qualitative data are collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, designed to gather personal experiences and insights regarding the leadership formation received at Catholic educational institutions. The participants are selected from a diverse range of professional fields. Specifically, ten women leaders, each holding prominent leadership positions with significant influence in

their respective industries, will be chosen. These leaders include a justice, an international performing artist, an ambassador of the Philippines, a president of an educational institution, a renowned scientist, and other similar distinguished figures.

To efficiently gather sufficient data for the research study, the researcher leverages both personal and professional connections to contact and request interview opportunities with the targeted prominent women leaders. Formal letters of invitation will be sent through the preferred communication channels of the individuals, whether via email, courier mail, or delivered in person. Additionally, survey questionnaires will be strategically distributed to identified personal and professional contacts across the country using various electronic platforms, such as social media (e.g., Facebook Messenger, Instagram, LinkedIn) and other messaging applications. This approach ensures a broad and effective reach for data collection.

Table 2: Targeted Respondents for the Quantitative Research Data Gathering

FIELD OF SPECIALIZATION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Learning and Education	1
Arts and Culture	1
Business and Economics	1
Diplomacy and International Relations	1
Justice and Constitution	1
Medicine and Health	1
Humanitarian Work	1
Politics and Public Service	1
Science and Technology	1
Other fields	1
TOTAL	10

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research plan, both the quantitative and qualitative research tools - survey questionnaires and interview questions will undergo validation and pilot testing with three women leaders in the Philippines who are not part of the actual study. This process helps the researcher identify any flaws in the questions and verify the feasibility of the research plan. Pilot testing offers an opportunity to assess the appropriateness of the data collection methods and procedures, allowing for revisions if necessary. Additionally, it provides the researcher with a chance to conduct a preliminary test of the hypothesis and address any unanticipated issues that may not have been foreseen during the planning phase, before launching the full-scale data collection (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, and Walker;2019: 30).

ii. Ethical Research Protocols (Consent and Confidentiality)

Research Ethics is a form of occupational ethics that addresses the unique ethical issues that may arise within the context of a research study. Researchers are expected to carry out their work in an ethically responsible manner and must seek approval from an Ethics Committee before proceeding with any fieldwork. The Ethics Committee is tasked with reviewing the study design and assessing the appropriateness of the research methods to ensure the protection of the individuals and groups involved in the research (Denscombe; 2021: 306).

The concept of research ethics became particularly significant during the World War II, following the revelation of the horrific experiments conducted in concentration camps under the guise of scientific research. While educational research may not present the same physical risks to participants, it remains essential to uphold the highest ethical standards throughout the data collection process, ensuring compliance with established ethical principles and protecting participants' rights and well-being (Flick; 2014: 49).

This research takes into serious consideration the ethical and moral dimensions involved in conducting the data collection for the study. It complies with the Ethical research protocols and has been granted Ethical Research Approval by the Ethics

Sub-Committee of St Mary's University, Twickenham. In addition to the Ethical Research protocol of the university, the research study ensures that the research does not breach any legal boundaries and will be compliant with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 of the United Kingdom, the Philippine Republic Act 10173 - Data Privacy Act of 2012, and the Intellectual Property Rights.

Part of the Ethical research protocol is mitigating any potential researcher's bias. The researcher will not discriminate in selecting literature or respondents who may have different political stands or religious ideologies. All inclusion and exclusion criteria are transparently communicated to the Ethics committee of St. Mary's University.

All respondents in this research study have been purposively selected based on their relevance and suitability to the research objectives. Participation in this study offers several benefits, including increased awareness and a deeper understanding of the perceived connection between Catholic educational values and their impact on leadership development and formation. Additionally, the findings may help participants refine their perspectives and strengthen their support for Catholic educational institutions, particularly in upholding Catholic values and enhancing the formation of future leaders in the Philippines.

There are no potential risks or adverse effects associated with this study. There are also no invasive procedures involved either. Although the research data collection tools that will be used for this study such as survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews pose no obvious harm to any participants, the researcher takes into consideration the fact that there is no way of guaranteeing and knowing the potential consequences of the research in the future to anyone or any group. Therefore, it is still part of the fundamental research obligation of the researcher to safeguard the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of all the participants and for the researcher to try to anticipate likely outcomes and mitigate any potential risks for any respondents who participated in the research study (Ruane; 2005: 18).

The questions in both the survey and interview guide are designed to address broad sociological and cultural aspects of participants' experiences in Catholic education, rather than personal, private, or sensitive matters. However, if a participant becomes upset during the interview or survey process – triggering emotional or sensitive issues that could lead to distress or psychological discomfort, the participant will have the option to discontinue the survey at any point. The researchers will immediately stop the interview and inquire whether the participant wishes to continue. If necessary, the researcher will seek third-party support to ensure the participant's well-being.

As part of the ethics protocol for this study, all participants will be provided with an informed consent form outlining their rights, including the ability to freely decide whether to participate in the research. Participation in the study, whether part or in full, will be entirely voluntary. Additionally, all respondents invited to take part in the research will be of legal age (18 years or older) and will not belong to any vulnerable groups.

Before administering the research tools, each participant in both the survey and interviews will receive a Consent Form (See Appendix: A) and a Participant Information Sheet (See Appendix: B). These documents will provide comprehensive details about the purpose of the research study and outline participants' rights to ensure they are fully informed.

Participants will be explicitly informed of their rights, including the ability to decline to answer any question and the freedom to stop the survey or interview process at any time. To protect confidentiality, no participant will be identified by name in the research. Any identifiable information, such as names of institutions, individuals, or events mentioned during interviews, will be anonymised and replaced with fictitious names. Each participant will be assigned a unique identifier code, recorded in the Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet. Access to the code key will be restricted to the researcher, research supervisors, and the Director of Studies.

In cases where third-party professional transcription services are required, a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) will be executed to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents and their responses.

All collected data, including survey responses and interview recordings and transcriptions, will be securely stored in password-protected file systems. Electronic data will be housed on St. Mary's University cloud servers as well as the researcher's personal laptop or external hard drives, all of which will be password-protected. Confidential information will be retained securely for a period of 10 years, after which it will be permanently deleted and destroyed.

Participants have the right to withdraw their consent and request deletion of their data at any time during the research by referencing their unique identifier code. Upon withdrawal of consent, all personal data related to the participant will be promptly deleted or destroyed.

The final version of the thesis will be submitted to the St Mary's University Open Research Archive (SORA) and British Library EThOS (E-Theses Online Service) for online publication. It may also be submitted to various publishers and educational institutions to maximise accessibility and academic contribution.

iii. Interview Protocol

The qualitative research instrument that will be used for this study is an in-depth interview using the life stories approach. Participants for this research method are prominent women leaders in the Philippines who studied in Catholic educational institutions during their formative years. Interviews provide researchers with rich and detailed qualitative data for understanding participants' experiences, how they describe those experiences, and the meaning they make of those experiences. To ensure the effective and ethical collection of personal life experiences and stories from respondents, the researcher will adhere to a structured set of interview protocols and procedures refined through an iterative, recursive process. Milagros Castillo-Montoya (2016) proposes a Four-Phase Process for Interview Protocol Development, which will serve as the foundational guide for this research.

The interview protocol framework is comprised of four phases:

Phase 1: Ensuring interview questions align with research questions,

Phase 2: Constructing an inquiry-based conversation,

Phase 3: Receiving feedback on interview protocols

Phase 4: Piloting the interview protocol. (Castillo-Montoya; 2016: 812).

The interview procedure involves careful preparation and execution to ensure consistency, transparency, and ethical conduct throughout the process. The researcher must provide participants with a clear and honest explanation of the purpose, nature, and process of the interview. This transparency helps participants feel at ease, reducing the risk of biased responses. Before the interview begins, the researcher should explain the interview format, including how responses will be recorded, to foster trust and clarity.

It is essential that all interview protocols are consistently followed and replicated for each participant to maintain the integrity of the data collection process. During the interview, the researcher must take care to remain neutral, refraining from revealing personal biases, values, or judgments that could inadvertently influence the responses. A commitment to objectivity and professionalism is critical to preserving the validity and reliability of the study (Cohen, Manion, Morrison; 2013: 361).

The interview procedure that will be followed for this research is the following:

- a. Introductory communication. This step is to inquire with potential participants if they would be willing to participate in a short interview (30-45 minutes) about their experience in the Catholic educational institution. This process will be an informal conversation targeting potential respondents through personal and professional contacts and referrals.
- b. Send an official invitation to participate. This communication is the official request to participate in the research study, including an explanation of what the topic of the research is all about. It can be in the form of an official letter, email, or preliminary meeting.
- c. Make an interview schedule with the participant. The researcher and interviewee should agree on the set of specific date and time to conduct an interview. The interview can take place using digital tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, or Microsoft Teams, or in-person.

- d. Since the research data collection is in the form of a semi-structured interview and requires a bit of life story recollection, the researcher may send in advance the interview questions to allow the interviewee to prepare and recollect some experiences she may have during her studies in the Catholic Educational Institution.
- e. The semi-structured interview will begin by discussing the informed consent and rights of the interviewee. The script will begin with collecting the interviewee's informed consent for the interview to take place and be digitally recorded. The interview will not proceed without the interviewee's consent.
- f. The interviewer will follow the interview script that contains basic introductions, the research topic and the type of questions the interviewee might expect. This is to ensure that all important information will be conveyed.
- g. The researcher will use an interview guide with the main questions and will ask probing questions to follow up when necessary.
- h. The interview will end with the researcher thanking and letting the interviewee know what to expect thereafter.
- i. If the respondent wishes to be informed about the research findings, the researcher will offer the respondents an opportunity to contact the researcher through St. Mary's University (Jacob and Furgerson; 2012; 7-10).

Since interviews are social encounters and not merely a data collection exercise, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) suggest that there might be some visual and non-verbal communication that can be neglected during the transcription of the interview. It is often inadequate to transcribe only spoken words; because other data are also important. Replacing audio-recording to video recording of the interview might provide richer data and context of the interview. For the purpose of minimising misinterpretation of non-verbal cues, it is necessary for the interviewer to make an effort to clarify actions and gestures by asking the interviewee verbal clarification of non-verbal actions, such as asking "I see you are shaking your head,

what does that mean? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison; 2013: 367).

Peter Newby (2014) established the importance of the researchers' or interviewers' judgement by making a conscious self-inquiry about when to code personal observations during the interview process. He suggests making it a norm in the coding procedure to identify if the coded observation is a context description, contemporaneous notes, or post-observation reflections of the researcher. Context description provides a richer picture of the narrative, contemporaneous notes are the noticeable non-verbal actions and cues during the interview, and post-observation reflections are what the interviewers observed in hindsight that may begin to provide perspective from the interview (Newby; 2014: 376).

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design employed in this study will be using a mixed-method design which includes both quantitative and qualitative features of the research tools. The researcher will collect and analyse data, integrate the findings and draw inferences using both the quantitative and qualitative data approaches in a single study. Respondents are women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions and will be asked about their formation experience during their studies (Mertens; 2020: 293).

The formulation of the research questions used in this study both for quantitative and qualitative research instruments are all original and self-formulated deriving from a clear idea about the research problem and a sound knowledge of the related literature. The quantitative research instrument will take the form of a Survey Questionnaire, while the qualitative research instrument will take the form of an in-depth semi-structured interview.

Questionnaires will be distributed online using Google Forms, while the semi-structured interviews will be conducted either using online conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams or in-person interviews depending on the preference of the respondents. Questionnaires will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and interviews will approximately take 30 - 40 minutes.

Before employing the research tools, there will be preliminary qualifying questions to make sure that all participants are qualified and suited to take part in the research study. This section is part of the inclusive and exclusive criteria protocols needed for the study.

i. Preliminary Qualifying Question

1. Gender
 - Male
 - Female
2. Are you 18 years old and above?
 - Yes
 - No
3. Did you study in a Catholic Educational Institution?
 - Yes
 - No
4. Are you a leader in your field of specialisation?
 - Yes
 - No

Upon qualifying to take part in the research study, participants will be given the Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent form. They will be asked the following Personal Profile Questions:

ii. Personal Profile

In the **personal profile** section, respondents are asked the following questions to give a broad idea of their background and context:

5. Field You are involved in:
 - Learning and Education
 - Communications and Media
 - Arts and Culture
 - Business and Economics
 - Peace building and Foreign Relations

- Justice and Constitution
- Medicine and Health
- Food and Water Sustainability, and Environment
- Politics and Governance
- Science and Technology
- Other/s: _____

6. Age Group:

- 20-29 years old
- 30-39 years old
- 40-49 years old
- 50-59 years old
- Above 61 years old

7. Religion:

- Catholic
- Other Christian Denomination
- Islam
- Other faith (Please Specify): _____
- Prefer not to say

8. Number of Years studied in Catholic Educational Institution

- 1 – 4 years
- 5 – 8 years
- 9 – 12 years
- 12 years and above

9. Level studied in Catholic Educational Institution:

- Elementary
- Secondary
- College/University
- Post - Graduate

10. Location

- Luzon
- Visayas
- Mindanao
- Metro Manila

iii. Quantitative Research Instrument

One of the common challenges in conducting surveys is ensuring a high response rate. This study aims to address that challenge by utilising an online questionnaire accessible throughout the Philippines. The quantitative research tool selected for this study is Google Forms, a versatile and widely accessible software platform that offers a fully integrated web environment for designing, delivering, and analysing online surveys. Its accessibility and user-friendly interface make it suitable for both private and public sector respondents in the Philippines.

Five Key features of Google Forms make it particularly valuable for this research are:

- The software is free to use for everyone, both for researchers and respondents
- The software is quick to learn and intuitive to use
- It requires no technical knowledge to set up or maintain
- It can be accessed using different digital gadgets such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and personal computers
- It gives instant feedback on survey results and a summary of the result

The survey forms were distributed via Google Forms to various Catholic organisations, parishes, alumni associations, and related groups to collect responses

from three hundred women leaders across the Philippines who studied in Catholic educational institutions. Respondents were randomly selected and participation was open to anyone who identifies as a woman leader in their respective field and who attended a Catholic educational institution at any level - primary, secondary, or tertiary. This approach ensures a diverse representation of perspectives while maintaining the study's focus on Catholic education and leadership.

The survey questionnaire takes the form of a six-point Likert-type Scale, constituting a series of statements that will measure the respondent's agreement to disagreement, with "1" indicating the highest level of agreement and "6" indicating the highest level of disagreement.

An Introduction to the Survey will be included in the questionnaire to guide respondents in answering the survey properly and to make sure that responses will be valid for the research study.

EXPLANATION: The purpose of this survey questionnaire is to identify the extent to which Catholic Education affected and influenced you in becoming a woman leader.

There will be 30 statements in this survey. Please note that sentences are written in either POSITIVE or NEGATIVE statements. Kindly read each statement carefully before indicating your level of agreement or disagreement. Mark the response that best reflects how you have observed yourself and your experience. There is no right or wrong answer. Please make sure that you only mark ONE response for each statement, in order not to void your responses.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

The researcher intentionally selected an even-numbered Likert-type scale rather than an odd-numbered one to eliminate the option of a neutral response. This design choice facilitates a clearer identification of respondents' inclinations, ensuring

that each statement reflects either positive or negative agreement without ambiguity. Judith Bell (2005: 229) points out that Likert Scales:

“...ask respondents to indicate, usually by circling a number, rank order of agreement or disagreement with a statement. There is generally a three, five, or seven point range, though researchers frequently prefer an even number of items, namely to avoid the neutral central point.”

The quantitative research instrument is structured into three parts, namely: (1) Distinctive characteristics of Catholic Education, (2) Sacramental Vision of Leadership, and lastly, (3) Formation towards women leadership; composed of ten statements for each section. This structure corresponds to the findings in the literature review.

The survey questionnaires take about 5 to 15 minutes to complete. The forms will be distributed to women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines and will contain the following statements:

PART 1: DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

In the concretization of the distinctive nature of Catholic education, it is important to identify if the appropriate formation was given during studies in Catholic education, and how these formations influenced its students in their current life practices, especially in their leadership roles. This section was, therefore, designed to probe whether or not women leaders experienced in school the Moral Formation in the Faith, Search for Excellence in Service, Respect for Human Dignity, Solidarity in the Community, and lastly, Education for the common good, and the extent on how much it influenced them. The following statements in this survey questionnaire will determine the statistical reality of the distinctive nature of Catholic education. The following probing statements are:

Moral Formation in the Faith

1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced my moral principles (choosing the right thing to do) today.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence the values (e.g. integrity, honesty, etc) I uphold today.

The search for excellence in service

1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to use my talents and capabilities.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me to work excellently.

Respect for Human Dignity,

1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I respect human dignity.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I respect the poor and marginalised.

Solidarity in the community

1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I show solidarity (willingness to stand alongside others in pursuit of the common good) in my community.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I act on my social responsibility.

Education for the common good.

1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me to pursue the common good (the task of creating a good life for all).
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I promote the common good to others.

PART 2: SACRAMENTAL VISION OF LEADERSHIP

This section is designed to probe whether or not the sacramental vision of leadership was taught in Catholic education. It will investigate if the leadership formation in Catholic education is modelled on the leadership of Jesus Christ. These leadership models are Discerning Authority, Servant Leadership and Inclusive Leadership. The following statements in this survey questionnaire will determine the statistical reality of the leadership style exercised by women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions. The following probing statements are:

A. Discerning Authority

1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to exercise authority in my current leadership role.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I make decisions in my current leadership role.
3. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to discern (decision-making process) between difficult choices.

B. Servant Leadership

1. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to serve others.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to lead.
3. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to be a servant leader.

C. Inclusive Leadership

1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me how to respect other people's opinions.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to accept diversity in the community where I belong.
3. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to be inclusive.

4. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence my ability to suspend judgment and prejudice.

PART 3. Formation towards leadership

This final section of the survey questionnaire is designed to examine the kind of formation towards leadership received in Catholic education. It will investigate if Catholic education influenced and prepared its students to take on leadership roles. This section of the survey questionnaire is composed of ten statements that will determine the current leadership practices and influences on women who are now holding leadership roles. The following probing statements are:

1. The formation I received in Catholic education taught me that being a woman is not an impediment to pursuing any career or vocation.
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT teach me that being a woman is not an impediment to pursuing a leadership role.
3. The formation I received in Catholic education provided me with opportunities to explore my leadership potential.
4. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT help me in discovering my passion.
5. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me to pursue a leadership position.
6. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT prepare me to become a leader.
7. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced my style of leadership.
8. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I train others who are under my leadership.
9. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to handle my leadership responsibilities.
10. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to deal with moral dilemmas in my leadership role.

iv. Qualitative Research Instrument

This research focuses on examining the contribution of Catholic education to the development of women leaders in the Philippines. The study aims to explore in-depth knowledge, practices, and formative experiences of women who attended Catholic educational institutions and how these experiences influenced their journey to leadership roles in their respective fields.

Interviews were conducted either in person or through online teleconferencing platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, or Google Chat, depending on the respondents' preference.

Participants were purposively selected for their well-suited knowledge, and ability to provide high-quality information and valuable insights into the research topic. The study seeks to understand how formative experiences in Catholic education shaped these women's leadership paths and to gather recommendations for enhancing current practices in Catholic education to foster leadership development and formation in the Philippines (Denscombe; 2021: 41).

The interviews provide the qualitative data necessary for the research study's analysis. A written interview question guide will be sent to respondents in advance, ensuring clarity and reducing the risk of misinterpretation. Verbatim transcription of responses will further minimise potential errors in understanding and interpreting the questions and answers provided during the interview process (Cohen, Manion and Morrison; 2014: 508).

Before the interview begins, participants will be given orientation covering the purpose of the study and the interview process. Consent will be secured from each participant. The interviews are expected to last for 30 to 40 minutes. Providing the interview questions beforehand allows respondents time to review the content and seek clarification about any concerns related to the questions.

The interviews are designed to explore the experiences of women who studied in Catholic educational institutions, focusing on how these experiences shaped their

leadership development and current roles as leaders. Additionally, the interviews aim to uncover insights into the practices within Catholic education that influenced the formation of leadership qualities among its students.

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Interview Questions	Probing Questions	Remarks
1. You are considered as one of the leading women of our nation, who or what inspired you to pursue your current position or responsibility right now?	What are the rewards and challenges of being a female leader in our country? How does it differ from the leadership of men?	
2. You said you studied in a Catholic Educational institution when you were in _____, Tell me about your experience studying in a Catholic Educational Institution.	Did your formation in Catholic Education play a part in your pursuit of a leadership position? How?	
3. Do you think your formation in Catholic Education prepares you to become a woman leader of our country? In what way? If not, why not?	Is there a specific event, class, activity or person in your years in Catholic education which made a great impression on you? How?	

	If it did not influence you, what do you think was missing?	
4. Now as a woman leader, is there a particular strength or weakness in your leadership that you associate with the formation you received in your Catholic education?	Is there a particularly important lesson you got from Catholic Education that you go back to until now? Like a guiding principle?	
5. Did you ever study in a non-Catholic educational institution as well? What do you think sets your Catholic Education apart from your other school?	Is there something you have gained in your non-Catholic education experience that you did not gain in Catholic school?	
6. If you are to suggest something for all Catholic educational institutions in our country, what would be the best or most effective practices that they need to continue doing in order to prepare their students for	How about the things that they can include or stop doing that are not beneficial for the formation towards leadership?	

leadership, especially women?		
7. Is there anything else you wish to add that probably I did not ask, or we did not talk about that you think is useful for my research?		

CHAPTER IV

RESULT

I. Introduction

This study investigates the impact of Catholic education on the development and formation of women leaders in the Philippines. Data was gathered from women who studied in Catholic educational institutions and now hold leadership roles.

The Catholic Church, as one of the leading private educational providers, offer quality, affordable education in urban centres and remote rural areas. Yet, despite this strong Catholic influence, the Philippines ranked 116th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International; 2022: Online). This ranking underlines the need to explore how Catholic education impacts leadership development and formation, as insights from this research may inform best practices for curricula and leadership formation programmes.

This research employed a mixed method approach, collecting quantitative data through surveys and qualitative data via in-depth semi-structured interviews. This chapter presents the results and classifications of the data gathered, examining the degree to which Catholic education affects and influences the formation of women leaders. Data was collected from a targeted group of women leaders who attended Catholic education at the primary, secondary, and/or tertiary levels.

The previous chapter detailed the methods used to collect quantitative data through survey questionnaires and qualitative through semi-structured interviews. Survey questionnaires were distributed via purposive and convenience sampling to parish groups, Catholic alumni associations, and Catholic organisations across the Philippines. Through social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and alumni group chats, the quantitative survey aimed to capture responses from various age groups to represent different generations of women leaders. Ultimately, the study received 366 responses, of which 337 met the study's criteria.

The qualitative portion involved semi-structured interviews with 9 prominent women leaders from various fields. Each participant held a leadership position of national influence and importance and had attended Catholic educational institutions at some stage of their education, whether at primary, secondary, or tertiary levels.

II. PRESENTATION OF RESULT

A. CLASSIFICATION OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA

i. Introduction

This study employed survey questionnaires to gather quantitative data, aiming to uncover patterns, trends, and relationships in the experiences of women leaders who attended Catholic educational institutions across various groups and sectors in the Philippines. Systematic data collection and presentation of the quantitative findings provide a structured view of these experiences, offering insights that will later be analysed and triangulated with the findings from the qualitative results from the interviews and the literature review.

The quantitative data collection aimed to capture measurable insights from a broad sample, enabling a more precise estimation of the effects and influences of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders. By surveying a diverse sample group across age groups, societal sectors, and regions of the Philippines, this approach allows for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines.

The survey questionnaires were distributed randomly online through emails, LinkedIn, and various social media groups, including parish groups, alumni associations, and Catholic lay organisations. Eligible participants included women of legal age (18 years old and above), who identified as leaders and had received Catholic education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary levels. The survey form was designed to automatically screen and disqualify any responses that did not meet the study's requirements and criteria.

The research aimed to collect 300 responses across different age groups: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and above. The survey responses exceeded its target by 122%, resulting in 366 responses. This high response rate strengthens the reliability of the data to be analysed. However, 29 responses were disqualified due to incomplete or non-compliant criteria. Consequently, the result that will be presented in this chapter will focus on the 337 qualified responses.

ii. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The survey collected demographic information of the respondents, including their current professional field, age groups, and religious backgrounds. While the study aimed to gather data across all age groups, there was a natural variation in age distribution, with higher representation from the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups. This may be because younger participants are less likely to identify as leaders or older generations might find online surveys less accessible. However, the responses from each age group were sufficiently balanced to ensure broad representation.

The survey also gathered information on respondent's religious backgrounds, which align with the general religious demographics of the Philippines. Additionally, it collected data on the duration of respondents' Catholic education, with 56% reporting over 12 years of Catholic schooling, indicating that many spent the majority of their formative years in Catholic educational institutions. The survey further inquired about the level (primary, secondary, or tertiary levels) and location of Catholic education they received.

Below is the summary of the demographic profile of the 337 respondents who participated in the quantitative study, followed by the profile of the responses that were considered invalid responses.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents – Fields of Specialisation

	Number of respondents	Percentage
1. Field You are involved in:		
o Learning and Education	107	32%
o Communications and Media	25	7%
o Arts and Culture	7	2%
o Business and Economics	59	18%
o Peace Building and Foreign Relations	2	1%
o Justice and Constitution	4	1%
o Medicine and Health	31	9%
o Food and Water Sustainability, and Environment	3	1%
o Politics and Governance	7	2%
o Science and Technology	8	2%
o Other/s: _____	84	25%
Total	337	100%

Table 4: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents – Age Group

2. Age Group:		
o 20-29 years old	58	17%
o 30-39 years old	76	23%
o 40-49 years old	73	22%
o 50-59 years old	63	19%
o Above 61 years old	67	20%
Total	337	100%

Table 5: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents – Religious Background

3. Religion:		
o Catholic	325	96%
o Other Christian Denomination	10	3%
o Islam	0	0%
o Other faith (Please Specify): _____	1	0%
o Prefer not to say	1	0%
Total	337	100%

Table 6: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents – Years in Catholic Education

4. Number of Years studied in Catholic Educational Institutions		
o 1 – 4 years	51	15%
o 5 – 8 years	37	11%
o 9 – 12 years	59	18%
o 12 years and above	190	56%
Total	337	100%

Table 7: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents – Level studied in Catholic Education

5. Level studied in Catholic Educational Institutions:		
o Elementary	212	63%
o Secondary	230	68%
o College/University	225	67%
Postgraduate	97	29%

Table 8: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents – Location of Respondents

6. Location		
o Luzon	47	14%
o Visayas	54	16%
o Mindanao	22	7%
o Metro Manila	214	64%
Total	337	100%

iii. Summary of Invalid Responses

The online survey was designed to automatically screen and disqualify responses that did not meet the study's eligibility criteria. Of the 366 responses received, 29 were deemed invalid due to one or more unmet criteria and therefore excluded from the study. For transparency, a summary of these invalid responses is presented below.

The study also considered that leadership exists at various levels across different fields. To participate in this research study, respondents needed to self-identify as leaders, regardless of their area of expertise and level of leadership. However, 28 respondents did not consider themselves leaders in their fields, community, or organisation, and their responses were therefore excluded from the quantitative results summary in with the study's criteria.

Table 9: Summary of Invalid Responses

Disqualifying Criteria	No. of Respondent/s
Male	1
Not of Legal Age (Below 18 years old)	1
Did not study in Catholic Education	7
Not a leader	28

iv. Summary of the Quantitative Results

The following is a summary of the key findings from the survey conducted with women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions. The survey aimed to assess respondents' level of agreement with statements that explored the influence of Catholic education on their current leadership perspectives and insights.

a. PART 1: DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

This first section of the survey questionnaire used a Likert-type scale to capture the perspective of these women leaders. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements reflecting the distinctive nature and characteristics of Catholic education, divided into five key areas: (1) Moral Formation in the Faith, (2) Search for excellence in Service, (3) Respect for Human Dignity, (4) Solidarity in the community, and (5) Education for the common good. Statements in each section were alternated between positive and negative phrasing to encourage participants to carefully consider each question.

Table 10: Result Summary of Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education – Moral Formation in the Faith

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
Moral Formation in the Faith							
1. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced my moral principles (choosing the right thing to do) today.	221	88	22	2	2	2	337
	66%	26%	7%	1%	1%	1%	100%
2. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence the values (e.g. integrity, honesty, etc) I uphold today.	2	8	12	44	107	164	337
	1%	2%	4%	13%	32%	49%	100%

Table 11: Result Summary of Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education – The Search for excellence in service

The search for excellence in service							
3. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to use my talents and capabilities.	167	129	30	3	5	3	337
	50%	38%	9%	1%	1%	1%	100%
4. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me to work excellently.	3	11	15	53	104	151	337
	1%	3%	4%	16%	31%	45%	100%

Table 12: Result Summary of Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education – Respect for Human Dignity

Respect for Human Dignity							
5. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I respect human dignity.	229	92	12	3	1	0	337
	68%	27%	4%	1%	0%	0%	100%
6. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I respect the poor and marginalised.	1	5	13	38	92	188	337
	0%	1%	4%	11%	27%	56%	100%

Table 13: Result Summary of Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education – Solidarity in the Community

Solidarity in the community							
7. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I show solidarity (willingness to stand alongside others in pursuit of the common good) in my community.	175	122	30	5	3	2	337
	52%	36%	9%	1%	1%	1%	100%
8. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I act on my social responsibility.	1	7	14	45	114	156	337
	0%	2%	4%	13%	34%	46%	100%

Table 14: Result Summary of Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education – Education for the Common Good

Education for the common good							
9. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me to pursue the common good (the task of creating a good life for all).	170	135	24	6	2	0	337
	50%	40%	7%	2%	1%	0%	100%
10. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I promote the common good to others.	0	4	16	46	116	155	337
	0%	1%	5%	14%	34%	46%	100%

b. PART 2: SACRAMENTAL VISION OF LEADERSHIP

The next section of the survey employed a Likert-type scale to capture the perspective of women leaders educated in Catholic educational institutions. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding the influence of Catholic education on their approach to leadership and the extent to which the sacramental vision of leadership has been imparted to them. This part of the survey is divided into three sections focused on the Sacramental Vision of Leadership: (1) Discerning Authority, (2) Servant Leadership, and (3) Inclusive Leadership.

As in the previous section, statements were alternated between positive and negative phrasing to encourage thoughtful responses. Below are the findings derived from this portion of the survey.

Table 15: Result Summary of the Sacramental Vision of Leadership – Discerning Authority

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
Discerning Authority							
11. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to exercise authority in my current leadership role.	133 39%	130 39%	49 15%	15 4%	10 3%	0 0%	337 100%
12. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I make decisions in my current leadership role.	2 1%	7 2%	23 7%	51 15%	128 38%	126 37%	337 100%
13. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to discern (decision-making process) between difficult choices.	149 44%	123 36%	42 12%	11 3%	11 3%	1 0%	337 100%

Table 16: Result Summary of the Sacramental Vision of Leadership – Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership							
14. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to serve others.	2 1%	9 3%	13 4%	48 14%	113 34%	152 45%	337 100%
15. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to lead.	147 44%	123 36%	46 14%	9 3%	9 3%	3 1%	337 100%
16. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to be a servant leader.	3 1%	11 3%	15 4%	50 15%	127 38%	131 39%	337 100%

Table 17: Result Summary of the Sacramental Vision of Leadership – Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive Leadership							
17. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me how to respect other people's opinions.	165	128	25	8	10	1	337
	49%	38%	7%	2%	3%	0%	100%
18. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to accept diversity in the community where I belong.	3	17	22	47	119	129	337
	1%	5%	7%	14%	35%	38%	100%
19. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to be inclusive.	130	135	47	16	8	1	337
	39%	40%	14%	5%	2%	0%	100%
20. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence my ability to suspend judgment and prejudice.	3	15	26	60	135	98	337
	1%	4%	8%	18%	40%	29%	100%

c. PART 3. FORMATION TOWARDS LEADERSHIP

Finally, the third part of the survey utilised a Likert-style scale to assess the perspective of women leaders educated in Catholic educational institutions. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements designed to capture how Catholic education has influenced their pursuit of leadership positions and the manner in which they exercise their leadership roles. This section specifically focused on their experiences regarding the formation they received in Catholic education related to leadership. As in previous sections, statements were alternated between positive and negative phrasing to promote thoughtful responses. Below are the findings derived from this portion of the survey.

Table 18: Result Summary of the Formation Towards Leadership

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
21. The formation I received in Catholic education taught me that being a woman does not impede pursuing any career or vocation.	172	113	25	10	16	1	337
	51%	34%	7%	3%	5%	0%	100%
22. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT teach me that being a woman is not an impediment to pursuing a leadership role.	5	25	16	47	112	132	337
	1%	7%	5%	14%	33%	39%	100%
23. The formation I received in Catholic education provided me with opportunities to explore my leadership potential.	151	121	46	10	7	2	337
	45%	36%	14%	3%	2%	1%	100%
24. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT help me in discovering my passion.	5	10	25	65	117	115	337
	1%	3%	7%	19%	35%	34%	100%
25. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me to pursue a leadership position.	101	123	73	24	13	3	337
	30%	36%	22%	7%	4%	1%	100%
26. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT prepare me to become a leader.	4	9	25	57	138	104	337
	1%	3%	7%	17%	41%	31%	100%
27. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced my style of leadership.	139	127	48	7	14	2	337
	41%	38%	14%	2%	4%	1%	100%
28. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I train others who are under my leadership.	1	14	21	63	133	105	337
	0%	4%	6%	19%	39%	31%	100%
29. The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to handle my leadership responsibilities.	141	137	42	7	9	1	337
	42%	41%	12%	2%	3%	0%	100%
30. The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to deal with moral dilemmas in my leadership role.	1	7	20	55	126	128	337
	0%	2%	6%	16%	37%	38%	100%

B. CLASSIFICATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

i. Introduction

While the quantitative data offers valuable insights, it cannot fully explain the underlying reasons behind the respondents' choices and perceptions. To enrich the research, this study also gathered qualitative data, providing a deeper look into how Catholic education shapes the development of women leaders in the Philippines. Through in-depth interviews, this research explored the personal experiences of 9 prominent women leaders who attended Catholic educational institutions at the primary, secondary, and/or tertiary levels. Respondents were selected without regard to religious affiliation, ensuring diverse perspectives on the influence of Catholic education.

The objective of the presentation of the qualitative findings is to provide a summary of the interviews which will aid in understanding and analysing the extent of Catholic education's effects and influences on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. This section will identify key themes that emerged from the interviews subdivided into four categories: Independent Variables, Confounding Variables, Extraneous Variables and Dependent Variables.

The interview questions were designed to determine whether the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education and the sacramental vision of leadership were present in their formation. The questions also invited participants to share personal experiences and perspectives on how their education in Catholic institutions prepared them for leadership roles.

Finally, the interview transcripts will serve as a narrative record, capturing experiences and emerging themes that align with or diverge from the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education, the sacramental vision of leadership, and the formation towards leadership.

ii. Demographic and Context of the Interviewees

This study conducted both online and in-person interviews with nine prominent women leaders in the Philippines, all of whom attended Catholic educational institutions at various stages of their academic journeys. These respondents were carefully selected to represent a broad range of societal sectors and areas of expertise, capturing perspectives from Politics, Creative Arts, Medicine, Science and Technology, the Justice System, Education, Peacebuilding and Foreign Relations, Business, as well as from a household management role.

The women included in this study occupy nationally significant positions, each contributing uniquely to Philippine society. Their areas of influence are diverse, spanning public service, professional and creative fields, education, and community building. The inclusion of a housewife – a woman while not a front-facing leadership figure, plays an essential and often under-recognised role in shaping community and family values, adding a crucial dimension to this study. Her inclusion brings an unconventional perspective, challenging traditional views of leadership and underscoring that influence and leadership extend beyond formal titles or public-facing roles.

Gathering qualitative insights from such a varied group allows the research to delve deeply into the specific ways Catholic education has impacted their leadership formation. Their personal experiences offer rich, nuanced understandings that go beyond what quantitative data can capture. By exploring how Catholic educational values and practices influenced their pathways, the study aims to uncover recurring themes, individual interpretations, and potentially unique aspects of Catholic education that foster the development of women leaders across a variety of roles and responsibilities in Philippine society.

These interviews provide a firsthand narrative on how Catholic educational values, such as service, moral integrity, and sacramental leadership, manifest in diverse career paths and life choices. This qualitative approach is essential for capturing the depth of their experiences and for understanding how their formative years in Catholic educational institutions contributed to their leadership philosophies and

actions. Through their insights, we gain a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the enduring impact of Catholic education on women leaders in the Philippines.

For the purposes of the classification and confidentiality of the respondents will be delineated as follows.

Leader 1 – Court of Appeals Associate Justice

Leader 2 – Astrophysicist and Data Scientist

Leader 3 – Senior Leader of the Philippine Women’s Commission

Leader 4 – Businesswoman and wife of the High Ranking Government Official

Leader 5 – Award-Winning Theatre and Film Actress

Leader 6 – Senior Leader at the United Nations – UNWomen / UNAIDS

Leader 7 – Medical Doctor, Department of Health and World Health Organisation Consultant

Leader 8 – President of a Catholic University

Leader 9 – Ambassador of the Philippines

iii. Summary of the Qualitative Results

The aim of analysing the interview text is to identify recurring themes and core concepts that shed light on the effects and influences of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. Using NVivo software, the interview transcriptions were systematically coded to capture common themes that emerged across the responses. These themes were then categorised according to the variables outlined in the study’s conceptual framework, as discussed in the Methodology chapter.

This approach acknowledges that various factors may impact women’s leadership development and formation. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2022), provides a rigorous and systematic framework for this process. By identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning within the data, this method enables a flexible

yet theoretically grounded exploration of how Catholic educational experiences shape leadership formation. Braun and Clarke emphasised the importance of reflexivity, researcher subjectivity, and active engagement with the data, ensuring that the analysis is both rigorous and contextually nuanced (2022:7).

Therefore, the presentation of the qualitative results is organised around four key categories of variables: Independent Variables, Confounding Variables, Extraneous Variables, and Dependent Variables. By structuring the qualitative data in this way, the study provides a comprehensive view of the factors that contribute to and influence the respondents' leadership journeys, aligning these themes with the study's theoretical foundations which are the distinctive nature of Catholic education and the sacramental vision of leadership.

In this section, each theme will be presented within its respective category, offering insights into how Catholic education may shape or intersect with these variables. Through this structured presentation of qualitative results, the study aims to illustrate and analyse the nuanced way Catholic educational experiences contribute to the leadership formation of women in the Philippines.

I. Independent Variables

The themes categorised under Independent Variables represent the direct effects and influences of the content, values, and practices inherent in Catholic education. These variables highlight specific aspects of Catholic educational formation that uniquely affected and influenced the women leaders who attended these institutions. The Independent Variables reflect the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education, such as values, teachings, and Catholic cultural environment, and serve as indicators of how these elements shaped the respondents' leadership formation.

The primary themes that emerged in this category for the interview are as follows:

Theme 1: Formal Faith Formation Classes

Sub-themes: Christian Living Classes, Religious Education Classes, Theology Classes, Other moral and faith formation programmes

Theme Description:

This theme reflects the unique offering of structured faith formation classes within Catholic educational institutions, as emphasised by respondents. In the Philippines, Catholic schools require all students, regardless of personal religious backgrounds, to participate in courses focused on Catholic teachings and values. Respondents highlighted that at the primary and secondary levels, these courses, often titled *Christian Living Education* or *Religion* are integrated into the core curriculum across all year levels, forming a foundational part of the students' education.

At the university level, respondents noted that faith formation continues as part of the General Core Curriculum. Theology courses, required for all students, regardless of their chosen field of study, provide an opportunity to further deepen their understanding of Catholic teachings. These formal faith formation classes, consistently referenced by respondents, reflect a distinctive feature of Catholic education and play a key role in shaping students' moral and ethical perspectives.

Theme 2: Other Non-Faith Formation Classes

Sub-Themes: Philosophy, Arts, Sciences, and Social Awareness Classes

Theme Description:

This theme encompasses subjects areas beyond faith-based education that, while not unique to Catholic institutions, were noted by respondents as influential in their leadership formation within Catholic education. These courses include subjects such as *Philosophy*, *Social Awareness*, *Sciences*, and *Arts*, which provide students with broader perspectives and critical thinking skills.

Although these subjects are commonly offered in both secular and religious educational settings, their integration within the Catholic educational framework adds a unique dimension. Respondents highlighted that these courses encouraged reflective thinking, ethical reasoning, and a commitment to social responsibility,

qualities that have contributed to their development as leaders. This theme illustrates the broader academic influences within Catholic education that support and complement the moral and ethical formation provided by faith-based classes.

Theme 3: Catholic Ethos

Sub-themes: The charism of the school, Patron Saints, School Motto / Tagline, Catholic Practices

Theme Description:

This theme represents the distinctive Catholic identity and cultural elements embedded within Catholic educational institutions. It includes the visible signs, traditions, and experiences that reflect Catholic values and practices, shaping students' formation within a faith-based environment. Respondents identified several aspects of this Catholic ethos, including:

- **School's Charism:** The unique spiritual identity and mission of each institution, often inspired by the vision of its founding religious order.
- **Patron Saints and Their Sayings:** Inspirational figures associated with the school, whose teachings and values are celebrated and integrated into daily student life.
- **School Motto or Tagline:** Phrases or guiding principles rooted in Catholic values that reinforce the school's mission and serve as a moral compass for students.
- **Catholic Practices:** Regular faith-based activities that connect students with Catholic traditions such as the Sacraments, communal prayers, religious events, and catechism.

Through these elements, Catholic educational institutions create a holistic environment that not only imparts academic knowledge but also fosters a strong moral and ethical foundation. This Catholic ethos, expressed in both formal practices and informal cultural expressions, plays a pivotal role in students' personal and leadership development.

Theme 4: Extra-Curricular Activities

Sub-themes: Organisations, Immersion, and Outreach Programmes

Theme Description: This theme encompasses the various activities within Catholic educational institutions that extend beyond formal classes and lectures. These extra-curricular opportunities provide complementary learning experiences that enrich students' personal and leadership development. Respondents highlighted several key types of activities, including:

- **Student Organisations:** Societies and clubs that foster collaboration, leadership, and community engagement, allowing students to apply Catholic values in practical and group-oriented settings.
- **Immersion Programmes:** Experiences that encourage students to engage with marginalised communities, deepening their understanding of social justice and reinforcing the Catholic commitment to service.
- **Outreach Programmes:** Volunteer opportunities and service projects aimed at helping those in need, which promote compassion, empathy, and a sense of responsibility to society.

These extra-curricular activities are integral to Catholic education, as they provide students with hands-on opportunities to live out the values taught in the classroom. By participating in these programmes, students develop skills, empathy, and a strong sense of community, all of which contribute to their growth as compassionate and socially responsible leaders.

Theme 5: Other Aspects Associated with Catholic Education

Sub-themes: Conservatism, Strict Rules and Discipline, Close-mindedness

Theme Description: This theme captures additional cultural elements, practices, and attitudes that respondents uniquely associate with their experience in Catholic educational institutions. These components, while not explicitly tied to academic or faith-based curricula, contribute significantly to the environment and formative experience with Catholic education. Respondents identified aspects such as

- **Conservatism:** A traditional approach in values and norms, often reflected in the moral teachings and behaviour expectations upheld within the school environment.
- **Strict Rules and Discipline:** Rigorous guidelines and structured routines aimed at instilling self-discipline, respect, and responsibility in students.
- **Close-mindedness:** Perception of limited openness to diverse viewpoints, which some respondents felt shaped their experience in both positive and challenging ways.

These elements form a distinctive aspect of Catholic education's cultural identity, influencing students' experiences and, in some cases, shaping their outlook on leadership, ethics, and social norms. By examining these perceptions, this study aims to capture a more comprehensive view of the factors within Catholic education that impact student formation, both positively and critically.

II. Confounding Variables

The themes under Confounding Variables encompass factors within Catholic education that, while not directly related to its formal curriculum, significantly influence students' development and leadership formation. These variables capture the impact of interpersonal relationships, institutional culture, and individual capabilities that interact with the educational experience. These confounding variables add layers of complexity to the Catholic educational experience, as they interact with formal teachings to form students' leadership qualities and moral foundations. Key elements identified by respondents include the influence of teachers and school leaders, peer relationships, engagement with stakeholders, and nurturing of student abilities.

The key themes that emerged in this category for the interview are as follows:

Theme 1: Role of Key Figures in the educational community

Sub-themes: Influence of Teachers/Professors, School Leaders and Administrators, Religious Figures (Nuns and Priests), Mentors, and Peers and Classmates

Theme Description: This theme encompasses the various individuals with Catholic educational institutions who significantly influenced the respondents' leadership development. These influential figures include teachers, professors, school leaders, religious members – such as nuns and priests, mentors, as well as peers and classmates. Each of these groups contributed uniquely to the respondents' experiences, sometimes fostering growth and support, while at other times presenting challenges or differing perspectives.

- **Teachers and Professors:** Through their guidance, encouragement, and role modelling, educators played a crucial role in imparting both academic knowledge and Catholic values. However, some respondents encountered educators strictness and conservatism presented challenges, particularly in areas like critical thinking and openness to diverse viewpoints.
- **School Leaders and Administrators:** Principals, deans, and other administrators influence the overall environment, establishing a culture of discipline, integrity, and service within the institution. However, certain

administrative practices or rigid policies were also cited as limiting students' freedom and self-expression, creating an environment some found overly restrictive.

- **Religious Figures (Nuns and Priests):** As representatives of the Catholic faith, religious members reinforced spiritual teachings, offered moral support, and inspired students to embody Catholic principles in their personal and professional lives. At times, however, the influence of religious figures was perceived as limiting, especially strict adherence to doctrine seemed to inhibit open dialogue or exploration of alternative perspectives.
- **Mentors:** Individual mentors provided personalised guidance and support, fostering the respondents' self-confidence and resilience as they prepared for leadership roles.
- **Peers and Classmates:** Fellow students contributed to a sense of community, that reinforced shared values. However, social dynamics could also be challenging, with some students experiencing peer pressure or exclusion when differing from the norms and values held by the majority.

Theme 2: Opportunities for Nurturing Abilities and Talents

Sub-themes: Student Councils, Leadership Positions and Initiatives, Talent Showcases and Skill Building Activities

Theme Description: This theme highlights the various activities and opportunities provided by Catholic educational institutions to support students in developing their leadership skills and cultivating their unique talents. These experiences, both structured and informal, offered students valuable platforms to grow personally and professionally within a supportive environment. Key opportunities mentioned by respondents include:

- **Student Councils:** Leadership roles within student government allowed students to practice decision-making, responsibility, and collaboration, fostering essential leadership qualities in real-world scenarios.
- **Leadership Positions and Initiatives:** Beyond student councils, additional leadership roles in social clubs, organisational committees, and academic

societies offered students chances to lead projects, organise events, and manage teams, helping them build confidence and communication skills.

- **Talent Showcases and Skill-Building Activities:** Events and competitions, such as talent shows, academic contests, and religious activities, encouraged students to hone and display their abilities, promoting both individual growth and community recognition of their talents.

These opportunities played a pivotal role in shaping students' capabilities and self-perceptions as emerging leaders. By encouraging active participation, Catholic educational institutions provided a structured yet flexible environment where students could explore and develop their strengths, preparing them for future roles in both personal and professional spheres.

III. Extraneous Variables

The themes under Extraneous Variables capture influences beyond the direct educational experience in Catholic educational institutions, reflecting additional factors that shaped respondents' development and leadership formation. These variables encompass family upbringing, social context, and direct religious influences outside the formal educational environment. Each of these elements interacted with the respondents' Catholic education, providing an additional layer of influence that contributed to their personal and professional growth.

Key themes within the Extraneous Variables identified in the interviews include:

Theme 1: Family Influence

Sub-themes: Parental Upbringing, Spouse/Partner Influence, Family Values and Traditions

Theme Description: This theme captures the significant impact of family on respondents' leadership formation, encompassing the values, support, and expectations shaped by family relationships. Family influence extended beyond childhood upbringing to include the role of spouses and partners in the respondents' personal and professional journeys. Key aspects of this theme include:

- **Parental Upbringing:** The foundational values, principles, and work ethics instilled by parents, which shaped respondents' moral compass, and early perspectives on leadership and responsibilities.
- **Partner / Spousal Support:** The encouragement, guidance, and practical support provided by spouses or partners, which influenced respondents' confidence and ability to pursue leadership roles, often enabling a balance between family commitments and professional aspirations.
- **Family Values and Traditions:** Broader cultural and familial beliefs that reinforced or provided alternatives to the teachings within Catholic education, impacting respondents' ethical and moral views, goals, and leadership styles.

These family influences played a crucial role in shaping respondents' identities and leadership approaches, providing both a foundation and ongoing support that enriched their experiences within Catholic education and beyond.

Theme 2: Influences from Individuals Outside of Catholic Education

Sub-themes: Peers outside of Catholic education, Women Role Models, Support from Religious Organisations

Theme Description: This theme encompasses the influence of individuals outside the formal Catholic educational setting who significantly impacted respondents' leadership journeys. These influences came from personal relationships, role models, and supportive communities that contributed to their development in various ways. Key sources of external influence included:

- **Peers outside of Catholic education:** Friends and Colleagues from different educational or professional backgrounds who provided fresh perspectives, alternative viewpoints, and support that enriched respondents' understanding of leadership and broadened their social networks.
- **Women Role Models:** Inspirational women, such as mentors or public figures, who demonstrated leadership qualities that resonated with the respondents, providing examples of resilience, innovation, and integrity in various fields.

- **Support from Religious Organisations:** Engagements with religious groups and communities outside of Catholic education that offered spiritual guidance, mentorship, and leadership training, reinforcing respondents' faith-based values and commitment to service.

These external influences provided respondents with valuable perspectives and support networks that complemented their Catholic education, shaping their leadership styles, moral and ethical views, and personal growth.

Theme 3: Social Context

Sub-themes: Gender-Specific Challenges, Broader Social Contexts of the Time

Theme Description: This theme explores the various societal challenges and contextual factors that shaped the respondents' paths to leadership. These elements reflect the broader social environments, norms, and obstacles that influenced their experiences as women leaders, highlighting both the struggles and the resilience required to navigate them. Key aspects of this theme include:

- **Gender-Specific Challenges:** Unique obstacles encountered by respondents in their pursuit of leadership roles, such as biases, stereotypes, and societal expectations associated with being a woman in leadership, which often require extra perseverance and adaptability.
- **Broader Social Contexts of the Time:** The cultural, political, and economic circumstances during the different phases of their lives, which influenced both opportunities and barriers for women in leadership. These contexts included shifts in gender norms, societal expectations, and changing perceptions of women's role in professional and public life.

By examining these social contexts, this theme captures the external factors that impacted the respondents' leadership journeys, providing insights into resilience, adaptability, and strength they cultivated to overcome societal challenges and thrive as women leaders.

Theme 4: Combination of Catholic Education and Non-Catholic Education

Sub-themes: Formal Education in Both Catholic and Non-Catholic Institutions, Informal exposure to Non-Catholic Environments

Theme Description: This theme examines the experiences of women leaders who were formed by both Catholic and non-Catholic educational environments, exploring how the combination of these two educational settings influenced their leadership development. Respondents who navigated between different types of education often reflected on how the distinct characteristics of each context contributed to their values, leadership styles, and perspectives. Key elements of this theme include:

- **Formal Education in Both Catholic and Non-Catholic Institutions:** Respondents who attended both Catholic and Non-Catholic educational institutions shared insights into how the contrasting approaches to teaching, leadership, and values in these environments shaped their personal and professional growth. They often noted how Catholic education provided strong moral, ethical, and spiritual foundations, while non-Catholic education settings offered more diverse perspectives and opportunities for independent thinking and innovations.
- **Informal Exposure to Non-Catholic Environments:** Beyond formal education, some respondents were exposed to Non-Catholic settings through extracurricular activities, community involvement, or professional experiences. These informal exposures enriched their understanding of different leadership styles and social contexts, helping them develop a more well-rounded approach to leadership.

This theme underscores the dynamic interplay between Catholic and non-Catholic educational influences, highlighting how each setting contributed to shaping the respondents' leadership approaches, moral and ethical frameworks, and ability to navigate diverse environments.

IV. Dependent Variables

The themes under the Dependent Variables reflect the outcomes of the respondents' leadership journeys, encompassing their current moral dispositions, attitudes as leaders, and significant career achievements that propelled them to leadership roles. These themes provide insight into how the combined influence of the Independent, Extraneous, and Confounding Variables shaped their formation and accomplishments as leaders which is now translated to their exercise of the sacramental vision of leadership. These themes illuminate the ways in which various factors interacted to produce tangible outcomes in the respondents' leadership journeys, offering a holistic view of their formation from Catholic education and upbringing to professional success.

Theme 1: Exercise of Discerning Authority

Sub-themes: Ethical Decision-Making, Empathy and Compassion, and Reflection and Prayerful Discernment

Theme Description: This theme highlights instances where respondents demonstrated or practised the Sacramental Vision of Discerning Authority, a leadership approach rooted in Catholic principles that emphasise discernment, thoughtful, and empathetic decision-making, and the exercise of authority. The respondents' experiences revealed how this Sacramental Vision of leadership was applied in their leadership roles, focusing on the careful balance of responsibility, compassion, and moral guidance in their authority. Key elements of this theme include:

- **Ethical Decision-Making:** Situations where respondents exercised their authority and decision-making guided by a deep sense of morality and justice, reflecting the integration of their Catholic formation into their leadership practices.
- **Empathy and Compassion:** Practices that involved considering the perspectives and needs of others before making decisions, showcasing their commitment to fairness and the dignity of individuals.

- **Reflection and Prayerful Discernment:** Instances where respondents relied on reflective and prayerful discernment or consultations with trusted advisors, to guide their leadership decisions depending on each situation, embodying the sacramental vision of Discerning Authority.

This theme illustrates how the respondents carried forward the teachings of Catholic education into their leadership, demonstrating a discerning, and values-driven approach that seeks to lead with careful thought and guidance by the Holy Spirit.

Theme 2: Exercise of Servant Leadership

Sub-themes: Leadership as Service, Solidarity with the Marginalised, and Humility in Service

Theme Description: This theme captures the respondents' practice of Servant Leadership, guided by the Sacramental vision that views leadership as a calling to serve others, particularly the marginalised and underserved. Guided by the Catholic principles of the preferential option for the poor, this leadership style emphasises humility, solidarity, and a deep commitment to justice and service. Respondents' experiences illustrate how they integrated these values into their leadership roles. Key aspects of this theme include:

- **Leadership as Service:** Instances where respondents prioritised the needs of their team, communities, and those they serve, embodying the idea that leadership is about service rather than asserting power and privilege.
- **Solidarity with the Marginalised:** Efforts to stand in solidarity with the poor, oppressed and vulnerable, reflecting a commitment to social justice and a faith-driven desire to uplift those in need.
- **Humility in Leadership:** Instances where respondents humbly lead others and situations while taking on leadership responsibilities.

Theme 3: Exercise of Inclusive Leadership

Sub-themes: Openness to Diversity, Invitational Leadership, Dialogue and Active Listening

Theme Description: This theme highlights the respondents' practice of Inclusive Leadership, inspired by the Sacramental Vision that values the inherent dignity of all individuals and fosters the spirit of openness, dialogue, and collaboration. Inclusive leadership, as expressed by respondents, emphasises embracing diversity, creating welcoming environments, and ensuring that all voices are heard and respected. Key aspects of this theme include:

- **Openness to Diversity:** Leadership practices that celebrate and respect differences in background, culture, perspectives, and experiences. Respondents actively worked to build inclusive environment where everyone felt welcomed and valued.
- **Invitational leadership:** An approach characterised by inviting others to participate and collaborate ensuring that decisions are informed by wide range of perspectives. This reflects a commitment to shared responsibility and collective growth.
- **Dialogue and Active Listening:** A strong focus on fostering meaningful dialogue and actively listening to others. Respondents demonstrated a willingness to engage with differing opinions and learn from those they serve ensuring respect and inclusivity.

The practice of Inclusive Leadership as described by respondents reflects a commitment to creating environments where everyone feels valued and supported. Rooted in Catholic Values of human dignity and compassion, this approach aligns with the Sacramental Vision of Leadership as an inclusive vocation that seeks to welcome and collaborate with others regardless of their background and circumstances.

Theme 4: The Practice of Moral Upbringing in Daily Life

Sub-themes: Faith in Daily Life, Living out the Values, Challenges in Sustaining Moral Practices

Theme Description: This theme captures the various ways respondents integrate their moral and ethical values, often rooted in the formation they have received in Catholic education, into their everyday lives. It explores how their educational experiences shaped their faith practices, ethical decision-making, and broader moral outlooks, regardless of their specific religious affiliations. For respondents who do not identify with the Catholic faith, this theme highlights how Catholic education influenced their non-religious moral dispositions and principles. Key elements of this theme include:

- **Faith in Daily Life:** Instances where respondents practice their Catholic faith through prayer, participation in Sacraments, acts of charity, or living according to the Gospel values. These practices reflect a deep integration of faith into personal and professional spheres.
- **Living out the Values:** For both Catholic and non-Catholic respondents, this includes a commitment to values aligned with Christian teachings such as integrity, respect for human dignity, justice, truth, and dedication to the common good.
- **Challenges in Sustaining Moral Practices:** Some respondents also reflected on the difficulties of maintaining their moral or faith-based practices amidst the demand of leadership or societal pressure and expectations, showcasing the ongoing efforts to align actions with deeply held values.

This theme demonstrates how Catholic education, regardless of respondents' current religious beliefs, provided lasting effects and a framework for living a values-driven life. It highlights the profound influence of moral and spiritual formation on their personal and professional choices, whether expressed through faith-based practices or secular commitments to moral and spiritual choices.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the extent of the influence and effects of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. Building on the findings presented in the previous chapter, it integrates quantitative data obtained through survey questionnaires with qualitative insights derived from in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines.

Acknowledging the multifaceted nature of leadership formation and development, this study organises its thematic analysis around key variables: Independent, Confounding, Extraneous, and Dependent presented in the Result Chapter. While these variables were used to structure the presentation of the result, this chapter will not follow the same variable-based categorisation. Instead, the discussion prioritises the thematic framework established in the Literature Review to maintain a focused exploration of the effects and influences of Catholic education.

Variables are addressed primarily in terms of their interactions and intersections with the formation provided by Catholic education, rather than as independent factors. This approach ensures alignment with the study's central aim of understanding the effects and influences of Catholic education in the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. This framework is crucial for mitigating potential biases and ensuring a comprehensive and critical evaluation of the influence of Catholic education and how it interacts with other variables that may affect the leadership formation of the respondents.

Given the scope and limitations of this research which will be enumerated in the succeeding chapter, the primary focus remains on the specific effects, influences, and contributions of Catholic education to leadership formation.

This chapter presents, discusses, and analyses the collected data following the structure established in the Literature Review and is organised into three sections. Section 1 investigates the distinctive nature of Catholic education, Section 2 explores how the sacramental vision of leadership is realised in the leadership styles of women leaders who studied in Catholic education, and Section 3 examines the formation and development of women leaders within this context.

Throughout the analysis, some themes and perspectives emerge across multiple contexts, reflecting the interconnected nature of the research framework. While minimal or no interview extracts were repeated, the connections across sections highlight the intricate interplay of values, education, formation, and leadership challenges in the context of Catholic education.

SECTION 1: DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

A. MORAL FORMATION IN THE FAITH

The first distinctive characteristic of Catholic education highlighted in this research is the moral formation in the faith. The moral formation of the faith is one of the key characteristics of Catholic education that sets it apart from other non-Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines.

In addition to the mandatory core curriculum prescribed by the Philippines' Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education, Catholic educational institutions integrate a required subject focused on the Catholic faith into their core curriculum. This includes subjects such as Christian Living or Religious Education at the primary and secondary levels and Theology at the university level. This inclusion constitutes one of the independent variables identified in this research, as detailed in the Results Chapter. These mandatory classes are provided to all students across all levels enrolled in Catholic educational institutions. The Religious Education, Christian Living, and Theology classes serve as opportunities to educate students in the Catholic faith and provide them with a moral and ethical upbringing aligned with Christian values and principles.

The interview results reveal that participants often closely associate Catholic education with the Catholic religion and its faith practices, sometimes using these

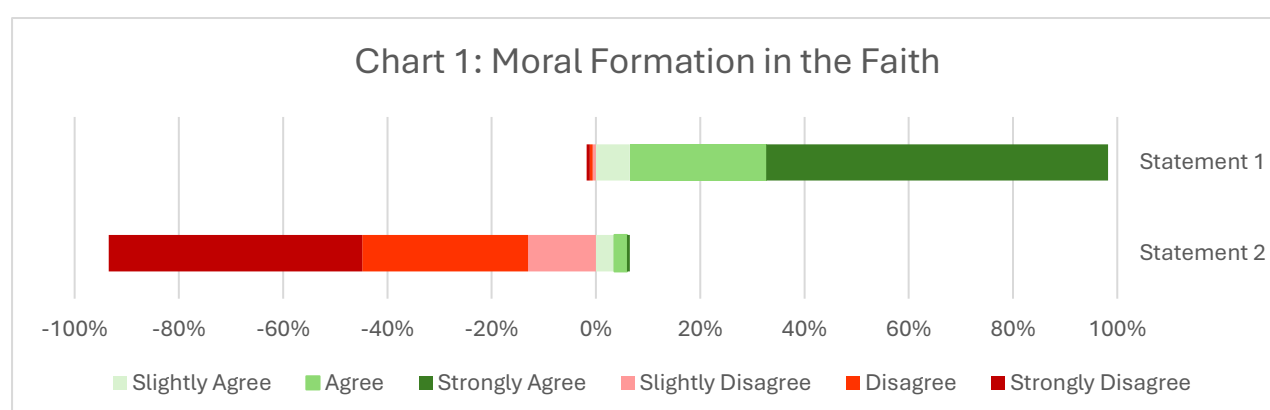
terms interchangeably. As a result, the moral formation in the faith in the research findings is strongly linked to the Catholic faith.

Chart 1 – Moral Formation in the Faith (see below) summarises the quantitative results of the survey for Statements 1 and 2 conducted among 337 women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines. The survey reveals that 221 respondents (66%) strongly agreed with Statement 1, which asserts that the moral formation they received through Catholic education influences their moral principles today. In the survey, “moral principles” were briefly described as choosing the right thing to do.

Additionally, 88 respondents (26%) agreed, and 22 respondents (7%) slightly agreed with the statement. Combined, 331 out of the 337 respondents (98%) expressed varying levels of agreement, affirming the impact of Catholic education on their moral principles.

In contrast, negative responses were minimal, with 2 respondents each (1%) selecting “slightly disagree”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, representing a total of 3% of the sample.

Statement 1 ranked as the second-highest among the 10 statements in Section 1: Distinctive Characteristics of Catholic Education, further highlighting Catholic education’s influence on the moral formation of women leaders in the Philippines.



Statement 1: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced my moral principles (choosing the right thing to do) today.

Statement 2: The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence the values (e.g. integrity, honesty, etc) I uphold today.

The survey questionnaire also included a reversed, negatively worded statement to assess respondents' agreement or disagreement with the influence and effects of Catholic education. For Statement 2: "The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence the values I uphold today, such as integrity, honesty, etc.", the results show that 164 respondents (49%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Additionally, 107 respondents (32%) disagreed, and 44 respondents (13%) slightly disagreed. Combined, 315 out of the 337 respondents (93%) disagreed to varying degrees, affirming that Catholic education influenced their values.

Conversely, 12 respondents (4%) slightly agreed, 8 respondents (2%) agreed, and 2 respondents (1%) strongly agreed, totalling 6% of the sample population who supported the negative statement to some extent.

Statement 2 ranked seventh among the statements in this section, providing a different perspective on the positive influence of Catholic education on the values and leadership formation of women leaders.

The distribution of responses across all survey statements highlights notable statistical differences between agreement and disagreement regarding the moral formation provided by Catholic education and the values upheld by women leaders today. These differences are further illuminated by detailed insights drawn from interviews with nine prominent women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines.

A.1 Role of Family and External Influences

The positive survey results on the influence of Catholic education on the moral formation in the faith of women leaders in the Philippines align closely with insights gathered from interview responses. A key factor in understanding this moral formation is the interplay with extraneous variables, particularly family influence, where parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's moral development.

Qualitative data from the interview emphasised that Catholic education embraces its role as a secondary educator, collaborating with parents to guide students in making

morally sound choices and doing what is right, regardless of their age. These findings echo themes from the literature review, which highlight families as the foundational roots of moral upbringing. Students entering Catholic schools bring with them diverse family and faith backgrounds, further enriching the moral formation process within these institutions.

As noted in the Congregation for Catholic Education's (CCE; 2014:1) document, a strong alliance and collaboration between parents and educators is essential in providing a holistic Catholic education and moral formation in the faith. The interview responses further revealed how this collaboration extends beyond the classroom, as former students expressed their desire to pass on the same Catholic education to their own children and future generations. This echoes the CCE's (1988:18) observation that the connection between Catholic schools and parents is not just one of convenience but a vital partnership rooted in the shared mission of faith formation.

Definitely, Catholic Education has a big impact. Going to a Catholic school or university, you're guided by the philosophy or the principles of being Catholic. And because of that, it became a non-negotiable when I had kids. I find that with Catholic education, it's the type that when you're not there, if a parent is not there anymore, you fall back to that Catholic formation that you have in school, and that will be enough to guide you in doing or deciding between doing what is right and what is wrong. – Leader 8

I'm not regretful that my mother put me in this Catholic school, where even when you're already in college, the dean would still call your father just to say that "your daughter is becoming rebellious". – Leader 4

A.2. Educational Practices in Catholic Education

The interview also revealed that, consistent with the teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CDF;1994:1784) discussed in the literature review, a key aspect of moral formation in the faith within Catholic education is the education of the conscience. One of the independent variables identified in the influence of Catholic education is its provision of moral and faith formation through mandatory Religious Education and Theology classes, spanning from primary school to university level. This process is tailored to be age-appropriate, ranging from simple concepts like the introduction of heaven and hell to a more complex discussion on morality that

requires discernment, allowing them to understand and shape their personal moral and ethical perspectives.

I think the most important in terms of my work, which deals with integrity, is the way I've been brought up concerning morality in the Catholic religion. I mean, the very important thing is there is that you have punishment in the Catholic religion or, for example, heaven and hell, these kinds of beliefs. So I guess that going to hell would be a deterrent for anyone who's been brought up in Catholic education. So you want to do it the right way. Maybe it helped me, but I don't see how it served other Catholic leaders. I mean, in the Philippines, it's mostly Catholic leaders, but they're still very corrupt. So I don't know how punishment can come as a deterrent to them. But I guess in a way, my morality, which was brought up by the Catholics, helped me. I would say a little bit, but not that much. – Leader 3

One of the excerpts from the interview seen below illustrates how Catholic education inculcates moral formation in the faith by teaching the importance of critical thinking and the need to suspend judgment when handling difficult and challenging situations that require moral decision-making.

I think the most beautiful thing about Jesuit education is that they really teach you to think. And just to make sure that you have a moral compass. It also introduces the idea, that it's gonna be hard and you're gonna be faced with difficult situations. And you don't just say "this is right or wrong" also. You also consider other factors, etcetera, and then you have to use your own brain and heart. – Leader 5

However, it is important to note that while Catholic education places significant emphasis on educating the conscience, as evidenced by the qualitative findings from the interview, the variation in respondents' levels of agreement with Statement 1 in the quantitative result may be attributed to differences in their understanding and acceptance of the formation. This formation is often reflected in one's practice of faith in daily life, which is identified as one of the dependent variables.

A.3 Impact on Leadership and Values

While Theology and Religious Education classes are effective in providing students with foundational knowledge about faith and morality, it is crucial to remember that, the example and witnessing of role models especially teachers and school leaders play an even greater role in ensuring that students live out the Christian values and

morality in their daily lives. This includes the formation outside of the classroom setting. As Leader 9 added:

Looking back now, I wish my Catholic education made me understand more the rudiments of interpersonal relationships (horizontal) and the relationship we have to develop with the Lord (vertical.) We could have had a more effective way of teaching the subject of Theology. – Leader 9

Thus, Catholic education not only provides structured faith and moral formation but also serves as a platform for students to witness lived examples of Christian values, which significantly shapes their ability to practice those values as adults.

Additionally, the role of educators, school leaders and other key figures within Catholic education, identified as confounding variables in the Result Section, significantly influences this process. These individuals serve as role models, guiding students on how to embody and practice moral formation in their everyday lives. Leader 8 reflected on the inspiration she drew from the religious sisters and the education they provided, which shaped her values and now inspires her in her professional life.

The sisters inspired me, the education that they gave me and the memories that I have of the education that I received, which I am now giving back, all of which serve as an inspiration for carrying out my assignment. – Leader 8

Similarly, Leader 1 contrasted her experiences in Catholic and Non-Catholic education, noting that Catholic educators go beyond academic instruction by offering guidance and support, creating an environment of care and personal growth.

So I am just comparing my Catholic education and Non-Catholic education which is completely opposite. So, really they are completely opposite. In Non-Catholic Education, bahala ka sa sarili mo (you deal with your own life), but in Catholic University, when you approach a professor, they will guide you. They lend their ears. – Leader 1

These examples illustrate how Catholic education fosters moral formation not only through formal instructions but also through the lived example and role modelling of its educators.

As highlighted in the literature review, *Gravissimum Educationis* document from the Second Vatican Council (1965a:7), Catholic education bears the responsibility for the moral and religious upbringing of all children under their care, regardless of their faith backgrounds. The Council Fathers emphasised the Church's mission to extend its educational and pastoral care to students from diverse backgrounds, calling on teachers to serve as living witnesses of Christ through their actions and moral examples.

This role is particularly critical in the Philippines, where the Catholic population is vast, with over 80 million Catholics but only approximately 11,000 priests to serve and minister to them, resulting in an overwhelming ratio of one priest for every 7,000+ Catholics, far exceeding the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) recommended ratio of 1:2000 ratio (Inquirer;2023:Online). Given this shortage of clergy, Catholic Education fills a vital gap by offering pastoral care and faith formation, especially for students from non-religious or nominally Catholic family backgrounds.

The literature review notes faith formation in Catholic education, such as the mandatory core curriculum subjects of Christian Living, Religious Education and Theology classes serve as the first meaningful faith and moral formation for many students. These classes not only introduced students to the Christian faith but also created an environment where they could reflect on their own values and develop their moral principles. This aligns with the call for teachers to embody Christian values, serving as role models and living examples of Christ, that can inspire both Catholic and non-Catholic students.

Leader 1 shared her personal experience, noting that her exposure to formal theology began only during college at the University of Santo Tomas:

In my Elementary (Primary School) and High School (Secondary School), I was enrolled in public schools¹⁰, and when I took up law (Juris Doctor), it was also a public school, the University of the Philippines. So it was only during my college years when I entered the University of Santo Tomas that I was formally introduced to Theology¹¹. – Leader 1

¹⁰ In the Philippines, Public Schools are State-Owned Schools with Free Tuition fees

¹¹ Theology is a mandatory subject in the Catholic Colleges and Universities in the Philippines.

She further explained how this theological foundation influenced her later life decisions, particularly when faced with religious uncertainties:

After I was married, my husband was searching for a religion. He explored many options – attending evangelist services and even visiting Brother Eddie¹². We also welcomed Seventh-Day Adventists into our home. But since I remember my theology classes, so I refused to be part of any of this. – Leader 1

By embedding faith and moral formation classes into the core curriculum, Catholic educational institutions provide students with a holistic formation that combines academic instruction with value-based learning. This dual focus is central to what sets Catholic education apart, fostering both intellectual growth and moral character.

Nothing really sets it (Catholic Education) apart, except that you have... (pause) well, at least during our time, and I don't know about now, we would have Mass on certain occasions and then we always had Theology (as part of the core curriculum). - Leader 4

A.4. Challenges and Opportunities in Faith Formation

There is a slight discrepancy between the results of the moral formation received in Catholic education and the values that women leaders uphold today. For Statement 1, only 6 respondents expressed support for Catholic education, while 22 respondents expressed a lack of support and influence from Catholic education in Statement 2. Notably, 164 respondents (49%) strongly disagreed with Statement 2, which claimed that Catholic education did not influence the values they uphold today, compared to 221 respondents (66%) who strongly agreed that Catholic education influenced their moral principles today, ranking seventh place in Section 1.

The interview data reveals that women leaders acknowledge the significant influence of Catholic education on their moral principles and how these principles are applied in their leadership roles. However, as suggested in the thematic summary in the Result section (See B.iii. Summary of the Qualitative Results), the discrepancy

¹² Brother Eddie Villanueva is an evangelist and president-founder of the Jesus Is Lord Church, based in the Philippines

between responses can be a consequence of some extraneous variables such as family influence, peer influence, social context, and the formation they have received outside of Catholic education.

As Leader 9 remarked:

The faith grounded me. But I could also say that success in leadership could also be attributed to other elements like family, job, experience, etc. - Leader 9

The variation in the influence of Catholic education on moral principles and values upheld by women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions can be further explained through these interview responses, highlighting the complex interplay of multiple factors shaping their values and leadership.

Many students who enter Catholic education later in life, such as in secondary school, university, or postgraduate studies, may already have established certain sets of values shaped by their family and social backgrounds. In these cases, the role of Catholic education is to provide an environment where these pre-existing values and moral principles are nurtured and practised.

As Leader 7 shared:

I actually go back to my childhood, thinking of influences in the family. So I think very early on, I learned from my parents the value of serving other people or being mindful of other people who are not as fortunate as me, or not as fortunate as us. – Leader 7

Similarly, Leader 6 reflected:

So I felt that the ambience and the environment of a Catholic school fitted with my personality and what I like to do. I like to help. I was that kind of child. Catholic education fits the values that I have. Although I was not aware that they were values, I just like to do those things. But then, I became more self-aware of others, that I am there not for myself but rather to work with others and to help others. The other thing that I experienced in my many years in Catholic school is that I always felt that I needed to do the right thing in my life. So doing what is right was something that I absorbed and lived out. – Leader 6

This underscores the idea that Catholic education plays a vital role in fostering moral principles and values formation, even for those who may have entered with pre-existing values, allowing them to deepen their sense of service, self-awareness and commitment to doing what is right.

Although only a minority of the responses indicated that Catholic education had little influence on their moral principles and values, it is important to highlight that women leaders recognised that formation in the faith they received in Catholic education was a good preparation for tackling and navigating moral issues and situations, particularly in leadership roles.

As Leader 9 explained:

A Catholic education can be a good preparation platform for any woman leader, in my opinion. I don't mean that to have studied in a Catholic institution is already a good preparation. I mean – that person should also learn to practice the Faith. She should have imbibed our Christian values well and be grounded with them. She does not succumb to relativism.

But there are other factors which should make a leader successful: management skills, interpersonal relations, comprehensive information, etc... Our values in the Faith should be able to weave themselves into all aspects of the leader's life and profession. -Leader 9

This recognition aligns with the goals of Catholic education described in the literature review, from the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education's document (1982:32), which emphasises that living out the Christian values in a secular world is possible when students are presented with role models who embody the faith. The document stated that "conduct is always much more important than speech". This underscores the importance of living out Christian values while navigating the realities of the secular environment, which can sometimes lack these examples.

Women leaders interviewed in this study also emphasised the relevance and ultimate goal of moral formation in this modern world pointing out the importance of integrating faith into everyday life, making it relevant beyond religious rituals and prayers.

As Leader 7 noted:

The Philippines is 80% Catholic, so definitely, there's a huge role of Catholic institutions in general, whether they're educational institutions, church institutions or non-government organisations – play a crucial role. They need to stay connected to real-world issues and make the practice of the faith relevant. *Hindi lang dasal sa kwarto* (It is not just praying inside your bedroom) and in your own little world. Catholic education, especially since it reaches younger people, has the potential to form good people with good values, which can have a significant impact on the country.” – Leader 7

Similarly, Leader 1 reflected on the need for a deeper understanding of the faith, because many do not fully grasp the reality of the Christian faith because they haven't studied it deeply:

It was only later in life that I realised that we really need to study our faith more deeply, not just knowing and reciting the basic prayers like “Our Father”. We need to understand our faith. We have to study it further. We need the philosophy for that because *napaka-philosophical ang religion* (religion is very philosophical). – Leader 1

A.5. Catholic Ethos and Charism

Another Independent Variable identified in the Result section is the Catholic Ethos of the educational institution. The identity of a Catholic school and its charism, often celebrated through the recognition of the Patron Saints and founders, play a pivotal role in shaping the moral and spiritual formation of the students. The lives of the Saints serve as powerful testimonies, offering both children and adults tangible examples of how to live out their faith. Including lessons on the lives of the Saints in the curriculum, particularly in Theology and Religious Education classes, is highly recommended. These stories resonate with students, as noted by Leader 7:

I remember the story of our founder, which struck me even as early as grade school. Whether she was already a saint or not, her story had a profound impact on me. She dedicated her life to a mission of education, going against the usual path expected of young people. So that actually struck me as early as grade school and in high school. – Leader 7

However, there is a recognised need to deepen this focus. As Leader 1 pointed out, the basic teachings often lack depth, and some students only remember the stories of the Saints from hearing them at Church.

Leader 1 noted,

During my time, we studied the basics, not in-depth and I didn't remember much of it. I only recall things because I hear them every Sunday in church. There are Saints celebrated every day, (*pag-aaralan lang yung basic hindi yung in-depth and hindi mo maalala. Kaya ko lang naalala because I hear it every Sunday sa Church, pero diba everyday meron Saint, yung feast day*) but we weren't taught how to learn from their lives and apply those lessons in daily life. I wish they had included that in our education. – Leader 1

In addition to Saints' stories, short sayings and mottos derived from Catholic tradition, such as school taglines, help reinforce moral principles. These simple yet powerful phrases serve as constant reminders for students about the values taught within Catholic education. As Leader 7 shared:

In my school, we had a tagline, "Women of Faith and Service". We use it all the time and it really stuck with me. – Leader 7

Similarly, other respondents highlighted how these taglines shaped their values and focus. Leader 8 reflected:

I keep saying, "Building the kingdom of God!", "All for Jesus, in Jesus", that keeps me focused. – Leader 8

The influence of Ignatian Spirituality was also evident in statements from other participants. Leader 2 noted:

"Cura Personalis"¹³ - It is a very Ignatian spirituality and teaching. You know it is their values because you always hear about it, they always say it. – Leader 2

Leader 7 echoed this, explaining how Jesuit education shaped her moral outlook:

The sayings or taglines that Jesuit Education inculcated like "Cura Personalis"¹⁴ which means "care for others" had a significant impact on me, more so than "Magis"¹⁵. Cura Personalis, along with the preferential option for the poor and Catholic Social Teaching, were central to my understanding. – Leader 7

¹³ Cura Personalis is a Latin word which means Care for the whole person. The expression is a hallmark of Ignatian Spirituality used by the Jesuits or the Society of Jesus.

¹⁴ Latin phrase meaning "care for the person," *Cura Personalis* is having concern and care for the personal development of the whole person. This implies a dedication to promoting human dignity and care for the mind, body and spirit of the person.

¹⁵ *Magis* is a Latin word meaning "more", "the most", "the greatest", or "the best". St. Ignatius of Loyola often used this word, taking it to mean living fully, deeply; serving selflessly.

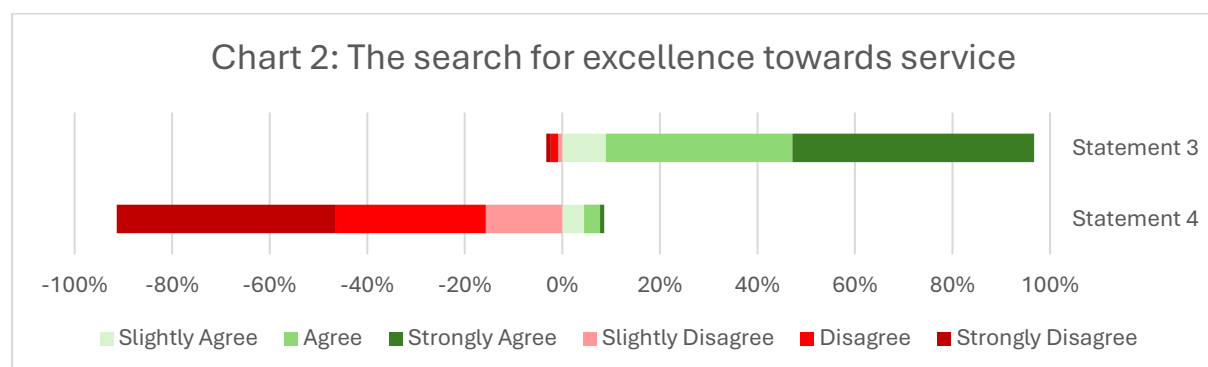
While the Independent Variables such as curriculum contents, teaching materials, and Catholic ethos are essential in shaping moral formation, the Confounding Variables such as the role of teachers and school leaders are equally influential and important. Teachers and school leaders who exemplify the Christian values they teach and live out their faith become role models for their students, helping them embrace these moral principles in their daily lives. As Leader 2 shared:

It is because many of the teachers, on many levels subscribed to the Ignatian values. It was visible in praying before classes. My history professor was even a priest, so obviously the Ignatian values were incorporated in various classes, even if it was not a Theology class per se. – Leader 2

This demonstrates the importance of the entire school community, not just the formal curriculum, in fostering an environment where faith is lived and taught. This holistic approach is the distinctive nature of Catholic education of providing moral formation in the faith.

B. THE SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE TOWARDS SERVICE

Catholic education is dedicated to creating an environment where students can realise their full potential by developing their intellect, skills, and talents. Rooted in a commitment to excellence in service, its mission is to provide high-quality education that prepares students to be successful and contributing members of society. One of the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education is the search for excellence towards service. At its core, it aims to empower students to strive for excellence, not only for their personal growth but also to serve others and positively impact and contribute to society.



Statement 3: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to use my talents and capabilities.

Statement 4: The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me to work excellently.

Summarised in Chart 2: Search for Excellence towards Service, the survey conducted among 337 women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines reveals that 167 out of 337 (50%) strongly agreed with Statement 3, which stated that the formation they have received in Catholic education influenced them on how they use their talents and capabilities. Additionally, 129 out of 337 (38%) agreed, and 30 out of the 337 (9%) slightly agreed. Statement 3 ranked sixth among the 10 statements in Section 1: Distinctive Characteristics of Catholic Education, reflecting the positive impact of Catholic education on the development and application of talents and capabilities of women leaders.

B.1. Leadership and Talents

The survey's score distributions across each statement highlight differences in agreement regarding the influence of Catholic education on the use of talents and capabilities among the respondents. The quantitative data reveal that a majority of respondents believe their Catholic education shaped their ability to use their talents and capabilities in a meaningful way. This aligns with the literature review on the teachings of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE), which emphasises that the ultimate goal of Catholic schools is to guide students toward a total commitment to Christ while developing their God-given talents to serve society and the common good (SCCE; 1977:40).

This formative influence of Catholic education, as outlined by the SCCE, is reflected in the qualitative data. The interviews provide further insights into these disparities, offering a more nuanced explanation of the agreement and disagreement trends.

The interview findings highlight the positive influence Catholic education had on nurturing the talents and capabilities of these women leaders during their formative

years. Catholic education offered interdisciplinary opportunities that enabled students, particularly women, to explore and develop their full potential.

For example, Leader 7 shared her early experiences of leadership:

As early as grade one, I was already a class officer, though I had no idea what I was doing then. I just remember “wanting to take care of people” which are my classmates. I think that early leadership experience carried through my profession, manifesting in different ways, whether as president of an organisation or even in informal roles within my family and group of friends. – Leader 7

Leader 2 recalled a specialised mathematics programme at her university:

I remember a special class for students who were really good at Maths. It was a “talented programme” and only top Math students were invited to join that class. It was a great experience, we solved complex math problems and competed as math geeks. – Leader 2 Q5

Leader 5, a prominent performer, reflected on her artistic experiences in her Catholic schools:

In grade school, it was all about the arts. So in terms of appreciating the arts, and already performing in PICC with Lea Salonga¹⁶, that was all when I was in grade school. Later in high school, I became deeply involved in singing during Masses. I would sing the responsorial psalms in most of the Masses. That helped me start my career as a performer. – Leader 5 Q3

While many of these opportunities are not exclusive to Catholic education as they can also be experienced in non-Catholic educational institutions, they are considered Confounding Variables that contributed to the formation and development of these women leaders.

B.2. Holistic Formation for Effective Service

The interdisciplinary opportunities and experiences have translated into how they fulfil the leadership roles and responsibilities they now hold. Additionally, through a variety of academic and extracurricular activities, Catholic education provided students with valuable opportunities to refine and develop their talents and skills, including those they may not have been naturally inclined toward or proficient in.

¹⁶ Award Winning International Performer

Leader 2 highlighted how Catholic education provided a holistic education that went beyond developing her natural talents, it equipped her with additional skills, enabling her to serve others more effectively.

We were told that graduates of my Catholic university are better at communicating and writing. Physicists often struggle with writing, but for our graduates, it seems we are more comfortable with it. Among my colleagues, I'm already considered better at writing, though it's mostly numbers and formulas. I write very few papers compared to those who are social science researchers, but the point is that graduates of my university are generally more communicative. I think this comes from the many classes that we need to write essays where even written communication is highly valued. – Leader 2

These reflections underscore the wide range of opportunities Catholic education provided to these women leaders, fostering both intellectual and creative pursuits. Such experiences resonate with the guidance of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, as highlighted in the Literature Review, which emphasises that Catholic education is more than intellectual development, it also involves forming students to use their talents in the service of others (CBCP; 2012, p12).

Leader 4 further emphasised that the holistic formation provided in Catholic education instils a sense of discipline, both in theory and in practice which is very important in leadership.

Oh, definitely. It did play a part (in my leadership). Catholic education gives you a certain discipline in taught and practice. And of course, it's also up to you what you will retain and what you will discard. How much are you taking it seriously? But I think it gives you a good base. – Leader 4

A possible explanation for the responses indicating disagreement on the influence of Catholic education on how women leaders use their talents and capabilities could be the presence of Confounding Variables. While Catholic education offers numerous opportunities for students to develop their talents and leadership skills through both academic settings and extra-curricular activities, the success of these initiatives often depends on the student's initiative and willingness to engage and participate in those programmes. Another factor for participation is the type of activities and programmes available and being offered.

For instance, participation in leadership and service-oriented activities is often driven by personal initiative, as illustrated by Leader 4:

When I taught Catechism, it was because I volunteered. The class did not go there. I took the initiative. – Leader 4

Similarly, Leader 2 shared how her focus on academic classes and scientific pursuits, particularly in Physics, limited her engagement with leadership activities.

As for the leadership part, I think I was a late bloomer because I focused heavily on Physics, unlike my other colleagues who were very active in organisations serving the poor. They were tutoring kids in impoverished areas. I wasn't involved in that. They formed their leadership through those interactions with other people. There was so much opportunity like that during college. Through that, they also gained mentorship from leaders and support from the university. But I was not like that. I did not partake, because I was just in the library. I was trying to make up for all the Physics that I did not learn because of the core courses. – Leader 2

This suggests that while Catholic education provides ample opportunities for leadership development, individual outcomes may vary based on personal priorities and initiatives. Students who actively engage in activities provided to enhance their talents, skills, and leadership capabilities benefit more from these experiences.

Statement 4: "The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me to work excellently", garnered the following responses: 151 out of 337 (45%) of respondents "strongly disagree" with this statement, while 104 out of the 337 (31%) "disagree", and 53 out of the 337 (16%) "slightly disagree". Conversely, 3 out of 337 (1%) "strongly agree", 11 out of the 337 (3%) "agree", and 15 out of 337 (4%) "slightly agree". This made Statement 4 the lowest-ranked among the 10 statements in Section 1: Distinctive Characteristics of Catholic Education, reflecting how women leaders perceived the impact of Catholic education on their work ethics and pursuit of excellence.

B.3. Challenges in the pursuit of excellence

The survey results highlight a disparity between levels of agreement and disagreement regarding Catholic education's influence on working excellently. The majority disagreement indicates that most respondents believe Catholic education positively influenced their pursuit of excellence in their work. However, qualitative interview data offers the perspectives of the minority who expressed agreement with the statement provided. Some respondents remarked that Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines sometimes place less emphasis on intellectual rigour and discipline compared to non-Catholic institutions. These experiences may have shaped the views of those who felt Catholic education did not strongly contribute to their work ethics and pursuit of excellence.

Qualitative insights suggest that while Catholic education provides a foundation of quality instruction, it may sometimes lack the level of intensity and rigour necessary to cultivate a pursuit of excellence in the workplace. This quality of thoroughness and precision in work is an important quality needed for leadership roles. As Leader 6 shared:

I think in a Catholic school there is a tendency to be content with "good enough" whereas in non-Catholic education, you are required to be really good. The pursuit of excellence, particularly intellectual rigour, was something that I sharpened in non-Catholic education and setting. In the Philippines, I noticed that the value of excellence isn't a top priority. I don't know if it's cultural in Filipino. It is more on getting by, or the attitude of "Pwede na" ("That will do") or "Makapasa lang" ("I just need a passing mark"), or "Bahala na!" ("Whatever happens, happens!"). It's a form of mediocrity or settling for what can pass. Over time, as you advance in education and leadership, you realise the importance of intellectual rigour and striving for excellence. – Leader 6

This observation aligns with insights shared by Leader 1, who compared her experience in Catholic and Non-Catholic universities:

In my non-Catholic University, you learn to think on your feet, because you are asked hard questions and you have to give logical answers. It is not just about knowing the law, but addressing loopholes and defending your position. Argue if you must. That's what I have learned at a Non-Catholic university, where critical thinking and intellectual discipline were heavily emphasised. – Leader 1

These reflections highlight an important tension between the nurturing ethos of Catholic Education and the need for rigorous intellectual development. Literature on Catholic education acknowledges this balance. Lydon (2019:35) critiques the concept of “quality in secular terms”, arguing that failing to meet secular standards compromises two central characteristics of Catholic education – the search for excellence and the recognition of the dignity and uniqueness of each individual.

For Catholic education especially when forming students towards leadership, maintaining a balance between academic rigour and their distinct Catholic mission and characteristics is critical. Leader 6’s observation reflects this tension, highlighting how Catholic education’s emphasis on pastoral care must be paired with efforts to meet high intellectual standards. Striving for excellence should not only include academic achievement but also uphold Catholic education’s commitment to recognising and nurturing the dignity and potential of every individual. This integration can prepare students to lead with both competence and character, embodying the full promise of Catholic education.

B.4. Cultural and Political Context

The lower score for Statement 4 may also be influenced by Confounding Variables of the role of key figures within the Catholic education environment and Extraneous Variables of the social and cultural context related to the nature of Catholic education in the Philippines. Catholic schools and universities in the Philippines are privately owned, apart from the mission schools in rural and urban poor areas, a significant portion of the student body comes from affluent families. This can create an environment where there is less pressure on students to excel academically, as their social status often provides a safety net. Educators and school leaders may feel hesitant to enforce rigorous academic standards for fear of complaints, withdrawal of financial support, or students transferring to other schools.

As Leader 2 pointed out:

Parents especially the very wealthy, tend to be overprotective. They don't want their kids to "suffer". In Catholic schools, this can be a barrier, as some students and parents may not value excellence and hard work as much, relying instead on their existing social status. This mentality can prevent schools from pushing students to strive for more. – Leader 2

Leader 3 also shared how her family's social standing influenced her experience in Catholic education.

When I was in Catholic primary school, I was kicked out of the school for being part of a *magulo* (rowdy) group, there was no real reason for it. So maybe I was a bit unruly, but nothing out of the ordinary - no drugs, no smoking. Nowadays, to get rid of someone like that and not give the reason, you would be sued by the parents to high heavens. Later, when I transferred to another Catholic school, where the land had been donated by my grandfather, I was basically allowed to do whatever I wanted. The nuns didn't discipline me, and money and status were the driving forces. – Leader 3

These anecdotes suggest that for some students, particularly from privileged backgrounds, Catholic schools may have avoided imposing rigorous standards and disciplines, leading to a perception of academic leniency or a lack of focus on excellence. This aligns with the idea socio-economic factors can act as Extraneous Variables, affecting the extent to which Catholic education is perceived to search for excellence towards service.

Further complicating this dynamic is the political and social context in which many students grew up.

Leader 4 shared how involvement in political activism led her parents to send her abroad, reflecting the tension between academic life and societal expectations.

I upset my parents by getting too involved in teach-ins¹⁷ and activism. They sent me to Spain because they feared I was becoming too radical. I was also disappointed by the student leaders, who didn't seem to have solid intentions. – Leader 4

¹⁷ A **teach-in** is similar to a general educational forum on any complicated issue, usually an issue involving current political affairs.

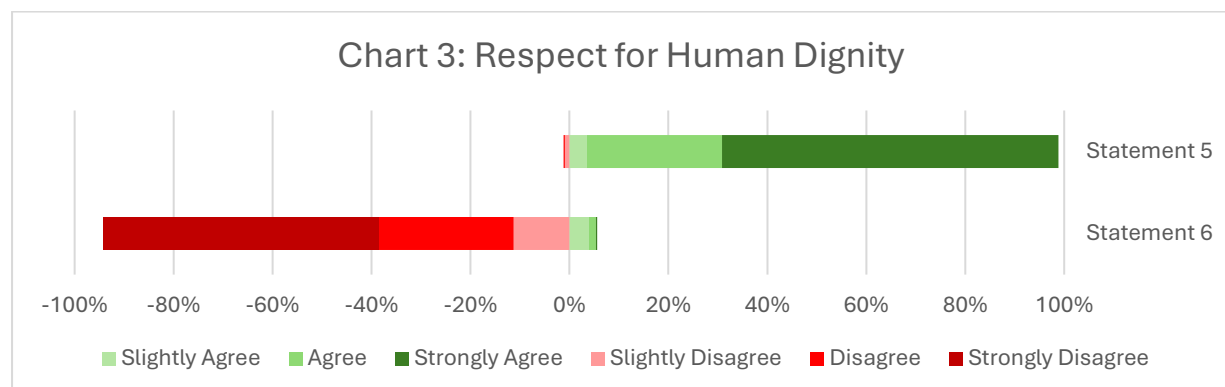
Similarly, Leader 8 recounted her activism during the Marcos regime, which led to her being sent away by her concerned mother.

I went to a Catholic school which was very exclusive. Most of us belong to a certain level of society. When I started joining demonstrations during Marcos era, my mother got scared. She thought I would be arrested and taken to Camp Crame, so she sent me away. – Leader 8

In conclusion, the qualitative data provide a nuanced explanation for the mixed responses to Statement 4. While many women leaders acknowledge that Catholic education played a significant role in fostering commitment to excellence, others pointed out Confounding and Extraneous Variables such as family influence, socio-economic privileges, and cultural attitudes, that may influence or have hindered the development of excellence in intellectual rigour or discipline. These factors, combined with student initiative and experiences help explain the disparities in the effects and influence of Catholic education in searching for excellence towards service.

C. RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

The distinctive characteristic of Catholic education - Respect for Human Dignity is deeply rooted in the Christian teaching that all individuals are created in the image and likeness of God. This principle underpins the Catholic Church's emphasis on the preferential option for the poor, a doctrine that broadens the definition of poverty beyond material deprivation to encompass psycho-social and spiritual poverty.



Statement 5: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I respect human dignity.

Statement 6: The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I respect the poor and marginalised.

Chart 3: Respect for Human Dignity, highlights the survey results among 337 women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines. An overwhelming 229 out of 337 (68%) “strongly agree” to Statement 5: *The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I respect human dignity*. Another 92 out of 337 (27%) “agree” and 12 out of 337 (4%) “slightly agree”, bringing the total agreement to 99%. Conversely, only 1% expressed disagreement, distributed as 3 respondents “slightly disagree”, 1 respondent “disagree” and none “strongly disagreeing” to statement 5. This high level of agreement underscores the significant influence of Catholic education in fostering respect for human dignity. Among the ten statements in Section 1: The Distinctive Characteristics of Catholic Education, Statement 5 garnered the highest positive response.

Similarly, Statement 6: *The formation I received in Catholic Education DID NOT influence me on how I respect the poor and the marginalised* showed strong disagreement from respondents, affirming Catholic education’s role in promoting compassion and social justice. A majority, 188 out of 337 (56%) respondents “strongly disagree” with the statement, while 92 out of 337 (27%) “disagree” and 38 out of 337 (11%) “slightly disagree”. Only 13 out of 337 respondents “slightly agree”, 5 out of the 337 “agree” and 1 out of 337 “strongly agree” indicated otherwise. Statement 6 ranked third among the ten statements in Section 1, further affirming the strong influence of Catholic education on this aspect.

C.1. Lessons on Compassion

These quantitative findings align with interview responses, which consistently highlight how the values imparted through Catholic education profoundly influence women leaders’ respect for others, particularly those who are less fortunate. For

example, Leader 6 reflected on how her Catholic education instilled in her the importance of compassion and respect:

The value of compassion and respect for others. These values were always something that I absorbed. I really learned that from school. – Leader 6

Leader 4 similarly recalled being taught to show kindness to those of lesser means:

We were always taught to be kinder to people who are of lesser means. - Leader 4

While Leader 9 highlighted the Christian teaching to “love your neighbour as yourself”

The specific lesson in Catholic education I go back to until now is “Love God and love your neighbours as thyself; do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” – Leader 9 Q4

These testimonies align with the Literature review finding on Catholic education’s emphasis on respect for human dignity, as articulated in the Catholic Church’s teachings. Catholic education seeks to form the whole person, recognising and honouring the inherent and inalienable dignity of every individual. This foundational belief stems from the Biblical teaching that all people are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27).

C.2. Catholic Social Teaching in Action

Beyond the broad testimonies of women leaders regarding the lessons and formation they have received in Catholic education related to respect for human dignity, one of the themes considered as an Independent Variable in the influence of Catholic education is the role of extracurricular activities. These include Immersion programmes and Outreach programmes, which actively foster respect for human dignity among students. Immersion programmes in particular provide direct exposure to the realities faced by marginalised communities, enabling students to develop empathy and a deeper understanding of social inequities. Similarly, outreach programmes allow students to engage in acts of service, and reinforce values of compassion, respect, and solidarity that Catholic education seeks to instil.

A compelling testimony from Leader 2 illustrates how Catholic education exposed her to social realities that were in stark contrast to her own privileged background. She described an immersion experience where she worked as a traffic enforcer, a physically demanding job that opened her eyes to the lives of those engaged in labour-intensive work. She attributed this experience and the broader values of Catholic education, as an important moment in her life shaping her worldview, especially in comparison to her family values.

The immersion that was assigned to me was to be a traffic enforcer, like the enforcer who stands in the middle of the intersection, directing the traffic manually instead of a traffic light. I needed to do that for how many Saturdays and be a traffic enforcer for how many weeks. For someone who is sheltered, it was a daunting experience. My parents were even commenting, why is your university asking you to do that? They were not very pleased.

That experience had a huge impact, that is Ignatian Education. They made us experience a different life, or what it is like to have a labour-intensive kind of work. Of course, during that time, I really did not understand or appreciate why I was doing that. But in terms of values, I think it stayed on me. This is in contrast to my family background. Since I am Chinese Filipino, my relatives, I would say, they are typical Chinese Filipinos who would discriminate against Filipinos. They don't treat their household help kindly or sometimes even humanely sometimes. They care about money so much. So I think because of my Catholic education, I was exposed to other social status and other values. Now, I see the difference between the way I think and my family, and I think a big part of that was because of the Catholic education values. – Leader 2

This testimony underscores how Catholic education cultivates empathy and a broader understanding of human dignity, even when it challenges entrenched familial and cultural values. These narratives collectively affirm the transformative impact of Catholic education in nurturing respect for human dignity as a core principle of its distinctive educational approach.

As the Catholic Church teaches, discussed in the literature review every person – regardless of gender, race, religion, or social background – deserves respect and honour because they reflect the divine image of God (CDF; 1994: 2334).

Consequently, the Church sees its mission as not only promoting the recognition of

human dignity but also actively working toward a society in which every person can live a dignified life.

In this light, the data from the survey and interviews shows how Catholic education shapes leaders' understanding and practice of respect for human dignity, reflecting the Church's broader mission to foster a culture of respect, compassion, and social justice.

In the qualitative data gathered from the interview suggests that Catholic education influenced student's respect for human dignity, particularly through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching, specifically the Preferential Option for the Poor. This principle was integrated into both Theology classes and extra-curricular activities, which were identified as Independent Variables.

Leader 2 reflected on her experience, stating,

In terms of the Theology classes, I just took it as an academic exercise. I got good grades but I didn't believe in it. But I think, what made a mark is the preference for the poor, which is they have a programme that they call "immersion". – Leader 2

This experience seemed to extend beyond the classroom, shaping her deeper understanding of social justice.

Similarly, Leader 7 acknowledges the profound influence of these teachings on her personal values and leadership style. She shared:

"The values I learnt in Catholic education have definitely guided me. And that's what defines my leadership. A lot of it I would like to think is based on just caring about other people, especially with the work that I do, focusing on the people who are marginalised and those who are most in need. So the preferential option for the poor is embedded in me, and even if I wanted to, I couldn't get rid of it. – Leader 7

This influence is rooted in the mission of Catholic education discussed in the literature review, which is driven by the Church's mandate to prioritise the poor as a reflection of God's love for those considered least in society (CCE; 1997: 15).

Despite many students coming from wealthier social backgrounds, Catholic education placed a strong emphasis on recognising the dignity of every individual, particularly those less fortunate and marginalised. The qualitative data revealed that immersion programmes such as community service, social involvement, and volunteering activities organised by the school, left a lasting impression on the leadership development of women. These programmes fostered empathy and a sense of social responsibility among the students.

Leader 4 reflected on her sheltered upbringing and how her Catholic education broadened her perspective:

Because I came from a very sheltered family. My parents were super super strict. I wasn't even allowed to ride the bicycle outside our gates. But through my Catholic schooling, I had to engage in activities like being a Girl Scout, a catechist, and volunteering when Ruby Towers collapsed. I volunteered in Catholic charities. I was taught to be compassionate to those who have less. – Leader 4

Similarly, Leader 7 shared her experience of weekly visits to Payatas, an urban poor area, as part of her social involvement;

We would visit Payatas¹⁸ every week. So my schedule every Saturday was going there. We would be doing activities with the kids in urban slums or urban poor areas. I'd often just walk through Payatas on my own, interacting with people, sharing meals with them, and entering their homes. It was a humbling experience that gave me a deeper connection with the marginalised. – Leader 7

Leader 5 also reflected on her immersion experience in college, acknowledging how it shaped her understanding of equality.

"We had an immersion programme where we were assigned to live in a community to experience their daily life. I was sent to Old Balara. Even though I grew up very sheltered, I've always believed that all people are equal. While some may see immersion as elitist activity like "oh you're going to observe poverty". I think if done well, it can be an eye-opening experience. It reinforces the belief that people, regardless of their circumstances, are truly equal." -Leader 5

¹⁸ Payatas is one of the biggest garbage open-ground dumpsites north of Metro Manila. An estimated 2,000 cubic meters (924 tons) of garbage is dumped in Payatas daily. Around 150,000 informal settlers living under harsh conditions reside in the area.

Leader 2 also highlighted how her immersion experience led her to recognise her own privilege:

I think the “immersion” part is very important. There are many ways to do it. Since most Catholic schools are private institutions and most of the students come from well-off families. For example, I was really surprised, because growing up, I thought we were not rich. My parents never said that we were rich. But when I studied at a Catholic university, that’s when I realised we are privileged compared to other Filipinos. If you are studying at my university, even if you are a scholar, the mere fact that you are studying in a private institution is already a privilege. – Leader 2

These narratives emphasise that Catholic education, through exposure to the realities of marginalised communities, instilled in its students a deeper understanding of social inequalities and the importance of compassion and respect for the dignity of every individual. Immersion programmes helped bridge the gap between privilege and poverty, fostering a lifelong commitment to recognising the dignity of all people, regardless of their socio-economic status.

C.3. Addressing Psycho-Social and Spiritual Poverty

The score distributions from the survey provide a statistical overview of the differences in agreement and disagreement regarding the influence of Catholic education on how women leaders respect human dignity. However, the qualitative data from interviews offers a more nuanced explanation of these disparities in responses, adding depth to the statistical findings.

From the interviews, it became clear that Catholic education instilled respect for human dignity primarily through students’ exposure to poverty-stricken areas and manual labour experiences. However, As discussed in the literature review, Catholic education is called to serve various kinds of poverty. While the focus of immersions and teachings on preferential options for the poor has predominantly been on material poverty, the qualitative data reveals a lower emphasis on addressing other forms of poverty such as psycho-social poverty and spiritual poverty.

In the literature review, the Second Vatican Council, through its document *Gravissimum Educationis*, underscores the Church's responsibility to assist Catholic schools and universities in prioritising its mission to educate and serve the poor. The document defines the "poor" not only as individuals who are lacking in material resources but also extends their care to those who experiencing other forms of poverty. These include individuals deprived of the support and affection from their families and society (psycho-social poverty), and those unfamiliar the gift of Faith, suffering from spiritual poverty (Second Vatican Council; 1965a: 9).

Several interviewees expressed the need for Catholic education to expand its formation programmes to address the less visible forms of suffering, including those experienced by socially marginalised groups. These include members of the LGBTQ+ community, survivors of abuse or addiction, and individuals from non-traditional family structures, such as children from separated parents or informal unions.

Additionally, given that the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, there is a growing need for Catholic institutions to foster greater understanding and respect for those who are non-religious or belong to other faiths. For instance, Leader 2 reflected on her experience:

"So how do we deal with LGBTQ issues, for example, and other minorities? Atheists are considered a minority, too. I remember there was a group of atheist students called Filipino Free Thinkers. That's what a university should be – it should allow for open dialogue. But I also understand that there are rules to follow, like the mandates of the Vatican."

Leader 2 also emphasised the importance of addressing sexual harassment, noting how the issue is handled in other non-Catholic educational institutions:

"Another critical issue we need to discuss is sexual harassment. At my Non-Catholic university, there is an anti-sexual harassment code and an office that handles cases. They provide counselling and have clear steps to follow. But in my Catholic university, there was a case, but some groups were dissatisfied with how it was handled. The Jesuits have a different approach, so some cases remain unresolved. While it's a challenging issue across the board, at least in the non-Catholic university there are clear guidelines, with student involvement and even peer-to-peer counselling. Women leaders have an important role to play in addressing these issues." – Leader 2

Similarly, Leader 3 pointed out a common issue she encountered with her peers in Catholic education when discussing difficult issues:

They were brought up in a Catholic school that's why they couldn't understand. They were very judgmental. That's one bad thing about the Catholic religion, if you don't follow a certain way or path, they judge you. There is a lack of understanding of different kinds of lifestyles and values. - Leader 3

Leader 7 echoed the need for Catholic education to engage in more open and inclusive discussions of difficult topics:

I sincerely hope that Catholic education institutions will be more open to discussing difficult issues, like the concerns that I just shared about abortion, especially gender. Especially for young people, these are incredibly important topics now. It's important to discuss topics like sexual orientation, gender identity, or even just sex. – Leader 7

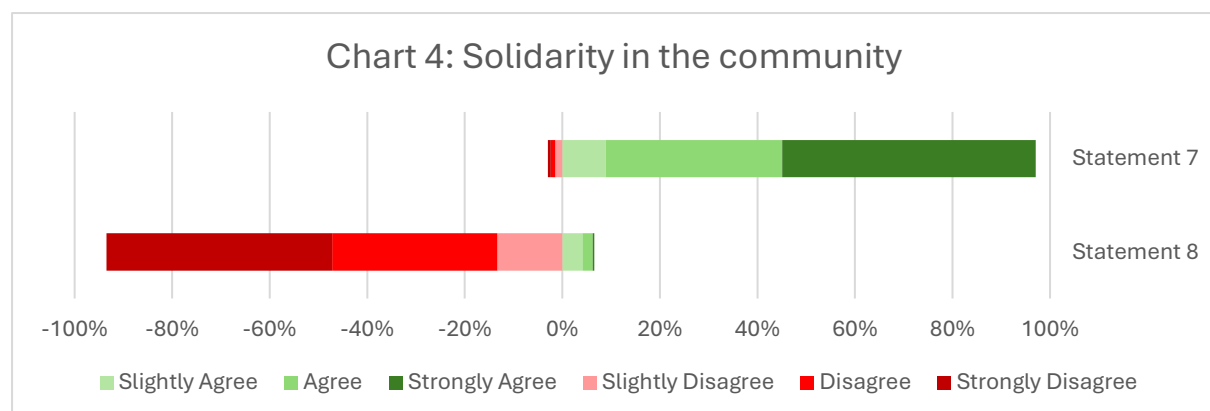
These reflections suggest that while Catholic education has made significant strides in teaching respect for human dignity, there is still room for growth in addressing the more complex and contemporary social challenges. Issues that can cause social isolation, bullying, discrimination, and various forms of poverty require a deeper, more nuanced approach and understanding to fostering inclusivity and compassion. By expanding their formation programmes to engage with these marginalised experiences, Catholic education can help cultivate a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to uphold and respect human dignity.

However, achieving this respect for human dignity requires more than changes in its formation programmes. It also demands a commitment to open and genuine dialogue between those who uphold differing views on what inclusivity and respect for human dignity truly mean. This is particularly important because people often operate from different philosophical assumptions about what is reasonable or moral, assumptions that may seem self-evident to one group but may not be shared by others. For Catholic education to be truly effective in this mission, it must acknowledge and bridge these differences while staying grounded in the truth of the Christian faith.

As highlighted in the literature review, Catholic educators are called not only to teach but to accompany students with sincerity and empathy while upholding the truth of the Christian faith (Guernsey; 2016:135). This means paying special attention to those who feel excluded or marginalised, recognising that social isolation, bullying, and discrimination are themselves forms of poverty that harm human dignity. This aligns with the principles of the dignity of the human person as emphasised in *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, no. 26. By addressing these challenges with Christian understanding and compassion, Catholic education can demonstrate its commitment to respect for human dignity in action. In the words of St. John Bosco, “Young people not only need to be loved but should know that they are loved.” (CCE; 2019:57).

D. SOLIDARITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Solidarity in the community as one of the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education, is rooted in its mission to form the whole person as an active participant in the community and to be of service to society. This commitment to solidarity emphasises standing alongside others in pursuit of social justice and the promotion of the common good. The Congregation for Catholic Education (2013) underscores that such solidarity is deeply rooted in justice and peace, fostering a sense of belonging to one human family. It explains that the experience of intercultural relationships and human development is best understood through the inclusion of individuals and peoples in this shared human family, founded on solidarity and the fundamental values of justice and peace (CCE;2013:37).



Statement 7: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I show solidarity (willingness to stand alongside others in pursuit of the common good) in my community.

Statement 8: The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I act on my social responsibility.

Summarised in Chart 4: Solidarity in the community, among the 337 women leaders who attended Catholic educational institutions, 175 respondents (52%) “strongly agree” with Statement 7: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how I show solidarity in my community. The word solidarity is briefly explained as the willingness to stand alongside others in pursuit of the common good. Additionally, 122 out of the 337 respondents (36%) “agree” and 30 out of 337 (9%) “slightly agree” with this statement. Conversely, 5 respondents (1%) “slightly disagree”, 3 respondents (0.9%) “disagree” and 2 respondents (0.6%) “strongly disagree”. Overall, Statement 7 ranks fourth in Section 1, highlighting the influence of Catholic education among women leaders on fostering solidarity in the community.

On the other hand Statement 8: The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I act on my social responsibility, garnered 156 out of the 337 (46%) women leaders who studied in Catholic education “strongly disagree” with the statement. Additionally, there are 114 out of the 337 (34%) who “disagree” and 45 out of the 337 (13%) who “slightly disagree” with Statement 8. While 14 out of the 337 (4%) women leaders “slightly agree”, 7 out of the 337 (2%) “agree” and 1 respondent “strongly agree” with this statement. Statement 8 ranks ninth in this section, further underscoring how Catholic education influences the formation of women leaders in fostering social responsibilities.

As discussed in the literature review, the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) discovered that students who are outstanding in every way often come from an excellent family background, with reinforced formation and guidance by both Church and school (CCE; 1988:18). Qualitative findings reveal that those Catholic educational institutions who are exercising this distinctive characteristic of solidarity

with the community by having a robust partnerships and cooperation with the local parishes and local community are more effective in educating and nurturing student's sense of social responsibility, community solidarity, and their civic and Christian duties.

D.1. Collaboration with local parishes and other organisations

One of the Independent variables identified in the Result section is the Extra-Curricular activities that involve outreach programmes facilitated by Catholic educational institutions in partnership with local parishes and other Catholic partner organisations to encourage students to engage with marginalised communities to deepen their understanding of their social responsibilities, and reinforcing the Catholic commitment to service.

As Leader 5 shared:

I started to learn how to do outreach projects because, in our Christian Living class or Religion classes, we would do parish work. So that was my introduction to learning to be part of your community. It was so beautiful because parish work means you do work in your church. We needed to distribute rice to the poor. I already would have to do it with my neighbours.
– Leader 5

Another leader recounted her experience:

I wanted to be a leader. I wanted to do things that many people would not do. So I like to teach catechism. So I joined a Catechetical work both in school and in the parish. – Leader 6

These reflections underscore how Catholic education's integration with parish activities provides students with tangible experiences in community involvement and socially responsible leadership.

However, while Catholic education naturally benefits from strong connections with local parishes, solidarity in the community should extend beyond the Catholic sphere. The qualitative findings suggest that while Catholic education in the Philippines excels in fostering ties within the Catholic network, there is room to

strengthen partnerships with non-Catholic institutions and other sectors of society. Expanding these collaborations can enrich students' understanding of solidarity in a broader context.

As Leader 4 emphasised:

Well, you've got to get out of the classroom. You have to involve yourself in local government, involve yourself in the community and just involve yourself outside of classroom studies. There has to be that element that makes you aware of the world you live in and the world that you would like to be able to be a good part of. That's the thing we should improve on. – Leader 4

Catholic education's emphasis on solidarity nurtures individuals who are deeply committed to their communities and the common good. While strong connections with Catholic institutions and parishes are evident, further efforts to collaborate with diverse sectors can enhance the reach and impact of this formation, enabling students to embody solidarity in a more inclusive and comprehensive manner.

Although 46% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the negative statement that Catholic education did not influence them on how they act on their social responsibility (Statement 8), this statement scored second-lowest in favour of Catholic education's positive influence within the section on the Distinctive nature of Catholic education. This paradox raises critical questions about the alignment of Catholic values with broader societal outcomes.

The literature review notes that, despite the Philippines' strong Catholic cultural identity and moral upbringing, the country consistently scores high on the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International; 2020:1). This discrepancy highlights the need for Catholic education to go beyond theoretical instructions by emphasising integrity and concrete actions. Without these, the teachings on solidarity and social responsibilities risk becoming superficial. As one respondent observed:

I would say being able to explain the Catholic values and teachings further by example. I think that should be done. – Leader 1

D.2. Engagement with Society

Effective mentorship and role modelling by educators and administrators are essential for embedding these values. Identified as one of the Confounding Variables on the influence of Catholic education presented in the Result Chapter is the role of key figures in the educational community. These are the teachers, school leaders, mentors, and religious within the Catholic education environment. Positive examples leave lasting impressions on students, shaping their social outlook and future leadership. Conversely, the absence of integrity or the presence of hypocrisy within Catholic educational systems can breed distrust and discontentment, as highlighted by another respondent:

And then when I was there, the nuns I would see would lie about a number of things. And they were not very straightforward. They favour the girls who have a lot of money. And so I never got a good impression during my education about Catholic values. They played actually an adverse role in my upbringing. It prepared me in the sense that I didn't want to be like them. I didn't want to be like very deeply religious women in our college because all they do now is just continuously pray and never really perform any action. They were not action women, they all just relied on their prayers. They're continuously praying. That's all we have in our Bible group, they were like "Oh, let's pray for this. Let's pray for that." rather than try to resolve the problem. – Leader 3

This critique underscores the importance of actionable faith – the integration of prayers, moral guidance, and concrete social engagement. While Catholic education's religious practices remain vital, they must be complemented by proactive responses to societal issues. As another respondent shared:

So that was also the other mantra that I learned from a sister. I remember who she was and the words she would leave us always "You must accompany the society. You have to be relevant. So whatever is happening in society, you must know what it is, and you must accompany the people who are experiencing that phenomenon." – Leader 6

The qualitative findings also reveal that Catholic education remains conservative and somewhat insular in its dialogue with groups holding differing perspectives. This is one of the aspects associated with Catholic education, and it is indicated as one of the independent variables described in the Results Chapter. To fully realise its

mission of fostering solidarity and social responsibility, Catholic educational institutions should actively engage with non-Catholic organisations, civil society, and government agencies. The Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE; 1997:17) emphasised that these relationships should be characterised by mutual respect, with each side recognising the other's role in serving the common good. Establishing a constructive and cordial dialogue with the state and civil authorities can enrich students' understanding of their role in contributing to a more just and peaceful society. Broadening this dialogue is essential for fostering a more inclusive approach to solidarity and social responsibility.

Nonetheless, Catholic education's social teachings have equipped many students with a meaningful understanding of their Christian duties. These include advocating for the voiceless, engaging with social issues, and taking an active role in their communities. Leader 6 reflected:

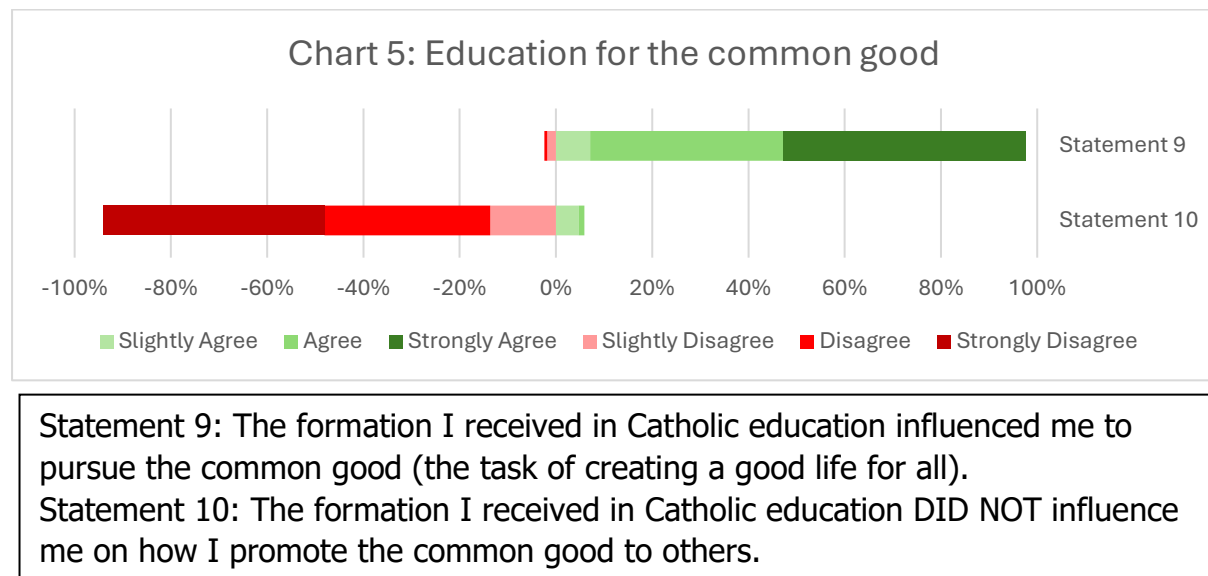
One thing I learnt in Catholic education is to speak out, and not to ignore. Another thing is to be aware of what is going on, and your relevance to your society. It was always a strong principle in my Catholic education. You've got to be aware of who you are in your community. So that was strong and that was a positive aspect of my education. And then second, the value of compassion and respect for others. These values were always something that I absorbed. I really learned from school. – Leader 6

In conclusion, the challenge for Catholic education lies in bridging the gap between values and action. By fostering integrity, mentorship, and openness to diverse perspectives, Catholic educational institutions can further strengthen their impact on social responsibility and solidarity, praying students to be compassionate and effective leaders in a complex and interconnected world.

E. EDUCATION FOR THE COMMON GOOD

One of the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education is its mission to promote the common good, serving not only the needs of individuals but also the greater society by building the Kingdom of God. Catholic school leaders and educators play a crucial role in fostering a culture of unity and service, with special attention to the most vulnerable. Their mission is to ensure that education attends to the welfare of

all, upholding integrity in the daily operation of the educational system (Oliva; 2022: 243). This commitment is grounded in another distinctive characteristic of Catholic education and the Catholic social teaching of respect for human dignity. As noted in the literature review, Christian theology emphasises that every human person reflects God’s presence, underscoring the Christian duty to recognise God in those who are suffering and in need.



Summarised in Chart 5: Education for the Common Good highlights quantitative findings that underscore this influence. Among 337 women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines, 170 respondents (50%) “strongly agree” with Statement 9: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me to pursue the common good. The term “common good” was broadly defined as the task of creating a good life for all. Additionally, 135 respondents out of the 337 (40%) “agree” and 24 out of the 337 (7%) “slightly agree” with the statement. Only 6 out of the 337 (2%) “slightly disagree” and 2 of the 337 respondents (1%) “disagree”. Statement 9 ranks second highest in this section, further underscoring how Catholic education influences the formation of women leaders in fostering pursuit for the common good.

In contrast, responses to Statement 10: The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how I promote the common good to others,

showed widespread disagreement. A total of 155 out of the 337 (46%) “strongly disagree”, 116 out of the 337 respondents (34%) “disagree”, and 46 out of the 337 (14%) “slightly disagree” with the statement. Meanwhile, 16 out of the 337 respondents (5%) “slightly agree”, and 4 out of 337 (1%) “agree”. Notably, no respondents “strongly agree” with this statement. Statement 7 ranks seventh highest in this section, further underscoring how Catholic education influences women leaders on how to promote the common good and encourage others to take part.

The variations in levels of agreement across these responses were further explained by qualitative data gathered. Interviews revealed that women leaders attributed much of their commitment to social awareness and societal relevance to the formation they received in Catholic education.

As Leader 6 noted:

I learned to be aware of what is going on, and your relevance to your society. It was always a strong principle in my Catholic education. You've got to be aware of who you are in your community. So that was strong and that was a positive aspect of my education. – Leader 6

This formation, rooted in the promotion of the common good, is not confined to Theology classes but is also integrated into non-faith formation classes like Philosophy. Non-faith formation classes offered in Catholic education are identified as independent variables presented in the Result Chapter. Philosophy classes, in particular, were described as instrumental in fostering deeper reflection on the common good, often through engagement with diverse philosophical perspectives.

As Leader 2 recalled the lessons and principles learnt in her Philosophy classes:

I remember my Philosophy class was a bit tricky because we were taught in the beginning about atheist philosophy. I am an Atheist, so I was very happy about it. We were taught about Sartre, Existentialism, Nietzsche, and others. So I thought, “Wow, they are teaching atheism in a Catholic university!”. But little did I know, the next part was to introduce the philosophy of God. I remember Levinas and the concept of “the other”. It is getting to know who “the other” is. It is the other people, or the poor in our case, whoever that is in your context. There was also Archelaus. Although, there was no mention of Christianity, if you think deeply and truly understand it, it is connected to

that. It is the core of Catholic spirituality and religion. So, I said to myself – “That’s impressive!”. – Leader 2

While many women leaders acknowledged the positive influence of Catholic education in promoting the common good, they also pointed to its limitations. Catholic education aspires to form citizens who possess the intellectual, moral, social, and political dispositions necessary for a just society. By introducing a Christian perspective on social problems, Catholic education aims to encourage Christians and those belonging to other faiths or none alike to work together for social justice (Bryk, Lee, & Holland; 1993: 42). However, participants in the study suggested that the practical implementation of this ideal sometimes falls short, particularly in fostering critical thinking and open dialogue about more complex social issues that may not align with traditional Catholic teachings.

My Catholic education at least in my generation, did not teach us to be more analytical. Perhaps this has changed in this day and age. So I think they should start having more subjects which allow for more interaction and critical thinking. – Leader 9

E.1. Enhancing Open Dialogue

Some participants expressed concern about close-mindedness in Catholic education, particularly in addressing issues requiring broader perspectives, such as policy-making in a multi-religious or secular context.

Leader 7 expressed the challenge of balancing the moral principles imposed by the Catholic Faith and the real-life issues she needs to handle in the health sector.

I think one of the leadership weaknesses that I associate with Catholic education is because of the Catholic tradition. *May pagka-sarado minsan* (It tends to be close-minded, sometimes). In my non-Catholic education, we were allowed more room to discuss things beyond imposing a moral judgment on the people. For example, in my work at DOH (Department of Health), I had to make decisions for the entire country – not just for Catholics. We need to focus on core values and avoid rigid, black-and-white thinking. That is close-minded. -Leader 7

Another area identified for growth was the engagement with diversity, including exposure to multi-faith perspectives and inclusion of marginalised groups such as

LGBTQ+ community. Participants noted that this aspect remains underdeveloped in Catholic education.

As Leader 6 noted:

I think Catholic education is not so strong in the engagement with diversity. As Catholics, we have our rules, traditions, and values, but we are not exposed to other ways of thinking. We do not have much experience with diversity, and multi-faith dialogue. It is not so strong in Catholic education, but I think that is something that should be strengthened.

And also with people who are “different”. For example, how do we handle the whole issue of LGBTQ? That is an issue. How do you relate to these groups?

Do we even consider that it might be a “time of change”? Different ways of thinking are not very encouraged in Catholic schools. Catholic education is more along the straight and narrow, and evolving social norms aren’t widely encouraged in Catholic schools. – Leader 6

These conservatism and close-minded practices and culture within Catholic education are some of the common themes identified as Independent variables in the Result section. The qualitative findings suggest that while Catholic education equips students with a strong foundation in social awareness and pursuit of the common good, there is room to enhance critical thinking, open dialogue, and engagement with diversity. Addressing these gaps can further empower students to navigate complex social issues with moral clarity, and inclusivity which is the essence of the education for the common good as a distinctive nature of Catholic education and are important qualities to have especially when in leadership roles.

SECTION 2: SACRAMENTAL VISION OF LEADERSHIP

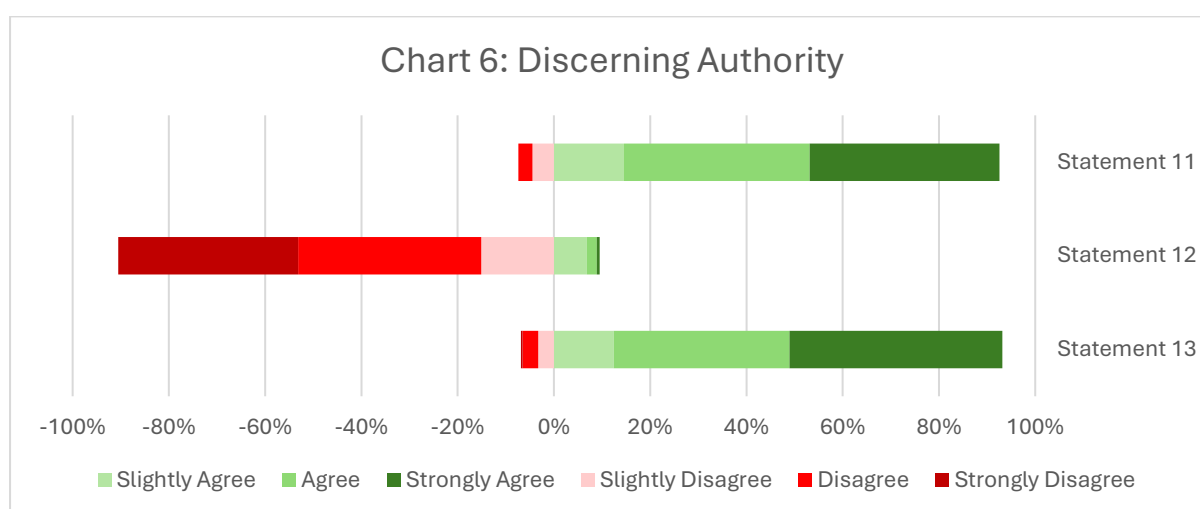
Leadership can be understood through various secular frameworks, yet Catholic education offers a distinct perspective by cultivating a sacramental vision of leadership. This vision emphasises leadership as a means of making Christ present through the roles, responsibilities, and styles leaders embody. In this context, Catholic education seeks to form leaders whose actions and decisions reflect the servant-hearted, inclusive, and discerning nature of Christ's leadership.

This section examines how the formation provided in Catholic educational institutions has shaped the leadership styles of women alumnae. It explores the extent to which these Catholic educational institutions instilled a sacramental vision of leadership, influencing their approach to leadership in both personal and professional contexts.

Following the structure established in the Literature Review, this section is organised into three key themes: Discerning Authority, Servant Leadership, and Inclusive Leadership. The analysis integrates findings from quantitative survey data and qualitative insights from in-depth, semi-structured interviews. These data sources are triangulated alongside insights from the literature review, offering a comprehensive understanding of whether and how the sacramental vision of leadership has been realised in practice.

Additionally, this section investigates how specific characteristics of Catholic education emerging as distinct themes and identified as Independent Variables have shaped the disposition, attitudes, and achievements of women who studied in Catholic institutions and how they interact with other confounding and extraneous variables. These factors are analysed to determine their influence on the leadership roles and behaviours of these former students, shedding light on the unique contributions of Catholic education to leadership formation.

A. DISCERNING AUTHORITY



Statement 11: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to exercise authority in my current leadership role.

Statement 12: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** influence how I make decisions in my current leadership role.

Statement 13: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to discern (decision-making process) between difficult choices.

Chart 6: Discerning Authority, 133 out of the 337 (39%) respondents “strongly agree” with Statement 11 – The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to exercise authority in my current leadership role. Similarly, 130 out of the 337 (39%) respondents “agree” and 49 out of the 337 (15%) “slightly agree” with the statement. Conversely, 15 out of the 337 (4%) respondents “slightly disagree”, 10 out of the 337 (3%) “disagree”, while none “strongly disagree”. This statement ranks fifth in Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership, highlighting the positive but varied influence of Catholic education on respondents’ understanding of authority in leadership.

While the quantitative data indicate strong agreement among respondents, they do not explain why or how this influence manifests. Qualitative findings offer deeper insights, illustrating how Catholic education shapes the discernment and exercise of authority.

The qualitative data highlighted how women leaders influenced by Catholic education demonstrate discernment by navigating complex situations. They exercise

authority thoughtfully, balancing assertiveness with humility and compassion in diverse contexts. The exercise of Discerning Authority is one of the themes identified as the Dependent Variable presented in the Result Section. As discussed in the Literature Review, this sacramental vision of leadership finds its ultimate model in Christ, whose authority is with both power and compassion (John 5: 16 – 30). He taught with profound wisdom, even in the presence of great scholars and religious leaders of His time, and His words carried extraordinary power. He showed great authority and even commanded demons, yet he also showed compassion to those who were in need, when he restored sight to the blind, calmed storms, and raised the dead (Mark 1:27) and many other examples. The sacramental vision of Discerning Authority emphasises the ability to rise above challenges and lead with wisdom and compassion.

One compelling example of the sacramental vision of Discerning Authority in practice comes from a judicial leader serving in the Philippine Supreme Court. She attributes her approach to applying the law to the values instilled during her Catholic education. She emphasises balancing justice with compassion in her role, showcasing the Discerning Authority in practice:

Well, I learned to be very compassionate when you are a judge. Because the people appearing before me are people who are really looking for justice, not only for justice but also for compassion. So, it's not only about the law but also about how you treat each case, how you treat the law, and how you apply the law. How do you apply the law to this person's case, the person before my court, before me? So, compassion is really one of those things that I learned in Catholic education. I have to be very careful when applying legal matters and the law. – Leader 1

Discerning Authority is not limited to traditional leadership roles. It extends to less obvious forms of leadership, such as within family dynamics. One interviewee, the wife of a prominent politician and diplomatic leader, highlights how Catholic education taught her to balance deference to her husband's leadership with asserting her own authority when necessary:

Even for a woman you have to have your own world. I mean, you can serve your husband left and right. But let's admit, marriage is not a bed of roses. There will always be times when you kind of get into loggerheads with each

other. So it's expected that the woman gives in *diba (right?)*. But there are times you have to put the person in place also *kung sobra na (when it is already too much)*. So it's a balance. – Leader 4

The roles of virtues and living out the values also play an important role in Discerning Authority. Respondents frequently associated virtues like humility and obedience with their Catholic education. These virtues were seen as foundational to their character and leadership style. This practice of moral upbringing in daily life is another theme identified as the Dependent Variable presented in the Result Chapter.

As Leader 4 expressed:

I was in Catholic education through and through (from pre-school to university). So I must say, I think in its own way, that discipline is training. We had so many rules. It taught me and gave me the strength of character to follow through when you set your mind to something. – Leader 4

However, some leaders observed that Catholic education tended to de-emphasise assertiveness and competitiveness, which is often necessary for leadership roles. For example:

Catholic education actually tempered my... um, how can I say this? "my aggressiveness". – Leader 1

Leader 9 echoed the same sentiments:

One weakness I associate with Catholic education is that sometimes I tend to be so kind; I am not tough; I don't compete to be always no.1. I am not competitive. – Leader 9

While humility and obedience are valuable, women leaders noted the importance of complementing these virtues with showing authority, assertiveness and confidence in leadership positions. One leader, reflecting on her experience at the United Nations, articulated the need for this balance:

So Catholic education really tells you that humility is a virtue. You don't go out and boast about what you can do or who you are, you just do. You don't talk about yourself. But at the same time, the other side of that is that you need to assert, you need to show authority, you need to show that you are knowledgeable. – Leader 6

This duality became even more pronounced in her professional context:

This double-edged dilemma of being humble was exacerbated in the United Nations. Because in the UN, when we go to countries, we are built as experts. We are specialists, so we are supposed to go there as experts. - Leader 6

Catholic education plays a significant role in shaping women leaders' approach to Discerning Authority. It instils virtues such as humility, compassion, and obedience, which influence how authority is exercised. At the same time as discussed in the Literature Review, Jesus' leadership of balancing power with discernment and authority with compassion, mercy and justice, serves as the transformative model that Catholic education seeks to emulate. This sacramental vision of Discerning Authority is reflected in how Catholic education forms students for future leadership roles. While preparing students to exercise authority, Catholic education emphasises the importance of discernment – teaching students to use power wisely, guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in the values instilled through their formation.

The qualitative evidence underscores the nuanced interplay between these values, highlighting how Catholic education prepares leaders to rise above challenges with wisdom, compassion, and discernment. At the same time, women leaders also recognise the need for assertiveness, competitiveness, and showing authority to navigate their roles effectively. This integrated approach is something that Catholic education can evaluate in their formation to encourage women leaders to exercise humility but also demonstrates the authority who seeks guidance and discerns the best course of action, reflecting Christ's leadership in both their authority and profound compassion and humility.

Subsequently, 126 out of the 337 (37%) respondents "strongly disagree" with Statement 12: The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence how I make decisions in my current leadership roles. Similarly, 128 out of the 337 (38%) respondents "disagree" and 51 out of the 337 (15%) respondents "slightly disagree" with the statement. However, 2 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly agree", 7 out of 337 (2%) respondents "agree", and 23 out of the 337 (7%)

respondents “slightly agree” that Catholic education did not influence their decision-making in leadership roles. These results place Statement 12 in the ninth place – the second-lowest ranking within Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership, underscoring the influence of Catholic education’s formation on the decision-making of women leaders in the Philippines.

The qualitative data further supports the majority of the agreement to Statement 12, with many women leaders describing how their faith and values, deeply rooted in Catholic education, act as a guiding anchor when making decisions in their leadership roles and responsibilities especially when navigating difficult decisions. As Leader 4 reflected:

I feel that Catholic education is an anchor to people, for people. I noticed that people who do not have a deep sense of religion, are the ones who despair easily because they only rely on themselves. You know, there are times when you just have to say to God, *Bahala ka na sa akin (I'll let you be in charge of me)*. – Leader 4

Another respondent echoed this sentiment, emphasising the role of faith as a source of resilience in her leadership journey:

The strength in my leadership that I associate with Catholic education is my Love of God. My faith in God has carried me through trying times. – Leader 9

Catholic education also instilled a strong sense of values, serving as a moral compass in decision-making. Leader 8 articulated this as follows:

I believe in the values that should be taught. There's no grey area. It's black or white. That's part of the decision-making. Of course, maybe sometimes we need to be a little bit considerate or whatnot, but that's my guiding light. The values that we were taught, because of the Catholic formation. - Leader 8

Statement 13 addresses discernment directly, stating: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced how I discern between difficult choices. The term “discern” was briefly described in the statement as a decision-making process. 149 out of the 337 (44%) respondents “strongly agree”, 123 out of the 337 (36%) respondents “agree” and 42 out of the 337 (12%) respondents “slightly agree” with the Statement. Conversely, 11 out of the 337 (3%) respondents “slightly disagree”, 11 out of the 337 (3%) respondents “disagree” and 1 individual “strongly disagrees”.

Statement 13 ranks third highest in this section underscoring the influence of Catholic education when women leaders discern the right decisions when faced with difficult choices.

Despite this strong positive response in the quantitative data gathering, the qualitative findings indicate a perceived gap in the way Catholic education prepares leaders for critical thinking and discernment. Some respondents expressed concerns about rigidity in Catholic teachings, which may hinder the ability to navigate complex, real-world decisions. These strict rules and discipline associated with Catholic education are identified as one of the Independent Variables presented in the Result Chapter.

Leader 9 noted the need for critical thinking or in the Christian perspective, Discernment:

In my generation, Catholic education did not teach us to be more analytical. Perhaps this has changed in this day and age. They should start teaching more subjects which allows for more interaction and critical thinking. – Leader 9

Another woman leader observed how the strict rules and standards instilled during Catholic education can create challenges in reconciling these teachings with the complexities of modern leadership:

In terms of weakness in leadership that I associate with Catholic education, it is because of the Catholic tradition, may pagka-sarado minsan (it tends to be close-minded, sometimes). So the discernment can be tricky. Having those rules and big standards that you grew up with then you realise that at some point, life becomes more complicated and it's not as simple as black and white. Now it's not as easy to reconcile the things that you read or you've learned all your life with the realities of the world, especially if the rules are pretty rigid or kind of close-minded. – Leader 7

Finally, one respondent shared how an overly rigid adherence to Catholic doctrines could impede objective decision-making in leadership:

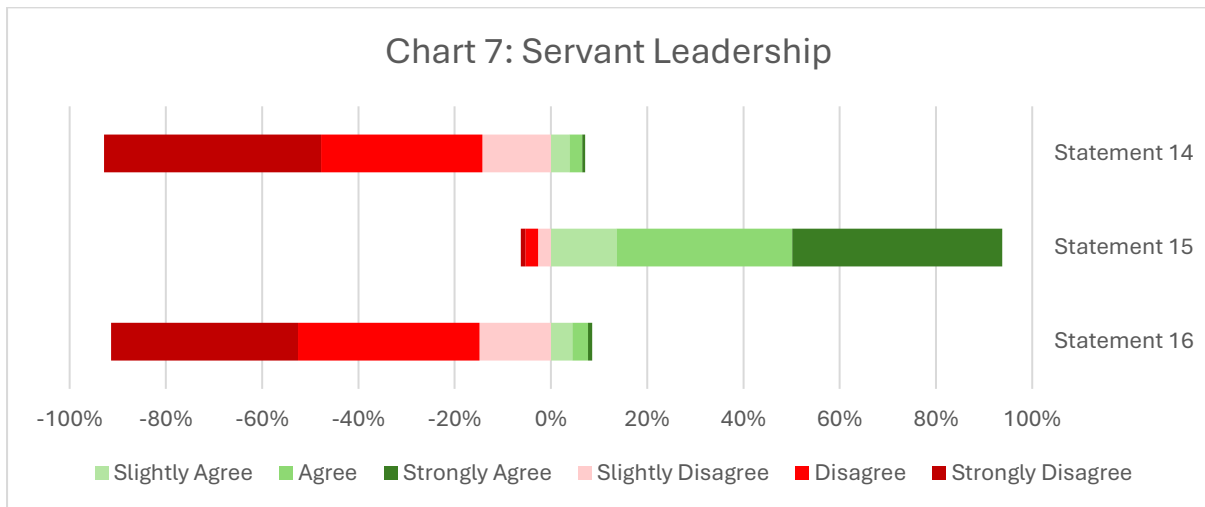
You need to be able to think things out properly and analyse and weigh things. I think it is a weakness in leadership, if you have these things in the back of your mind such as you're not allowed abortion, you're not allowed divorce, you're not allowed to decrease population and all that. I think that would certainly have been a deterrent because you don't tend to analyse things properly or weigh things, and you just have to follow blindly what the

Catholic religion says or what the Pope says. So that kind of following blindly, I think it would have been negative because many times in leadership, you need to think things out objectively. – Leader 3

The challenges of fostering critical thinking and avoiding close-mindedness in Catholic education are relevant not only to the broader discussion of leadership formation but also to specific aspects of Catholic education's role in promoting the common good. In the earlier section on *Education for the Common Good*, the focus was on how open dialogue is essential in promoting the common good. In this section, the discussion delves deeper into the sacramental vision of Discerning Authority. Discernment requires openness and critical thinking, especially in navigating diverse challenges and contexts in leadership roles. These recurring themes are revisited to illuminate their multifaceted implications, emphasising the importance of discernment and critical reflection before exercising authority.

In conclusion, Catholic education plays a pivotal role in forming students with a leadership style that equips authority with discernment, reflecting the sacramental vision of leadership modelled by Christ. The formation provided through Catholic education instils values such as compassion, humility, and justice while fostering a sense of authority, responsibility and moral courage to navigate complex decisions. However, as evidenced by the experiences of women leaders, there is a growing recognition of the need for greater emphasis on critical thinking by teaching them how to discern, assertiveness, and adaptability to meet the demands of contemporary leadership. By integrating these qualities with the enduring virtues rooted in faith, Catholic education equips students who are future leaders to rise above challenges, make sound and ethical decisions, and lead guided by the upbringing of their Catholic education. This delicate balance of authority and discernment not only reflects Christ's examples but also ensures that the formation of Catholic education remains relevant in today's world.

B. SERVANT LEADERSHIP



Statement 14: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** influence me on how to serve others.

Statement 15: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to lead.

Statement 16: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** influence me on how to be a servant leader.

Chart 7: Servant Leadership, illustrates respondents' perception of the influence of Catholic education on their servant leadership. Respondents were asked if the formation they received in Catholic education DID NOT influence them on how they serve others in Statement 14. 152 out of the 337 (45%) respondents "strongly disagree" with the statement, while 119 out of the 337 (34%) respondents "disagree", and 48 out of the 337 (14%) respondents "slightly disagree" with the statement. Conversely, 2 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly agree", 9 out of the 337 (3%) respondents "agree" and 13 out of the 337 (4%) respondents "slightly agree" with Statement 14. This statement ranked second highest in Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership highlighting the Catholic education's influence on how women leaders serve others.

A key attribute of servant leadership is the ability to rise above challenging circumstances to serve others. This sacramental vision of leadership is rooted in Catholic education's emphasis on leading through service even in adversity, particularly when engaging with marginalised communities and impoverished

environments. As discussed in the Literature Review, while Robert Greenleaf is considered a pioneer of the modern secular servant leadership movement, his concept was notably developed with minimal reference to religious frameworks or Christian tradition. Punnachet (2009: 117 – 121) argues that Jesus modelled distinctly Christian form of leadership throughout His ministry, focusing on serving others, especially the marginalised and neglected. This Christ-centred approach is the root of the values instilled in Catholic education, which encourages leaders to emulate Jesus prioritising service and compassion.

Section 1: Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education discussed that there are many indicators that Catholic education in the Philippines has strong and effective programmes that expose students to the social realities of the country, it was done through activities such as immersion and other community outreach activities. In this section, the qualitative data will demonstrate how the Independent Variables within Catholic education are translated to the Dependent Variable of exercise of servant leadership among women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions.

The qualitative responses from interviews offer deeper insights into how service ethos is instilled. A recurring theme is the deliberate integration of service into institutional practice and messaging.

Leader 7 noted the repetitive use of mottos like “Woman of Faith and Service”, which serve as a daily reminder of their responsibility to serve others had a lasting impact.

I think very early on the value of service was instilled. In our school, we have “taglines” that students repeat “Women of Faith and Service”. So that’s the tagline that we have and we use it all the time. We repeat it over and over. – Leader 7

Leader 6 also shared how the religious sisters in the Catholic school environment influenced her service to others.

The sisters who always encouraged us to be of service to others. So there were always opportunities to do that. So that was really something that I fitted into very well. So it was a positive experience. – Leader 6

Moreover, service is lived out and practiced through opportunities for action, such as immersion programmes and outreach activities which were considered as one of the Independent Variables presented in the Result section. These initiatives aim to bridge the gap between privilege and social responsibility, preparing students to lead with empathy and humility. Respondents consistently linked these experiences to long-term values of giving back.

As Leader 6 shared:

Because of my Catholic education, I became more self-aware of others, that I am there not for myself but rather to work with others and to help others. – Leader 6

Leader 8 also shared that now that she is the president of a Catholic university, she instils the same lessons to both the students and parents:

But I think maybe sometimes when you're in a non-Catholic school, the focus is more on yourself and how you can be. But in a Catholic school, I believe the focus is on giving back. So when I talk to students, when I talk to parents, I always tell them "Your education means nothing if you don't use it to serve others." – Leader 8

Such reflections suggest that Catholic education fosters a formation where leadership is inseparable from service. This alignment is reinforced by the responses to Statement 15, where 147 out of the 337 (44%) respondents "strongly agree" that the formation they received in Catholic education influences them on how they lead. While 123 out of the 337 (36%) respondents "agree" and 46 out of the 337 (14%) "slightly agree" with the statement. Conversely, 9 out of the 337 (3%) respondents indicated that they "slightly disagree", another 9 out of the 337 (3%) respondents "disagree", and 3 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly disagree". Statement 15 ranked fourth place in Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership highlighting the profound role of Catholic education on how women leaders in the Philippines lead.

The qualitative data suggests that Servant Leadership, as nurtured by Catholic Education in the Philippines, extends beyond theoretical principles to practical, lived experiences. For many respondents, this leadership model involves "other-

centredness”, a concept characterised by empathy, understanding, and prioritising of other’s needs.

As Leader 7 expressed, one of the strength in her leadership that she associate with her Catholic education is service:

I would say it would be the service. The value of “other-centeredness” is caring for other people, not just thinking of myself but understanding others, especially the struggles and sufferings of the people who are marginalized, and getting to know who they are. Recognising that those who are experiencing more suffering than me. – Leader 7

This idea is further supported by the responses to Statement 16, which directly measures whether Catholic education influences the formation of servant leaders. 131 out of the 337 (39%) respondents “strongly disagree” that the formation they received in Catholic education DID NOT influence them on how to be servant leaders. While 127 out of the 337 (38%) respondents “disagree”, and 50 out of the 337 (15%) respondents “slightly disagree” with the statement. Conversely, 3 out of the 337 (1%) respondents “strongly agree”, 11 out of the 337 (3%) respondents “agree”, and 15 out of the 337 (4%) respondents “slightly agree”. The statistical result of Statement 16 ranked sixth in Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership highlighting the influence of Catholic education among women leaders on how to be a servant leader.

Respondents also described how Catholic education emphasises a relational approach to leadership. This mode transcends traditional hierarchies in leadership, focusing instead on collaboration, service, and solidarity.

As Leader 6 expressed:

At the same time, I learned in school, and I found it effective actually that you do not always have to lead from the front. You lead from, not behind, Maryknoll was not like that, but you lead with. So you don't lead in front, you don't lead at back, but you lead with. – Leader 6

Such perspectives highlight the nuanced understanding of servant leadership cultivated in the formation of Catholic education. It emphasises shared responsibility and service for the common good.

The qualitative data also provides a critical analysis of the interplay between privilege and service in Catholic education. Given that most students in Catholic educational institutions come from socio-economically privileged backgrounds, the schools face the unique challenge of ensuring that service initiatives promote genuine empathy rather than reinforcing social divides. For example, Immersion programmes considered one of the Independent Variables were celebrated and critiqued by respondents. While these programmes expose students to poverty and marginalised, they risk fostering a sense of elitism if not carefully designed.

As Leader 5 explained:

And even though I grew up very sheltered, I always knew that people are equal. That's one of the things I've always believed in. Even if immersion is like a, maybe to some people, such an elitist thing to do. It could be seen as why would you go on immersion. What? You will go there, so that you will see poverty, and see how they live. It is very eye-opening for some. I think if done well, people will learn and always believe people are equal. – Leader 5

This observation raises important questions about the efficacy of service-learning in bridging social divides versus perpetuating them. While Catholic education effectively instils the principles of service, it must continuously evaluate how these programmes and activities are perceived and implemented to avoid intentionally reinforcing social class distinctions.

The cultural concept of “Bayanihan”, deeply rooted in Filipino values, emerged as a significant concept in the interviews. Respondents connected this spirit of communal cooperation and heroism to their Catholic education, particularly during challenging times like the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As Leader 5 further shared:

During the pandemic, I wasn't a leader but just a volunteer. That's when I saw how artists moved together as a great force to entertain people. That's the value of Bayanihan, which my Catholic education instilled in me. – Leader 5

Leader 9 also shared how the formation within Catholic education influenced her career choices because of the desire to help others and society.

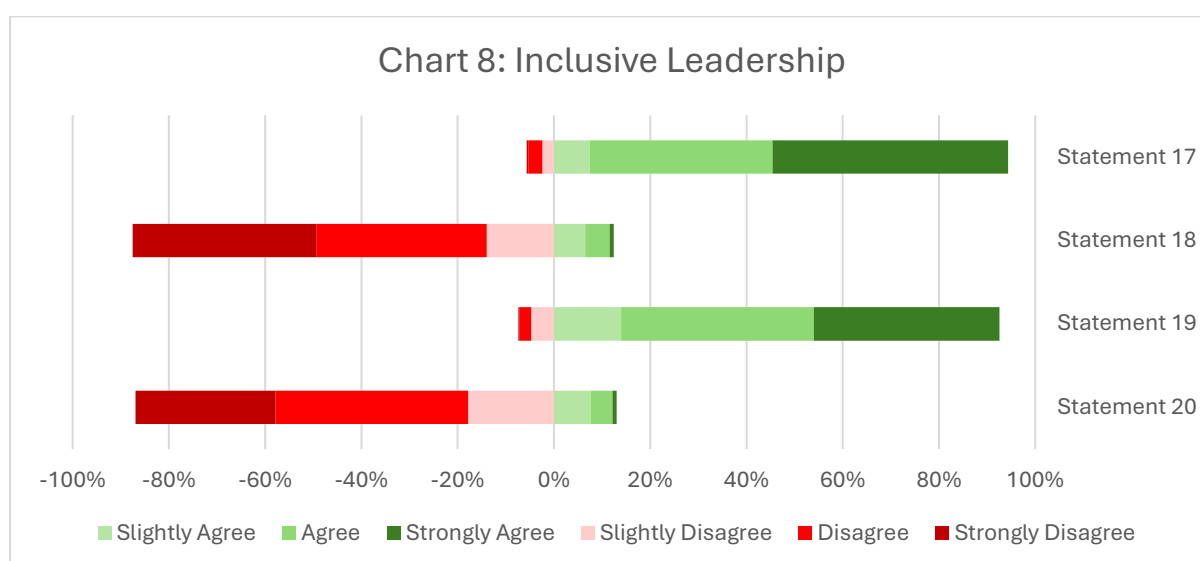
I was never conscious of striving for a leadership position. However, the Christian values of serving others, of helping others, influenced my decision after college to pursue a job in public service. – Leader 9

Overall, the qualitative data underscores that Catholic education transcends the classroom by creating opportunities for students to engage meaningfully with their communities. Through outreach programmes, service-oriented curricula, and the communal ethos of Catholic educational institutions, students internalised the importance of servant leadership.

Education doesn't happen within the four walls of a classroom. Outreach and engagement with society are just as important as what you learn academically and what they teach in the classroom. So providing those opportunities not only for service and creating a community environment is the strength of Catholic education. You are not adorned. You are there to serve others. So the communal mindset is something that Catholic schools are very good with. But then that materialises only if you also give your students the connection to their communities. The outreach needs to be put into practice. – Leader 6

This reflection underscores the adaptability of Catholic education's values to broader cultural and social contexts. By embedding universal principles of service and solidarity within a local framework, Catholic education nurtures leaders who are attuned to both global and community needs.

C. INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



Statement 17: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to respect other people's opinions.

Statement 18: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** influence me on how to accept diversity in the community where I belong.

Statement 19: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to be inclusive.

Statement 20: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** influence my ability to suspend judgment and prejudice.

Summarised in Chart 8: Inclusive leadership, 165 out of the 337 (49%) respondents "strongly agree" that the formation they received in Catholic Education influenced them on how they respect other people's opinions, as indicated in Statement 17. While 128 out of the 337 (38%) respondents "agree" and 25 out of the 337 (7%) respondents "slightly agree" with the statement. Conversely, 8 out of the 337 (2%) respondents "slightly disagree", 10 out of the 337 (3%) respondents "disagree" and only 1 out of the 337 respondents "strongly agree" with the statement. This statement ranked the highest in Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership highlighting the influence of Catholic education among women leaders on respecting other people's opinions.

The sacramental vision of Inclusive Leadership, as described in the literature review, emphasises a leader's ability to be welcoming to all. Catholic education reflects this principle by drawing from the example of Jesus Christ's inclusive leadership and His

Apostle's mission to evangelise and invite everyone to participate. Pope Francis, in the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (2016b: 1), reminded Catholics of the Church's role in embracing others with mercy and inclusion, emphasising a welcoming approach free of discrimination.

The quantitative data provides statistical insight into how women leaders perceived the formation they have received in Catholic education influenced them in terms of inclusive leadership and the qualitative data will provide a deeper explanation and reflection on the details of this perception.

Section 1: Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education, on Respect for Human Dignity, gives many examples of how Catholic education educated its students on how to respect others. This section will dive deeper into the qualitative data from the interviews of women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines to provide insights into how the Independent Variables are translated to the Dependent Variable of exercise of Inclusive Leadership and what other areas need improvement.

The responses from the survey questionnaires provided statistical data on the influence of Catholic education on how women leaders respect other people's opinions. The survey result aligns with qualitative reflections on how Catholic education fosters respect for others. Leader 4 shared how her education naturally prepared her to relate to and communicate with individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

Well, I find myself prepared as a leader when I'm with people, it just comes naturally, especially with people who are of lesser means than you. As a matter of fact, it is easier for me to relate to them, rather than the ones of the high society or what. - Leader 4

Similarly, Leader 5 reflected on learning to treat everyone equally, regardless of their status.

I learned this in Catholic education, you treat everyone as equals. You look them in the eye, talk to them, or shake their hand. That goes for everyone. May it be a teacher or whoever, you shake their hand with respect and greet them. That's one of the most beautiful things I learned there. You are not

afraid to talk to people. Although you're showing them respect, you're also being treated as an equal because you're shaking their hand. It's an equal ground. So even to this day, when I greet people, I try to remember that we are equal. – Leader 5

Despite these positive reflections, some leaders identified areas where Catholic education could further enhance its approach to fostering respect for others' opinions. Leader 8, now a president of a Catholic educational institution, emphasised the need to cultivate a culture of listening as part of inclusive leadership. She highlighted the importance of moving beyond surface-level conversations to truly understanding others.

As Leader 8 articulated:

It is very important to help the students listen to others more. I learned in the General Chapter, "Conversation in the Spirit", which is the synodal way of communicating. It is really all about listening because if you listen only to reply, rather than listen to understand, you're not gonna get very far. – Leader 8

Several leaders expressed the need for greater openness to diverse perspectives and religions within Catholic education.

Leader 4 noted:

Well, maybe they should stop preaching, like, as if we're the only correct religion or the correct way. You know, there has to be a certain openness also. – Leader 4

Leader 8 echoed this sentiment, pointing out the risk of exclusivity and the perception of superiority:

We need to be less biased, favouring only the Catholics, we are being high and mighty. Actually even just saying that Catholicism is always the best, I think we're being high and mighty already. It is one of many religions and it's good to understand. That's why I like Pope Francis because he believes in synodality. He believes in listening and bringing people together and understanding them. Whether from what religion but just listening, and understanding. So that's what I wish we would bring. – Leader 8

These qualitative feedbacks on the culture of conservatism and exclusivity are one of the themes identified as Independent Variables associated with Catholic education.

These reflections highlight two distinct but interrelated considerations within the broader conversation on the sacramental vision of leadership particularly in Inclusive Leadership.

On one hand, the acknowledgement that God may be revealed to different peoples and cultures in diverse ways underscores the importance of fostering mutual respect and understanding among individuals of varying religious backgrounds. This perspective does not diminish the Catholic belief in Christ as the fullest revelation of God but rather calls for openness that reflects the spirit of dialogue and unity.

On the other hand, the critique regarding the perception of Catholicism as superior invites deeper reflection on the sacramental vision of Inclusive Leadership and similarly the exercise of Discerning Authority. It raises questions about the balance between proclaiming the faith with authority and recognising the need to be inclusive and reach out to others by listening and understanding them in the context of pluralistic societies. Together, these perspectives challenge Catholic education to embrace a sacramental vision of leadership that is inclusive and grounded in authentic discernment.

This section highlights the strengths and areas for growth in Catholic education's role in fostering inclusive leadership by respecting other people's opinions. While many leaders appreciate the value of equality and respect instilled during their education, there is a clear need for increased openness to diversity and interreligious dialogue. Incorporating these elements into Catholic education could align more closely with Pope Francis's vision of inclusivity and equip future leaders to navigate a diverse, pluralistic society effectively.

In Statement 18 – The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence me on how to accept diversity in the community where I belong, shows a mixed response, 3 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly agree" and 17 out of the 337 (5%) respondents "agree" and 22 out of the 337 (7%) respondents "slightly agree" with the statement. In contrast, 47 out of the 337 (14%) respondents "slightly disagree", 119 out of the 337 (35%) respondents "disagree", and 129 out of the 337 (38%) "strongly disagree" with the statement. Statement 18 ranks eighth in Section

2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership, highlighting how Catholic education influenced women leaders on the acceptance of diversity within the community.

The survey results indicate that most respondents believe their Catholic education positively influenced their ability to accept diversity. However, the significant minority who agreed highlights an area where Catholic education could improve. The qualitative data will offer a nuanced explanation for the quantitative result.

The qualitative data underscores challenges in fostering openness to diversity within Catholic education, particularly regarding LGBTQ communities and multi-faith engagements. For instance, Leader 6 noted the need for a cultural shift.

We need to learn how to engage with people who are different. For example, the whole issue of LGBTQ. Even in my Catholic school, that is an issue. How do you relate to these groups? We need to have a mindset of “time of change” and be open with different ways of thinking.

I think that is not very encouraged in Catholic schools. So we're kind of more on along the straight and narrow, and so diversity in terms of thinking, in terms of relationships, and people you work with is something that needs to be strengthened. – Leader 6

Leader 2 echoed this perspective mentioning the need for an inclusive education within Catholic schools for minority groups such as people of no faith, or other minority communities such as the LGBTQ.

I think one of the aspects is, how you prepare the atheist and other religions. What are its policies and culture towards these people? How can Catholic education be inclusive at the same time Catholic? How do we deal with LGBTQ and other minorities, for example? That's how it is a “university”, it should allow that. However, I am also aware that there are rules that it needs to follow, like the mandate of the Vatican. – Leader 2 Q10

These sentiments highlight that Catholic education is often perceived as resistance to change and adhering to a “straight and narrow” approach, limiting opportunities for exposure to diverse perspectives. There is also a deficit in inclusivity because LGBTQ issues and interfaith dialogues remain contentious areas where Catholic education is perceived to fall short.

These qualitative feedbacks reveal gaps in how Catholic education aligns with contemporary diversity expectations, despite its foundational values of respect for human dignity and inclusion.

The sacramental vision of inclusive leadership, as embodied by Jesus Christ, emphasises inclusivity and acceptance, transcending social division of race, status, and belief (e.g. Galatians 3:28) as explained in the literature review. However, the mixed survey responses to Statement 18 and interviews suggest a disparity between the theoretical ideals of Catholic education and the lived experiences of its students.

Statement 19 – The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to be inclusive, 130 out of the 337 (39%) respondents “strongly agree”, 135 out of the 337 (40%) respondents “agree”, and 47 out of the 337 (14%) respondents “slightly agree” with the statement. Conversely, 16 out of the 337 (5%) respondents “slightly disagree”, 8 out of 337 (2%) respondents “disagree” and only 1 out of the 337 “strongly disagree” with Statement 19. This makes the survey result of Statement 19 rank seventh in Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership, providing a statistical insight into the perceived influence of Catholic education among women leaders in terms of their formation on how to be inclusive.

The qualitative insights supported the perceived success of Catholic education in fostering inclusivity in the quantitative results. The interviews emphasised the active role Catholic education played in shaping inclusive leadership among women leaders, considered one of the Dependent Variables presented in the Result chapter.

The respondents mentioned that there is an effort within Catholic education to be open to change. Leader 6 credited her Catholic education for teaching her to embrace diverse ways of thinking and exposing herself to different values.

I want to leave this place wherever I was, a little bit better than when I came in. That was always my mindset and I think I attribute that to my Catholic education. That was really something I learned in school, especially in college. At that time, there was a transition from the traditional way of society to awakening. My school allowed us to be more exposed to different values and to different ways of thinking. Because of that, I would like to be able to make a difference in whatever setting I would be placed in. – Leader 6

Leader 4 highlighted how Catholic education provided opportunities to engage beyond her comfort zone. She emphasised the value of personal interaction in cultivating empathy now that she is in a leadership position.

Whenever I give scholarships, I want to meet the person. I want to be able to talk to the person. And, of course, that makes you aware of how difficult life can be for certain people. So that to me, is part of leadership, because then you are not just safe in your little cocoon. You become involved in other people's lives, which makes you part of the world. - Leader 4

These qualitative feedbacks align with the positive quantitative finding and highlight the role of experiential learning in fostering inclusivity among students in Catholic education. The sacramental vision of inclusive leadership calls for a kind of leadership that actively engages with others, especially those from marginalised or minority groups. The responses to Statement 19 and interviews demonstrate how Catholic education has instilled this principle in its students, though the qualitative data suggest room for further development in specific contexts.

Lastly, 3 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly agree" with Statement 20 – The formation I received in Catholic Education DID NOT influence my ability to suspend judgment and prejudice. While 15 out of the 337 (4%) respondents "agree", and 26 out of the 337 (8%) respondents "slightly agree" with the statement. Conversely, 60 out of the 337 (18%) respondents "slightly disagree", 135 out of the 337 (40%) respondents "disagree", and 98 out of the 337 (29%) respondents "strongly disagree" with Statement 20. These findings rank Statement 20 lowest in Section 2: Sacramental Vision of Leadership, providing statistical insight into the influence of Catholic education on fostering open-mindedness and fairness.

The qualitative data from the interview reveals a deeper understanding of the lower statistical score of Statement 20. The interview responses revealed concerns about the judgemental tendencies within Catholic education.

As Leader 5 explained, because Catholic education is robust in the moral formation of the faith, there is a tendency to be judgmental and self-righteous.

But I suppose that is also a negative thing in Catholic education. You could be judgmental. Or you could easily say this is right and this is wrong, thinking you are the authority, even if you are not. – Leader 5

This sentiment is further supported by Leader 7 explaining that compared to non-Catholic education there is room for an open conversation without prejudice.

I think in non-Catholic education we were allowed more room to talk about things beyond imposing a moral judgment on the people. We had discussions without judgment and focusing on the practical needs of people, understanding their experiences and listening to them. – Leader 7

Leader 4 also critiqued that she considered it as a leadership weakness that she wasn't given enough opportunity in Catholic education to interact with other religion and therefore not have any prejudice.

We have to open ourselves up to different religions and not be prejudiced that we are the only ones. So that's a weakness if you didn't, if I didn't open myself to other religions. Not that I am really religious, I just go to church. I go to Mass. But I think we should open ourselves and have more interactivity and interreligious dialogue. I think there should be more like that, although we did have. But the Catholics are close, too close. Close-minded. – Leader 4

This sentiment was echoed by Leader 3, emphasising the limiting impact of dogmatic teachings within Catholic education.

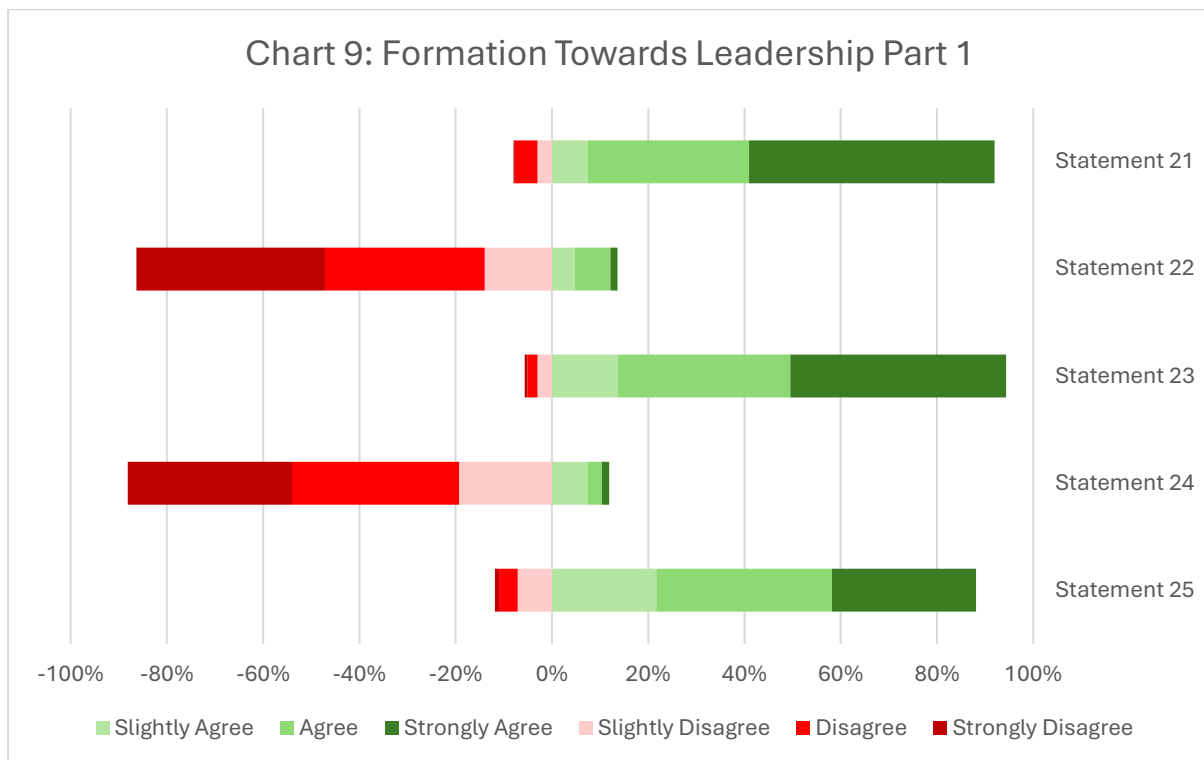
The problem really is to the Catholic religion is that they are unable to change their beliefs in faith and make it make things more analytical and objective. So it will be difficult. I don't know what small things can be done, maybe not depend so much on prayers and try to resolve the issues by acting upon them. Maybe try not to be so judgmental when you're in the workforce and not rely so much on religion. – Leader 3

Leader 6 also mentioned the need to shift from dogmatic instruction to discussion-based learning that encourages analytical thinking and open dialogue.

Probably a little less dogmatism. Because we tend to be dogmatic because that is the Catholic faith. We are a dogma-driven faith. And that's what I mean, maybe, is the diversity of thinking. So less dogmatism. It is not to stop, it is to lessen. Be more open to diverse talk. Even in terms of political engagement. – Leader 6

These qualitative insights indicate that while Catholic education promotes equality in principle, its practice often falls short due to cultural and institutional constraints. The sacramental vision of inclusive leadership emphasises openness and acceptance of other people, which are essential for suspending judgment. This quantitative result has largely succeeded in this regard, but the qualitative data highlights areas for growth, particularly in reducing dogmatism, fostering a non-judgmental dialogue, especially with people of other beliefs and ideologies, and engagement with LGBTQ communities.

SECTION 3: FORMATION TOWARDS LEADERSHIP



Statement 21: The formation I received in Catholic education taught me that being a woman does not impede pursuing any career or vocation.

Statement 22: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** teach me that being a woman is not an impediment to pursuing a leadership role.

Statement 23: The formation I received in Catholic education provided me with opportunities to explore my leadership potential.

Statement 24: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** help me in discovering my passion.

Statement 25: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me to pursue a leadership position.

Summarised in Chart 9: Formation towards Leadership Part 1, 172 out of the 337 (51%) respondents "strongly agree" with Statement 21 - The formation I received in Catholic education taught me that being a woman does not impede pursuing any career or vocation. While 113 out of the 337 (34%) respondents "agree" and 25 out of the 337 (7%) respondents "slightly agree" with the statement. Conversely, 10 out of the 337 (3%) respondents "slightly disagree", 16 out of the 337 (5%) respondents "disagree", and only 1 out of the 337 respondents "strongly disagree" with the statement. Statement 21 ranked the highest in Section 3: Formation

Towards Leadership, underscoring the significant role of Catholic education in forming women's pursuit of their career or vocational potential.

This overwhelmingly positive response situates Catholic education as a critical influence in fostering women's leadership aspirations, with statement 21 receiving the highest favourability within Section 3 of the survey.

A. Correlation Between All-Female Education and Leadership Formation

Although only 27 out of 337 respondents expressed any disagreement with Statement 21, the qualitative data suggests that beyond the influence of Catholic education on women's determination to pursue any career or vocation, there may be a correlation between attending an all-female educational institution and the ability to pursue diverse opportunities. The interview responses suggest that all-female educational environments amplify leadership development by eliminating male-dominated leadership structures. Respondents frequently attributed their leadership confidence to the equitable opportunities available in such settings.

For example, Leader 6 shared how she consciously looked for leadership opportunities in her all-female Catholic education.

I learned a lot from an all-female education. I think I looked for opportunities to be a leader. I wanted to be a leader, my education provided that. – Leader 6

All-female education whether it is a Catholic or Non-Catholic education or a combination of both is considered one of the Extraneous Variables identified in the Result section which is intertwined with the Confounding Variables of opportunities to nurture their leadership potential. Leader 8 explained that this could be due to the absence of male leadership bias, which allows for a more open and equitable environment for leadership possibilities.

Then I went to Women's College, which was an all-girls. So that opened me up. If you go to an all-girls college, because all positions for leadership are for women. So it was a really super good combination. The strength is I went to an all-girls college not necessarily Catholic. – Leader 8

Leader 7 shared the same sentiments on her all-female education.

And that's it because I studied in an all-girls (school), at least in high school. So it's different if it's all female. So, of course, the interactions are very different, I don't know if that really had an impact on my own behaviour towards males. From kindergarten to fourth-year high school, I was in an all-girls school. – Leader 7

These insights suggest that an all-female environment reduces implicit biases that often limit women's access to leadership roles in co-educational or male-dominated settings. They provide spaces where leadership skills can be nurtured without the constraints of gendered competition.

B. Challenges in Male-Dominated Fields

Despite the formative influence of Catholic education and all-female education, systemic barriers persist, particularly in male-dominated professions. Women often find themselves confined to "soft" leadership roles. This social context of gender-specific challenges is another Extraneous Variable that affects and influences the formation of women leaders.

Leader 6 described how issues or sectors within the government that are considered lower priority or less appealing to men are typically assigned to women.

"The issues that I was handling, men don't want to talk about. Sensitive issues like even sexuality, discrimination, and exclusion. Somehow at that time, these were issues that were not being considered in society, which was populated largely, by the leadership of men. So these were issues that were not on the radar screen. These were considered soft issues. These were not hard data like economic issues." said – Leader 6

Moreover, the psychological and social challenges of entering male-dominated fields are evident. One respondent shared how the lack of female peers in a theoretical cosmology course led to feelings of isolation and eventual withdrawal.

Leader 2 highlighted the challenges women faced in male-dominated fields:

“Actually, there is a difference between male and female in my field because Physics is a very male-dominated field. Although I do not know the exact ratio, there are available data on the ratio internationally in terms of different sciences. I was pursuing theoretical cosmology, but when I entered the class, I was the only female in that class, all students were male. After that, I felt out of place, so I did not attend anymore and did not pursue it. I was so intimidated. Maybe if there were more female students there, I probably would have stayed. I probably would have asked the female students for help.” she said – Leader 2

These accounts highlight how the absence of gender diversity perpetuates male-dominated spaces, discouraging women from pursuing and sustaining careers in such fields.

Encouragingly, progress has been noted in some sectors, often driven by women’s advocacy and systemic reforms. For instance, in the judiciary, the increasing presence of women judges signifies shifting norms.

Leader 1 shared her experience when she was starting in her field and how it has improved now,

“Well, before, it was so difficult to be a woman leader, but right now in the judiciary, there are a lot more women who are judges. Before, we were just a few women magistrates and I was then, basically a novice and there are a lot of male judges. And I went through a lot, not only in terms of... You know, they see me as not as a magistrate, not as their equal, they see me as a... This is vulgar, but they see me as a sex object. And in fact, I was rather a victim of that. So I think the women's movement actually helped a lot in the recognition of our role as magistrates. – Leader 1

While these strides are notable, the persistence of gender biases, particularly objectification and a lack of recognition of women’s expertise, underscores the need for continued efforts to challenge entrenched societal norms.

The quantitative and qualitative data highlight that Catholic and all-female education provide formative experiences that instil leadership aspirations and resilience among women. However, their impact may diminish when women transition to broader societal and professional contexts that remain male-dominated.

Progress in increasing female representation in leadership is evident but still uneven. Male-dominated industries and traditional perceptions of leadership continue to restrict women's advancement, particularly in roles or fields deemed "hard" or economically significant.

In Statement 22, 132 out of the 337 (39%) respondents "strongly disagree" that the formation they received in Catholic education DID NOT teach them that being a woman does not impede pursuing a leadership role. While 112 out of the 337 (33%) respondents "agree", and 47 out of the 337 (14%) respondents "slightly agree" with Statement 22. On the other hand, 5 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly agree", 25 out of the 337 (7%) respondents "agree" and 16 out of the 337 (5%) respondents "slightly agree" with the Statement. Statement 22 ranked fifth in Section 3: Formation towards Leadership, underscoring the mixed sentiments about Catholic education's influence and role in addressing gender dynamics in leadership.

C. Persistent Societal Perceptions of Leadership

Despite the Philippines' high ranking in the World Economic Forum's Gender Equality Index (WEF; 2023: 11/WEF; 2018: 10), discussed in the Introduction Chapter of this research study, the qualitative data revealed deep-seated societal biases that position men as default leaders. These perceptions persist even when women occupy leadership roles.

While more women are attaining higher positions in government and other fields, men are still more often considered for leadership roles by default. Leader 8, the president of an educational institution, highlighted this contradiction:

Although there are more and more women in higher positions right now whether be it in government or other fields, men are still the ones often automatically considered for leadership positions. – Leader 8 Q2

This reflects a disconnect between Catholic education's teachings and societal practice. Catholic education emphasises mutual understanding and the complementary nature of men and women, recognising their diversity as "different yet equal in dignity" (SCCE; 1983:25). This vision of reciprocal completion aims to nurture a worldview where men and women, though distinct, are equally capable of

leadership and worthy of respect. However, societal attitudes often fail to mirror this ideal, prioritising men as the “natural” leaders and undermining the application of these principles in practice.

D. The intersection of Gender and Age Bias

The intersection of gender and age adds another layer of complexity. Women leaders often face diminished perceptions of their authority due to youth, as exemplified by a senior leader in the Philippine Department of Health and a consultant to the World Health Organisation.

Leader 7 shared her experience of feeling that society did not view her as a leader, often attributing this to her youth or gender. She remarked -

“I felt like society didn't really regard me as much of a leader. There was that sense of “oh bata ka pa! or babae ka kasi” (you are still young or it’s because you are a girl”). So there's this expectation that you will be up to a certain level only. I say it is different because the default for men, I think, is that very early on, there is a higher level of respect or regard. Whereas for females, it was not that automatic, or it's not the default talaga (really). – Leader 7 Q2

Her account underscores how entrenched biases extend beyond gender to encompass age, relegating young women leaders to the margins of authority despite their qualifications or achievements. This systemic undervaluation contrasts sharply with the Catholic educational ideal of equal dignity and reciprocal respect between genders.

While Catholic education provides a strong foundation for leadership formation and emphasises equality in dignity between men and women, societal biases regarding gender and age continue to hinder women’s leadership potential. To bridge this gap, Catholic education plays an important role in pursuing a multifaceted approach. It requires combining educational reforms within Catholic education that champion advocacies at institutional, societal, and policy levels with broader cultural shifts to challenge deeply ingrained perceptions that will ensure leadership is no longer constrained by outdated gender norms, fulfilling the vision of equality and respect for human dignity in the Christian perspective.

In Statement 23, 151 out of 337 (45%) respondents “strongly agree” that their Catholic education provided them with opportunities to explore their leadership potential. Additionally, 121 out of the 337 (36%) respondents “agree”, and 46 out of the 337 (14%) respondents “slightly agree” with the statement. In contrast, a small minority of respondents expressed differing views: 10 out of the 337 (3%) respondents “slightly disagree”, 7 out of the 337 (2%) respondents “disagree”, and 2 out of the 337 (1%) respondents “strongly disagree”. The results for Statement 23 ranked second in Section 3, reflecting a strong influence of Catholic education in fostering leadership development.

D. Opportunities for Nurturing Leadership Abilities

The qualitative data reveals that while many female respondents did not consciously strive for leadership roles, they recognised in hindsight that their Catholic education offered numerous opportunities to develop their leadership potential which were considered Confounding Variables. This was facilitated through structured activities, mentorship and values-driven programmes.

Leader 9 shared her experience:

I was never consciously aiming for a leadership position. However, the Christian values of serving and helping others influenced my decision to pursue a career in public service after college. Leadership became a natural part of my life, even though I couldn't understand at the time why I was consistently nominated and elected as class president, both in grade school and high school. Whenever I joined groups, I would eventually be elected or selected to lead. – Leader 9

This highlights how Catholic education fosters an environment where leadership emerges organically, rooted in service and responsibility.

Similarly, Leader 2 described how her focus on physics provided a unique, non-traditional avenue for leadership development:

I think I was a late bloomer in terms of leadership because I focused intensely on physics. Unlike some of my peers, who were very active in organisations serving the poor and tutoring kids in underprivileged areas, I devoted all my free time to studying physics. My involvement in a small group

of physics enthusiasts, supported by our mentor, provided a different avenue for leadership. – Leader 2

Her experience underscores the importance of niche programmes, like the math-focused initiative she participated in, which cultivated leadership through academic excellence and mentorship.

Leader 2 recalled a special math class in a Catholic university, led by her two professors, which catered to students with exceptional mathematical abilities:

It was a talented program for math, open only to those excelling in the subject. We engaged in problem-solving and friendly competition as math geeks. It highlighted the importance of mentoring and teaching within Catholic education. – Leader 2

Other respondents, such as Leader 4 and Leader 6, emphasised service-oriented activities as a foundational element of their leadership development.

Leader 4 attributed her early sense of leadership to her Catholic school experiences:

Through activities like Girl Scouts, catechism, and volunteering with Catholic charities during crises like the Ruby Towers collapse, I developed a sense of responsibility and leadership. – Leader 4

Leader 6 reflected on her lifelong inclination toward service:

Even in my early childhood, I was drawn to situations where help was needed. This trajectory continued through school, where I became involved in service-oriented activities like Student Catholic Action and the Student Union. – Leader 6

Activities like Girl Scouts, Catechism, and volunteering with Catholic charities instilled a sense of responsibility and initiative. These structured opportunities allowed students to explore leadership informally, often motivated by a desire to care for others rather than formal ambitions.

Leader 7's experiences as a class officer from grade school to Church volunteerism further illustrate this dynamic.

From grade school, I was active in Church activities and often volunteered during Mass. Even as early as first grade, I was a class officer, though I had no idea what I was doing. I just wanted to take care of my classmates. This desire to care for others has carried through into my professional life, manifesting in various leadership roles, both formal and informal. – Leader 7

Leader 5 also noted the impact of her Catholic education on her career:

In Grade school, we were heavily involved in the arts, and in High School, I often sang during Mass. These experiences, particularly performing with Lea Salonga at the PICC, shaped my career and fostered my leadership potential.
– Leader 5

However, not all respondents viewed Catholic education's influence positively.

Leader 3 offered a dissenting perspective, highlighting how traditional Catholic values conflicted with her leadership goals. She felt that the traditional Catholic values instilled by her parents and Catholic education hindered her ability to achieve and grow as a leader.

My husband and I had a unique marriage, with him working in developed countries and me in developing ones. While my husband was always supportive, my mother, influenced by her Catholic values, couldn't understand our lifestyle. Her insistence on traditional values and marriage set-up felt suffocating and hindered my growth as a leader. The Catholic religion, in this respect, was detrimental to my ambitions, as I constantly had to explain my choices to family and friends from Catholic school, who were often judgmental. This lack of understanding of different lifestyles and values is one negative aspect of Catholicism that I experienced. – Leader 3

The interviewee's insights briefly touch on Leader 3's negative experience with Catholic values, which she felt hindered her leadership aspirations. This could be analysed by how traditional values can sometimes conflict with modern leadership roles, especially for women.

The complex influence of Catholic education on leadership formation reflects an intricate interplay of various factors, including family partnerships, traditional Catholic values, and institutional frameworks. As highlighted in the Literature review, strong partnerships between Catholic education and families are essential, not just for addressing academic concerns but for fostering the holistic education of students. These collaborations are particularly important when dealing with sensitive areas like religious and moral education, vocational guidance, and personal development (CCE;1988: 42)

Parental influence, a key extraneous variable, intertwined with Catholic education teachings and the roles of teachers – both independent and confounding variables, to shape the leadership trajectories of women. Catholic education's emphasis on values-driven leadership and service creates opportunities for growth and leadership development. Yet, these opportunities often coexist with challenges rooted in traditional values. While Catholic teachings underscore the complementary and equal dignity of men and women, some respondents highlighted the tension between these ideals and societal expectations or family pressures.

This tension raises critical questions about how Catholic education, rooted in values which can be viewed by some as traditional, and often reinforced by familial norms, engages with the evolving demands of modern leadership. While these values provide a moral and ethical foundation, their application must thoughtfully consider the diverse contexts in which leadership occurs today, including the unique challenges faced by women. Rather than judging Catholicism by contemporary social norms, this highlights an opportunity for Catholic education to reflect on how its foundational principles can be authentically lived out in ways that empower women to embrace leadership roles. Such a reconciliation can ensure that Catholic teachings continue to inspire and guide individuals while addressing the complexities of modern leadership.

In Statement 24 – 115 out of the 337 (34%) respondents "strongly disagree" that the formation they received in Catholic education DID NOT help them in discovering their passion. Similarly, 117 out of the 337 (35%) respondents "disagree", and 65 out of the 337 (19%) respondents "slightly disagree" with the statement. Conversely, 5 out of the 337 (1%) "strongly agree", 10 out of the 337 (3%) "agree", and 25 out of the 337 (7%) "slightly agree" with Statement 24. The result of statement 24 ranked seventh in Section 3, indicating a more moderate acknowledgement of Catholic education's influence on passion discovery compared to other impacts.

F. Sense of Purpose and Mission

Qualitative insights, however, offer a more nuanced understanding. While Catholic education may not have consistently guided individuals towards specific passions, it often cultivates a profound sense of purpose and mission. Many respondents identified this as a driving force in their personal and professional lives.

For instance, a leader in humanitarian causes attributed her enduring commitment to service to values instilled during her Catholic education:

"I want to leave this place wherever I was, a little bit better than when I came in. That was always my mindset and I think I attribute that to the sisters. That was really something I learned in school, especially in college." – Leader 6

This sentiment aligns with the broader role of Catholic education as highlighted in the literature review. Catholic educational institutions have historically fostered intellectual, scientific, and societal advancement, but they are also tasked with addressing moral, spiritual, and religious dimensions to ensure the authentic good of individuals and society (Pope John Paul II; 1990:7). This dual mandate emphasises a holistic approach to education, one that not only equips students with knowledge but also nurtures their capacity for meaningful contribution to the world.

This intrinsic sense of mission was similarly articulated by a president of an educational institution:

That's what keeps me moving forward because I know there is a purpose and that comes with the Catholic formation we get. I know that there is a mission. All of us have different missions. – Leader 8

In some cases, the nurturing of this sense of mission began at an early age. A medical professional reflected on her formative experiences:

Even before high school, I already had some roots, some like some seeds of that, for example, as early as grade three or grade four, I joined the Mission club. I don't know why I joined the Mission Club at that age. I wasn't really sure, but definitely, very early on, there was something there that was driving that sense of mission and sense of "other". And that was strengthened and fortified when I entered high school. – Leader 7

However, this integrated approach has its complexities. While many respondents acknowledged the moral and spiritual dimension of Catholic education, others felt it lacked specific pathways to individual passions. An international performer highlighted a different perspective. She recalled that her early passion for singing was purely driven by enjoyment, with no deeper purpose or sense of mission at the time:

“At first, I just wanted to sing because I like to sing, and that's as simple as that. There was no underlying or more important reason when you were young. When you start singing young, usually you don't look for a purpose. It's not yet in your mind.” – Leader 5

The qualitative data suggest that while Catholic education may not always provide explicit pathways to specific passions, it often cultivates a broader framework of purpose and mission. This foundation equips individuals with a guiding principle for their lives, whether through leadership, service, or personal pursuits. However, the data also reveals the subjective nature of this influence, varying based on individual interpretation and engagement with Catholic values.

These diverse experiences raise critical questions about the effectiveness of Catholic education in balancing its dual aims of fostering intellectual growth and cultivating a moral, purpose-driven life. While some students internalised the broader mission and sense of purpose promoted in Catholic educational institutions, others felt a gap between these values and the practical identification of their unique passions. As Pope John Paul II articulated, Catholic education must navigate this balance to fully address the “authentic good” of its students and their role in society (Pope John Paul II; 1990: 7).

In Statement 25, 101 out of 337 respondents (30%) “strongly agree” that their formation in Catholic education influenced them to pursue a leadership position. Additionally, 123 out of the 337 (36%) respondents “agree”, and 73 out of the 337 (33%) respondents “slightly agree” with the statement. On the other hand, 24 out of the 337 (7%) respondents “slightly disagree”, 13 out of the 337 (4%) respondents “disagree”, and 3 out of the 337 (1%) respondents “strongly disagree”. This makes

Statement 25 the lowest-ranking item in Section 3, reflecting Catholic education's influence on leadership aspirations compared to other factors.

G. Role of Family and Educational Community in Leadership Development

While the quantitative data points to a limited influence, the qualitative insights reveal a more complex narrative, suggesting that leadership development stems from an interplay of factors, including family influence, personal interests, and life circumstances. These factors are identified as Extraneous Variables discussed in the Results Chapter.

For instance, Leader 1 credits her father, a legal professional and public servant, as the primary inspiration for her career in law:

My father, who was a lawyer, prosecutor (fiscal), and later a judge, deeply influenced my career path. He even ventured into politics after retirement, although he wasn't successful in that field. – Leader 1

Similarly, family values and early experiences significantly shaped the leadership trajectories of other respondents. Leader 7 reflects on the values instilled by her parents on caring for others which later on influenced her to pursue a leadership role in public health in order to provide health care to those who cannot afford private health care:

When I think about my influences, I always go back to my childhood and the lessons my parents taught me about serving others and being mindful of those less fortunate. – Leader 7

Leader 9 echoes this sentiment, attributing her desire to work in public service to her father's career with the World Health Organisation:

My desire to do public service work was influenced by my father, who worked for the World Health Organization. Our travels with him made it natural for me to join the Philippine Foreign Service to pursue a career in public service. – Leader 9

These accounts highlight the role of family influence as a Confounding Variable in the development of leadership aspirations, suggesting that while Catholic education contributed indirectly, it was not always the decisive factor. This finding resonates

with the holistic vision articulated by Newman, as explored by Msgr. Roderick Strange (2019: 113 – 129). Newman emphasised the integration of intellectual, moral, and spiritual formation, arguing that neither devotion nor intellectual development should be treated as mere “ornaments.” Instead, he advocated for a synthesis that cultivates the “intellectual layman” to be religious and the “devout ecclesiastic” to be intellectual (Newman; 2023:12-13).

This interrelationship can be seen in the experiences of respondents who credited Catholic education with shaping their values and adaptability. For example, Leader 8, shared how the dedication of the religious sisters inspired her own leadership style, now that she is a president of a Catholic educational institution.

The education I received, particularly from the sisters, inspired me. Now, I give back by carrying out my assignments with the same dedication they instilled in me. – Leader 8

Leader 4 highlighted how her Catholic education prepared her to adapt to diverse roles, including leadership within the family:

I’ve worn many hats, including being the wife of a diplomat and government official, which I never expected. My ability to adapt to different roles is a testament to the education and training I received in Catholic education. While I admire women in high-profile positions, it’s important to recognise the leadership displayed by women in their husbands’ lives, like Jackie Kennedy Onassis and Corazon Aquino. Both were Catholic-educated, which suggests there’s something in Catholic education that fosters strength of character, something essential for the kind of life they led. – Leader 4

H. Personal Interests and Abilities

In contrast, some respondents, like Leader 3, highlighted their independence from traditional family or societal influences. While she appreciated her husband’s support, she emphasised pursuing her career on her own terms:

No one specifically inspired me, but my husband was fully supportive. I was keen on pursuing my career, separate from what my husband was doing. I didn’t want to be a housewife like my mother; I wanted to be my own person. – Leader 3

These accounts underscore the multifaceted nature of leadership formation. Beyond family influence, innate abilities, and personal interests also play pivotal roles.

Leader 5 for example, described how her love for singing guided her career path, independent from formal guidance:

“Initially, I just wanted to sing because I enjoyed it. There wasn’t any deeper reason when I was young—just a simple love for singing.” – Leader 5

Similarly, Leader 2 attributed her decision to pursue physics to her early fascination with science, nurtured during her time at a science-focused high school rather than her Catholic university:

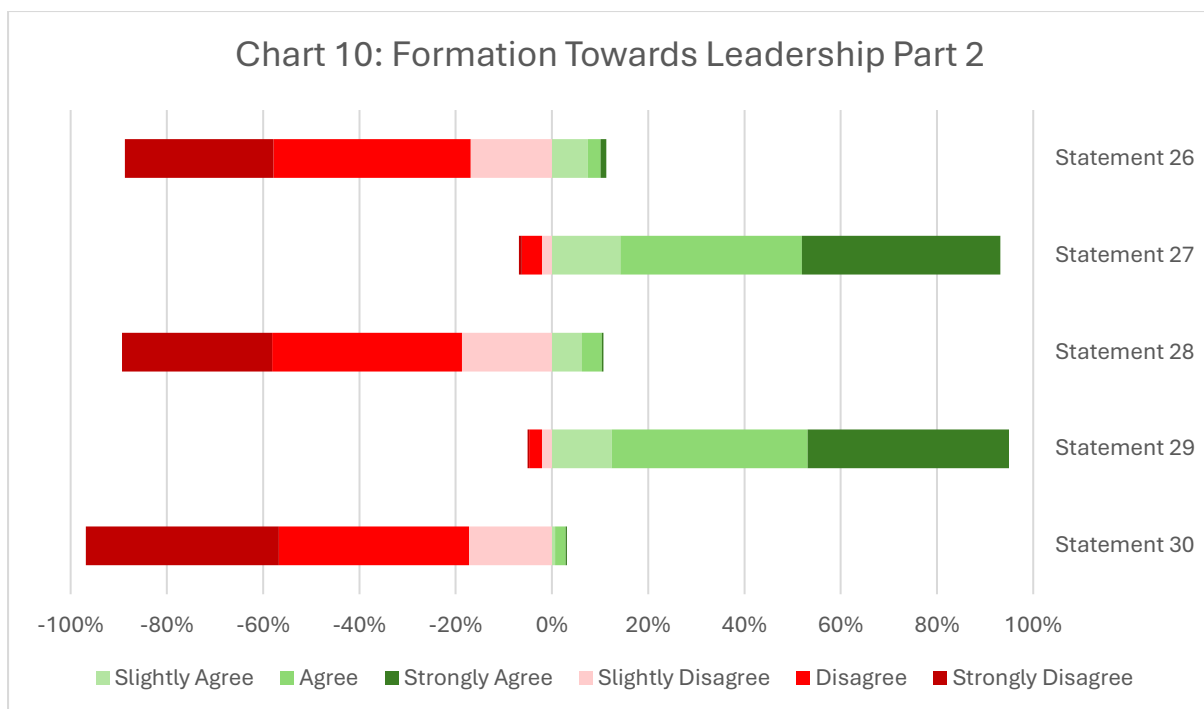
I think it started in High School because that is when I sort of decided to pursue a career in Physics. So I guess, I knew quite early, because in general, most people don’t know yet. I attended my secondary school at Philippine Science High School. It is a magnet school for Science. – Leader 2

Other respondents, like Leader 6, reflected on their natural inclination toward humanitarian work, describing it as an accumulation of experiences and a response to situations requiring help:

Actually, it's an accumulation and aggregation of different factors. You know, When I look back at my life, I realise that even in my early childhood, there was a strand of me that responded to situations needing help. That was kind of the track that I was on even as a child. – Leader 6

These findings suggest that leadership development is shaped by an intricate web of influences, with Catholic education providing a foundational layer of moral and spiritual formation. However, as Newman emphasised, intellectual and spiritual formation must be integrated to fully realise the potential of holistic education. For Catholic education to strengthen its impact on leadership development, it could focus more explicitly on nurturing leadership skills while maintaining its commitment to holistic formation.

By embracing Newman’s vision of forming the “whole person”, Catholic education can ensure that students not only possess the moral and spiritual grounding to lead but also the intellectual and practical tools to navigate and address the complexities of contemporary leadership challenges.



Statement 26: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** prepare me to become a leader.

Statement 27: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced my style of leadership.

Statement 28: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** influence me on how I train others who are under my leadership.

Statement 29: The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to handle my leadership responsibilities.

Statement 30: The formation I received in Catholic education **DID NOT** influence me on how to deal with moral dilemmas in my leadership role.

Chart 10: Formation Towards Leadership Part 2 summarises responses to Statement 26: "The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT prepare me to become a leader." The data indicates that 104 out of 337 (31%) respondents "strongly disagree", 138 out of the 337 (41%) respondents "disagree" and 57 out of the 337 (17%) respondents "slightly disagree." On the other hand, 4 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly agree", 9 out of the 337 (3%) respondents "agree", and 25 out of the 337 (7%) respondents "slightly agree" with the statement. Statement 26 ranked second to last (9th place) among the statements in Section 3. The result suggests that Catholic education is largely perceived as positively influencing leadership preparation, though there are nuances and exceptions.

I. Leadership Preparation in Catholic Education

The qualitative data further explains this finding, with many respondents emphasising the role of Catholic education in instilling values such as compassion, social responsibility, and moral integrity.

For example, Leader 4 noted that her Catholic education ingrained in her a natural inclination to relate to and serve those of lesser means. She shared that this sense of "giving" is a form of generosity that extends beyond material support to include time, presence, and personal engagement. She credited her experiences in Catholic education as formative in developing these values of compassion, service, and generosity.

Well, I find myself liking it when I'm with people, especially people those are of lesser means. It just comes naturally. As a matter of fact, it is easier for me to relate to them, rather than the ones of the high society or what. So it's "that giving". That is a certain kind of generosity, which is a generosity of your time, of your presence, and of yourself. And I'm not saying that it's put on. But because of my education in a Catholic school, and what I had to do, as I mentioned I was a Girl Scout, I was a catechist, and then I did all the you know, I volunteered when Ruby Towers collapsed. I volunteered in Catholic charities. So, I see that you are taught to be compassionate to those who have less. – Leader 4

Such narratives align with Catholic education's broader mission to create an environment centred on Christian values, as emphasised in the Second Vatican Council's teaching (1965a: 8). Catholic education is designed to guide students in growing their faith while developing their unique personalities, equipping them to contribute meaningfully to society and fulfilling their Christian vocations. As the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1982: 32) noted, this mission requires role models who embody Christian attitudes and behaviours, offering students a concrete and realisable example of the values they are taught.

Similarly, Leader 7 emphasised that her understanding of leadership is deeply rooted in self-awareness and other-centeredness, values she attributes to her Catholic education upbringing. She explained that these principles guided her leadership style, particularly in her work with marginalised communities, where the "preferential option for the poor" became a central tenet of her leadership philosophy.

My understanding of leadership is having a strong sense of self-awareness. It begins with self-awareness of knowing your values, and knowing who you are, your strengths and weaknesses. I also learned the “other” centredness or the service component. The values come in those leadership roles. Those values definitely guided me. And that's what defines my leadership. A lot of it is based on just caring about other people and especially with the work that I do is focusing on the people who are marginalized and those who are most in need. So the preferential option for the poor, I think I have fully imbibed it. – Leader 7

Leader 6 echoed these sentiments, stating that her Catholic education instilled in her a strong sense of responsibility and compassion. She emphasised the importance of being aware of one’s role in the community and respecting others, values she continues to uphold in her leadership journey.

To speak out, and not to ignore and be aware of what is going on in the society and your relevance in it. It was always a strong principle in my Catholic education. You've got to be aware of who you are in your community. Another is the value of compassion and respect for others. These values were always something that I absorbed and I really learned from school. – Leader 6

Leader 1 added that being compassionate is crucial in her role in the Philippine judicial system, where she must balance the application of the law with compassion for those seeking justice in her courtroom. This blend of legal rigour and compassion, she said, was a lesson learned from her Catholic education.

You have to be very compassionate when you are a judge. Because the people appealing before me are people who are really looking for justice, not only for justice but also for compassion. So it's not only about the law but also about how you treat the law and how you apply the law. Compassion is really one of those things that I learned. – Leader 1

Leader 2 shared that while she does not follow Catholicism or any other religion, she still values the moral foundation that Catholic education provided her. Catholic values such as compassion for others and holding on to one’s principles serve as a common language among other scientist colleagues.

I play that role and I have a certain responsibility that comes with it. That responsibility to be a good example gives you a certain responsibility to be a moral person. I do not have a traditional religion that I follow or belong to. God is beyond all of that. So I am happy to say now that I also found a spirituality that suits me, and it is Zen. At least I am rooted in something and it is aligned with what Catholics believe in, such as compassion for others. Of course, I also wanted that to be part of my “message”, so it is becoming our common language among colleagues in Science, it is not just Catholic spirituality. But at the same time, I also feel that I am more pragmatic about things, it is important to be principled. – Leader 2

Beyond compassion, Leader 9 also reflected on the importance of practising the faith as a leader. She underscored the importance of integrating Catholic values learnt in Catholic education into leadership. She believes that leadership is a gift from God that requires effort to maximise one's talents and navigate the challenges of leading in a secular world. She also argued that a Catholic education can serve as a strong platform for developing leaders, provided they actively practice and internalise the values taught.

I could say that the values espoused by our Catholic Faith should prepare us to take on anything. I believe that to be a leader of the country is a gift from the Lord for that person. But it does not just happen. One has to help herself too so that she can fully maximize her talents in the utilization of this gift. There will be many challenges for a good Catholic woman leader in a secular world. Catholic education can be a good preparation platform for any woman leader, in my opinion. I don't mean that to have studied in a Catholic institution is already a good preparation. I mean – that person should also learn to practice the Faith. She should have imbibed our Christian values well and be grounded with them. She does not succumb to relativism. – Leader 9

However, not all experiences were positive. One interviewee, Leader 3, although she recognised the practical contribution of studying in a private educational institution, by giving her a good network in society. She expressed disillusionment with the people she encountered in her Catholic education. She felt that many of her peers and teachers in Catholic school lacked integrity, relying heavily on prayers and rituals rather than action. This experience led her to distance herself from what she perceived as superficial religiosity and materialism among some Catholic-educated leaders.

And so I never got a good impression during my education about Catholic values. They played actually an adverse role in my upbringing. The Catholic schools are mainly for private education and the elites. So in that sense, I was able to network with a lot of people from the very top echelons of government and social circle. So in that way, it helped me. But in terms of values, it gave me a very wrong and bad impression. It prepared me in the sense that I didn't want to be like them. I didn't want to be like very deeply religious women in our college because all they do now is just continuously pray and never really perform any action. So I find it quite negative that Catholic values we were given. And then if you're talking about moral values, I didn't see it in any of my friends and graduates of Catholic education. They're very acquisitive. They're very materialistic when they come into leadership positions. I'm talking about political leaders who are known for corruption. – Leader 3

Leader 3's experience highlights the potential for Catholic education to have a negative impact if the Christian values taught are not genuinely practised rather than simply relying on religious rituals.

These accounts highlight the importance of role models within Catholic education, reinforcing the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education's assertions that conduct is more influential than speech in shaping students' moral and spiritual development. The qualitative and quantitative data reveal that while many respondents affirmed Catholic education's role in preparing them to lead with empathy and integrity, others pointed to inconsistencies in its implementation, particularly regarding the authenticity of role models. This underscores the need for Catholic education to bridge the gap between doctrine and practice, ensuring that the values they espouse are consistently modelled by educators and school leaders.

In Statement 27, 139 out of the 337 (41%) respondents "strongly agree" that the formation they have received in Catholic education influenced their style of leadership. 127 out of the 337 (38%) respondents "agree" and 48 out of the 337 (14%) respondents "slightly agree" with Statement 27. While 7 out of the 337 (2%) respondents "slightly disagree", 14 out of the 337 (4%) "disagree", and 2 out of the 337 (1%) respondents "strongly disagree" with the statement. The result of Statement 27 ranked fourth in Section 3, reflecting the widespread acknowledgement of Catholic education's formative role in shaping leadership approaches, albeit with some opposing opinions.

Difference between Leadership of Women and Leadership of Men

Qualitative data offers deeper insights into how women, shaped by Catholic education, that despite the challenges women face in leadership, they often approach it differently than men. Women tend to emphasise collaboration, communication, and a thoughtful approach to problem-solving, whereas men are often perceived as more aggressive and dominant.

Leader 8 observed:

They (Male Leaders) are more aggressive, they are more dominant. When we, women, behave in a similar manner, it is sometimes viewed as an aberration when we are more assertive. The difference, in my mind, between men and women—which is a blessing—is that women tend to collaborate more and communicate more. We do not shoot at once. We first see how we can fix things. – Leader 8

This reflection highlights not only the difference in leadership styles but also the societal biases that often challenge women's assertiveness in leadership. Women's preference for collaboration over unilateral decision-making offers a complementary perspective rather than an attempt to overshadow men's contributions.

As Leader 5 expressed,

I always want to acknowledge that men have important roles. We are all for women's empowerment, but there's always equality. I've been fortunate to work with many strong women in my life. – Leader 5

These insights align with the principles of Catholic education, which fosters the holistic development of individuals, recognising both gender equality and the complementary nature of male and female contributions to society.

Catholic education's ethos, as articulated by the SCCE (1983: 25), underscores that no gender is inferior to the other. Instead, it celebrates diversity in leadership styles, rooted in the belief that men and women, while different, are equal in dignity and designed to complement each other. This resonates with the sentiments expressed by Leader 5, who valued equality while acknowledging the distinctive strengths women bring to leadership.

Moreover, Leader 5 shared the unique touches women bring to leadership, recalling a time when a female leader went out of her way to find a colleague's favourite cake for a birthday celebration abroad.

That's the touch of a woman, but also the touch of a leader. It may seem small, but it's a big deal when you're away from home for months at a time. – Leader 5

Some interviewees also believe that certain roles come more naturally to women due to their inherent characteristics. One interviewee who is a wife to a high-ranking government official and diplomat observed,

Women who play the role of wives may find it easier because they can put aside their ego and pride, which men often struggle with. Women are more patient, while men can be more volatile, thinking more with their minds than with their hearts. – Leader 4

These insights highlight the SCCE's teaching reinforces that differences in gender should not be viewed as hierarchical but as part of a reciprocal completion, enabling both men and women to contribute unique perspectives and strengths to leadership.

This approach challenges traditional patriarchal assumptions about leadership by framing women's distinct qualities as strengths rather than deviations from male-centric norms. When asked how female leadership differs from that of men, Leader 8, an ambassador of the Philippines observed, that women's attention to detail and perseverance in crises often lead to better outcomes.

Women can be more patient with details, more present in situations, and more caring. Nagging, as it's sometimes called, often produces the results needed. My impression is that when push comes to shove, women will stay, but men may run away. – Leader 8

Catholic education's vision of gender equality and mutual complementarity provides a compelling model for modern leadership, particularly challenging societal stereotypes and promoting a balanced, inclusive approach to leadership. However, the qualitative data reveals areas for growth, such as addressing biases that view women's assertiveness as aberrant and expanding the scope of role models to better

reflect the diversity of leadership styles inspired Catholic education, particularly the sacramental vision of leadership.

In Statement 28 - "The formation I received in Catholic education DID NOT influence how I train others under my leadership" - 105 out of 337 respondents (31%) "strongly disagree" with the statement. Additionally, 133 out of the 337 (39%) respondents "disagree", and 63 out of the 337 (19%) respondents "slightly disagree". Conversely, 21 out of the 337 (6%) respondents "slightly agree", 14 out of the 337 (4%) respondents "agree", and only one respondent out of the 337 "strongly agree" with Statement 28. The result for Statement 28 ranked eighth in Section 3, underscoring Catholic education's influence on how women leaders train others.

J. Mentorship as an Important Component of Leadership Formation

While the quantitative data does not clearly indicate specific influences or training methods taught within Catholic education on how these women leaders train those who are under their leadership, the qualitative insights highlight the critical role that mentorship plays in their leadership development. It reveals that women leaders express deep gratitude for the mentors who paved the way for their success. These mentors are not limited to those from their Catholic educational backgrounds but also include those encountered in the workplace.

These key figures within the Catholic education environment such as teachers, school leaders, and mentors are considered Confounding Variables of the influence of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders. While mentors and other women role models outside of the school environment are considered Extraneous Variables that contributed to the formation of women leaders.

Qualitative findings highlight mentorship as a foundational aspect of leadership formation, reflecting the values instilled by Catholic education. As discussed in the Literature review, Catholic teaching emphasises the role of educators and mentors as living testimonies of God's love, not only providing academic instruction but also pastoral care. The Catholic Church calls for educators to reach out to students,

especially those who feel excluded or marginalised. This aligns with the teachings of St. John Bosco, who stressed that young people “not only need to be loved but should know they are loved” (CCE; 2019:57).

For example, Leader 2 reflected on how her curiosity in science was nurtured by teachers who became mentors during her time at a Catholic University, guiding her toward a career in physics and inspiring her to pursue graduate studies. She recalled,

So the teachers nurtured our curiosity in science in High School, which led me to pursue Physics at a Catholic university. There I found professors who became my mentors. My professor, who went to the US and returned to the Philippines, along with a younger lecturer applying for graduate school at that time, showed us the path. We followed that track. – Leader 2

Leader 2 also highlighted the impact of a special math class at a Catholic University, where she experienced the value of mentoring:

It was a nice class because it was problem-solving, and we would all compete as math geeks. But again, it goes back to my point that in our Catholic university, there was value in mentoring and teaching. My professor who is a priest is a role model of Jesuit education and leadership. The professors took it upon themselves the responsibility and spent their time teaching the younger generation. They mentored us and of course that is lasting. Up to now, I still consider them as my mentors and I can ask for advice. It is a big thing for us and I am sure for them as well because it means they have mentored future leaders. – Leader 2

This insight demonstrates how Catholic education fosters mentorship as an act of care and guidance, directly addressing the Church’s call to love and support the young, particularly those facing challenges or uncertainties.

Although some respondents emphasised the influence of Catholic education, the mentorship they received was not limited to that context. For instance, Leader 6 shared how the support she received from mentors, both in school and in life, played a significant role in her career path. Mentors encouraged her to pursue her career in humanitarian causes, which became more than just a job - it became a mission for her.

So it was really something in my character, I think. I got support from that kind of environment - school environment, life environment, and eventually people I looked up to. So the mentors in my life. And all together they encouraged me to pursue that line of work, this line of involvement in life. So it's much more than just a job. It became a to be a mission. The meaning of my life is really to be in this kind of work. – Leader 6

Leader 5 also emphasised the importance of mentorship and collaboration in her field of performing arts. These people supported her when she was still starting in the field and made work easier.

“Friendships in theatre are important. Mentors are also important. And, co-workers are important. So to summarise, it's easy because there are a lot of generous women in the Philippine Theatre.” – Leader 5 Q2

These broader perspectives suggest that Catholic education provides a foundational framework for mentoring, which can be adapted and expanded upon in professional and social settings.

K. Being a Mentor to the Next Generation

As these women leaders advance in their careers, they reflect Catholic education's mission by mentoring the next generation. This aligns with the Church's emphasis on educators who not only impart knowledge but also offer personal guidance and love to those in need. The concept of mentorship in Catholic education can be closely linked to the New Testament's use of the word “disciple”, as discussed in the literature review, derived from the Greek word μαθητής (mathētēs), meaning “learner” or “apprentice”, this underscores a relational and formative process (Strong; 1984:274). Mentorship, in this sense, is not merely about transmitting skills or knowledge but about forming individuals holistically in a manner akin to the way Christ formed His disciples. By nurturing and mentoring others, these women leaders embody a form of modern discipleship, guiding others not just professionally but in values, character, and purpose.

Now that they hold leadership positions, these women leaders recognise the importance of the next generation, especially in the context of education. As Leader 5, an international performing artist, recognised her responsibility to inspire and

guide young people in preserving the Filipino cultural heritage as part of her social responsibility.

The younger people, especially those who watched a lot of theatre online during the pandemic, are so excited to watch now. The young ones are thrilled. – Leader 5

This excitement underscores the importance of guiding and inspiring the next generation. She shared that although she wanted to be successful internationally, she also realised that it is important to preserve the music and theatre culture of the Philippines for the younger generation.

I'm learning that I have to go out of my comfort zone and make sure to promote culture. Sarsuwela for example, feels like a dying art form. Even now I'm trying to say, "Let's do a recording of the songs" so that music students can study it in the future." – Leader 5

She further explained that she realised the importance of choosing the projects she accepts, *"So that's where I am with my roles today. To be a role model to the youth."*

Similarly, Leader 2 also reflected on her role as a physicist, it is easy to think that she is not leading anyone, but she later realised that her role in science affects how the young people see the world and could potentially influence their goals. She now acknowledges the broader impact of her leadership, particularly on young people pursuing careers in science.

The term "leader", I think it does resonate with me, but not in a rigid definition of a leader, because people tend to ask, who am I leading? But there are people or many young people, who through various channels learn about things I say, learn about things I do, and through that somehow influences their goals, how they see the world, how they feel about the career paths they choose especially if it is science. So in that sense, I play that role and I have a certain responsibility that comes with it.

These qualitative findings highlight the essential, though sometimes understated, influence of Catholic education and mentorship within the educational environment in shaping leaders who will one day guide others.

The integration of mentorship within Catholic education aligns with its mission to form leaders who embody empathy, care, and responsibility. Rooted in the Church's

understanding of discipleship, mentorship in Catholic education transcends the mere transmission of knowledge. It emphasises relational and formative guidance as a form of accompaniment, mirroring the way Christ nurtured His disciples by shaping their character, values, and sense of purpose.

In Statement 29 – The formation I received in Catholic education influenced me on how to handle my leadership responsibilities, 141 out of the 337 (42%) respondents “strongly agree” with the statement. While 137 out of the 337 (41%) respondents “agree” and 42 out of the 337 (12%) respondents “slightly agree”. On the other hand, 7 out of the 337 (2%) respondents “slightly disagree”, 9 out of the 337 (3%) respondents “disagree”, and only 1 out of the 337 “strongly disagree” with Statement 29. The survey results of this statement ranked third highest among the ten statements provided in Section 3. The data underscores the perceived significance of Catholic education in leadership development. These results highlight a broad consensus on the role of Catholic education formation in shaping leadership decision-making and responsibilities.

L. Handling Complex Leadership Responsibilities

While the quantitative data reflects strong support for the role of Catholic education in leadership, the qualitative data adds nuance by highlighting the complexities faced by women leaders in balancing Catholic values with modern leadership challenges. The qualitative data provides insights into how women leaders see these responsibilities as part of the exercise of their Christian duty. Discussions on responsibilities in decision-making were also discussed in the previous section - Sacramental Leadership under Discerning Authority.

Qualitative data enriches this narrative, revealing how Catholic values intersect with the complexities of modern leadership. Many respondents attribute their decision-making and ethical steadfastness to the moral upbringing imparted through Catholic formation, emphasising Christian values such as integrity, compassion, and social responsibility.

Leader 8 explained the steadfastness of Catholic moral teachings as a “guiding light,” particularly in resisting temptations such as corruption in leadership roles like in politics.

My formation in Catholic education helped a lot. You know how tempting it can be to be in a political position. There's a lot of money to be made through the back window. The type that you receive in brown envelopes. I will not even talk about “the hows”, but it was so unnatural for me because that's not how we were taught. So much so that I was an aberration. So likewise, even in my position now, there are no compromises. I believe in the values that we were taught in Catholic formation. There's no grey area. It's black or white. That's part of the decision-making. Of course, maybe sometimes we need to be a little bit considerate, but that's my guiding light. – Leader 8

Leader 8 adherence to principles of integrity and transparency aligns with Lydon's (2023:8) understanding of “Salesian accompaniment”, which emphasises the holistic development of individuals, encompassing moral, spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions alongside academic excellence. The role of educators in this model extends beyond instructions, aiming to serve as role models who inspire and nurture those they accompany.

This emphasis on holistic formation resonates with Leader 8's assertion that Catholic values leave “no grey areas” in ethical decision-making. However, not all respondents viewed this moral clarity as universally acceptable. Leader 4 highlighted the disconnect between her Catholic upbringing and the pragmatic realities of leadership, particularly in political contexts, where insincerity and manipulation often challenge idealism. She explained that not everyone has the same upbringing and values that she acquired in Catholic formation.

You also learn the negative side of politics. That people are not sincere. They take advantage of you. Oh, that's very disappointing, but that's life and that's how some people are. So you grow up and you learn. So you kind of learn the ways of the world in a more painful fashion than what Catholic catechism teaches you. – Leader 4

On the other hand, although other respondents emphasised the moral foundation provided by their Catholic education, the qualitative data reveal a complex relationship between Catholic values and leadership. Respondents also acknowledged situations where traditional Catholic beliefs may need to be

reconsidered. This is in contrast to Leader 8's view of values being "black or white", compared with other leaders who recognise that some issues are more complex than others. For example, Leader 7 highlights how non-Catholic education allowed more room for critical discussion, especially on contentious issues in public health needs like abortion.

For example, talking about abortion, in general, killing is unacceptable. Learning at this non-Catholic university, especially coming from a public health perspective, it's different, if you withhold services to a pregnant woman who does not want to be pregnant. So it's different because you are moving away from the mortal judgement and you're focusing on, "What does this person need right now"? The person needs health care. If you don't provide that health service in a safe setting, can you truly guarantee that this person will receive quality care, that this person will not get an infection, etc, then are you providing care for that person? The focus was health care versus thinking of it as killing or not killing. It's a problem, and it's a question that has no answer, and people can be debating about this forever. So I think in non-Catholic education we were allowed more room to talk about things beyond imposing a moral judgment on the people. – Leader 7

These findings suggest that Catholic education plays a significant role in shaping leadership ethics and how women leaders handle their leadership responsibilities, but its influence is not without challenges. The moral clarity provided by Catholic teachings is seen as both a strength and a limitation, depending on the situation. Leader 3 viewed Catholic formation as a weakness and a deterrent in fulfilling her leadership responsibilities in the government.

I think it is a weakness. The fact that there are so many issues like abortion, and population control that I need to handle. That would have been a deterrent for me because you need to be able to think things out properly and analyse and weigh things. If you have these things in the back of your mind such as you're not allowed abortion, you're not allowed to divorce, you are not allowed to decrease population and all that. You have to follow blindly what the Catholic religion says or what the Pope says. Many times in leadership, you need to think things out objectively. – Leader 3

Leader 7's reflection illustrates the tension between Catholic education's moral absolutism and the critical discourse fostered in a non-Catholic education environment. In addressing contentious issues like abortion within public health, her perspective underscores the need for Catholic education to evolve beyond rigid

frameworks of morality to accommodate the multifaceted ethical dilemmas leaders face today.

These varied perspectives reflect the duality of Catholic education's influence on leadership: its capacity to instil strong moral and ethical foundations, balanced against its potential limitations in addressing complex modern challenges. For Lydon (2023:8), the value of accompaniment lies in fostering an environment where spiritual and moral development complements, rather than constrains, academic and professional growth. The Salesian ideal of forming "honest citizens and good Christians" encapsulates this vision of leadership, where educators and mentors actively live out this ideal and pass it on to the students and communities they guide.

Lastly, 128 out of the 337 (38%) respondents "strongly disagree" that the formation they received in Catholic Education influenced them on how to deal with moral dilemmas in their leadership roles, as outlined in Statement 30. While 126 out of the 337 (37%) respondents "disagree", and 55 out of the 337 (16%) respondents "slightly disagree" with the statement. On the other hand, 20 out of the 337 (6%) "slightly agree", 7 out of the 337 (2%) respondents "agree", and only 1 out of the 337 "strongly agree" with Statement 30. Ranking sixth among the ten statements in Section 3, this result underscores a more tempered approval of Catholic education's role in preparing women leaders for complex moral and ethical dilemmas.

M. Navigating Moral Dilemmas in Leadership

These findings highlight an important gap in Catholic education's ability to fully equip leaders with the tools to navigate moral dilemmas, particularly in the context of modern professional and societal challenges. While the foundational principles of Catholic education instil moral clarity, there is a growing need for structures that foster a deeper, context-sensitive understanding of ethical and moral issues. This involves forming individuals who can thoughtfully address complex moral questions in ways that remain faithful to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. A recurring theme among respondents is the importance of creating an environment that prioritises understanding and collaboration over judgment, fostering a leadership approach that integrates the Christian faith with the demands of

contemporary decision-making and facing moral dilemmas. Leader 8 articulated this sentiment by emphasising that humility and empathy are crucial in fostering meaningful dialogue and cooperation.

Judging! (Quickly replied) Yes, but sometimes, if you're not humble, you judge because we're the better ones. Catholics are the best, or whatever. It's not necessarily to be Catholic, being Catholic, that's the best, but you being the best, then you are more likely to judge. And that will never get you anywhere, judging. Understanding, yes, Because then when you understand why they're like that, it's easier to communicate and to help each other. At the end of the day, that's what we do. We should help each other to be better. I could judge all of these politicians, but if I had an opportunity to talk to them. That would be, "wow, how beautiful would that be?" We can work towards helping them to be better or ourselves to be better, just understanding. - Leader 8

This perspective aligns with the broader mission of Catholic education, which emphasises holistic formation and moral responsibility. As noted in the literature review, strong partnerships between Catholic education, families, and civil society are essential for achieving this goal. Parents, as primary educators, play a foundational role in creating a family environment rooted in God's love, while the Church provides guidance for Christian formation. Civil society also bears responsibility for promoting the common good and educating responsible citizens (McKinney; 2011:150).

Moreover, partnerships between Catholic education and families must prioritise not only academic achievement but also the holistic development of students. Such collaboration is particularly vital in addressing sensitive issues such as moral education and personal development (CCE;1988:42). The Congregation for Catholic Education emphasises that students who excel in religious, moral, and academic aspects often come from family backgrounds where the Church and school provide complementary support to their formation (CCE; 1988:18). However, respondents in this study suggest that these foundational efforts must be extended and tailored to meet the evolving demands of leadership roles in complex and modern contexts.

The narratives further highlight the inadequacy of occasional retreats in addressing the emotional and professional challenges faced by leaders. Leader 1, a judiciary

official, underscored the need for sustained and context-specific formation programmes.

In terms of women leaders in the judiciary, although there are a lot of Catholics in our field, there are more nominal Catholics. There are very conservative and faithful Catholics, but all of us also need sustenance. Once in a while, I hope we have formation because a retreat is not enough, we need a regular formation that is specific to our field. Sometimes, we get depressed with the cases we handle. I am so glad that I am no longer in the family court, there, I was dealing with a lot of family issues, especially about children. So, I am glad I am out of that because the cases I was dealing with were very depressing. It gets to you. The problems of the family get to you. So we also need sustenance. – Leader 1

This highlights the need for regular, practical, emotional, and spiritual support tailored to specific professional contexts. It also reflects the need for Catholic educational institutions to evolve beyond traditional approaches to spiritual formation not only for current students but also for graduates. Programmes that integrate spiritual and professional growth are critical for leaders in high-stress environments, such as those handling sensitive cases and dilemmas.

N. Support from Other Organisations

Additionally, lay organisations were frequently mentioned. For some leaders, the combination of Catholic education and participation in lay organisations provided a moral and spiritual compass. Lay Catholic organisations play a vital role in providing support during and beyond Catholic education. One respondent credited her involvement in the Christian Life Community (CLC) for shaping her faith and interpersonal understanding through its pillars of spirituality, apostolate, and community.

I joined the organisation – Christian Life Community within the school. I would say that kind of formed a lot of who I am right now, in terms of the practice of my faith, in terms of just how to pray, and how is my relationship with God. It contributed a lot to the very crucial formative years of really understanding myself, understanding other people. I was a member of that group from high school until college. So it means seven years of membership in that (Catholic lay) organisation really influenced me a lot. We had three main pillars - It's spirituality, Apostolate, and Community. – Leader 7

Similarly, others emphasised how additional spiritual formation apart from the formation received in Catholic education, such as that provided by Opus Dei, sustained their spiritual focus and moral direction in leadership.

Yes, I think Catholic Education did prepare me to be a leader, but I also have a little extra thing to share. I am Opus Dei. I don't follow it so much anymore now because I'm so busy but I would go to the weekly formation, we have to go to the recollection, every week there's something. So that one, we have "norms". Every morning I wake up at four in the morning to do my "norms", my prayer, my Bible reading and whatnot, and that together with my Catholic education has kept me, I would say "straight". Maybe there's a different description, but it just kept me focused on what is right and what is wrong. – Leader 8

These findings underscore the importance of collaborative efforts among families, the Church, and Catholic educational institutions in supporting leaders and future leaders holistically. However, they also reveal that foundational Catholic education alone may not be sufficient to address the complex moral and ethical challenges of modern leadership. Instead, there is a need for dynamic, context-sensitive approaches that incorporate continuous spiritual and professional development while fostering humility, empathy, and understanding as core leadership values. While Catholic education lays a strong moral foundation, its influence on dealing with leadership moral dilemmas must be strengthened through sustained collaboration, partnerships, and tailored formation programmes beyond Catholic education. Such initiatives are crucial to addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern leadership and fulfilling the Church's mission to promote holistic human development.

CHAPTER VI

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the limitations encountered in the research process. While every effort was made to conduct the study rigorously and comprehensively, certain factors, both logistical and methodological, may have influenced the results of the study's generalisability. These limitations are acknowledged here to provide context to the findings and assist in framing potential areas for future research.

1. Sampling Constraints and Participant Recruitment

- **Limited Number of Interviewees:** Although the research originally aimed to conduct interviews with ten prominent women leaders who studied in Catholic educational institutions, only nine interviews were ultimately completed. The absence of one targeted interviewee was due to scheduling difficulties arising from her demanding responsibilities and time-zone differences. This minor shortfall may slightly limit the depth of insights across all targeted fields and sectors.
- **Geographical and Occupational Representation:** The study aimed to gather a representative sample of female leaders across diverse regions and sectors. However, the reliance on purposive and convenience sampling, particularly for prominent interviewees, may introduce some selection bias. While the sample does reflect diversity in geographic and occupational backgrounds, it may not capture the full spectrum of female leadership experiences influenced by Catholic education across all localities and fields.

2. Mixed-Method Design Challenges

- **Data Integration and Triangulation:** The mixed-method approach aimed to triangulate quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights to achieve a more holistic understanding. However, integrating and interpreting data from the two distinct paradigms – quantitative and qualitative purists,

posed challenges. While quantitative data sought generalisable trends, qualitative responses reflected nuanced personal experiences that do not always align directly with quantitative trends. This inherent epistemological disparity in data types limits the direct comparability between datasets. Instead of seeking full alignment, this study recognised the strengths and limitations of each dataset while the inclusion of insights from the literature review further contextualised the findings and the dialogue between the three perspectives.

- **Quantitative Instrument Limitations:** The survey questionnaire, using a six-point Likert scale, aimed to measure various facets of Catholic education's influence on leadership. However, Likert-scale responses may not fully capture the complexity of respondents' experiences and reflections, which could lead to simplified or generalised interpretations or nuanced concepts like moral formation, servant leadership, or solidarity. Furthermore, as the survey was distributed online, variations in respondents' access to digital resources and familiarity with technology may have influenced their participation and responses.

Another important limitation concerns the geographic and generational representation in the quantitative data. While the research aimed to target the representation of women leaders from all over the Philippines, responses were disproportionately skewed toward Metro Manila. Despite distributing the survey across the three major island groups and the National Capital Region, 64% (214 out of 337 responses) came from Metro Manila. This imbalance likely reflects the concentration of major businesses and industries in the capital region, which may also influence the leadership pipeline.

Age distribution posed another challenge. The intended design was to collect 60 responses from each of the following age groups: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and above. However, only 58 respondents were recorded from the 20-29 age group, falling short of the target. This underrepresentation may be attributed to the career stage of younger professionals, who may not yet

identify as leaders. Although this deviation does not invalidate the overall findings, it suggests that leadership perspectives from younger generations may be less fully captured in this study.

3. Time and Resource Constraints

- **Fieldwork Timing and Scheduling:** Conducting both surveys and interviews with prominent women leaders across various age groups and regions required considerable coordination. Scheduling interviews with high-profile leaders, given their busy schedules, proved to be a significant challenge, affecting the overall timeline of data collection. While the interviews provided rich qualitative insights, time constraints prevented additional rounds of questioning or follow-up discussions that could have further enriched the data.
- **Data Collection and Analysis Tools:** The analysis of quantitative data relied on IBM SPSS software, while qualitative data was processed using NVivo. Although both tools were instrumental in managing large volumes of data, the limitations inherent to each software, such as SPSS's constraints in handling qualitative nuances or NVivo's extensive coding requirements, required additional time for meticulous data preparation and may have introduced slight inconsistencies in data categorisation and interpretation.

4. Potential for Research Bias

- **Researcher's Background and Positionality:** The researcher's background and familiarity with Catholic education in the Philippines and the Catholic values played a dual role in this study. On one hand, this positionality provided a unique advantage in understanding the culture and context of Catholic education in the Philippines, perspectives that may be less accessible to those researchers who are not from the same background. On the other hand, there remains a potential for bias in interpreting data, as personal

experiences and perspectives could unintentionally shape the research process. Efforts were made to mitigate this through triangulation, adherence to protocols, and conscious effort to ensure that the researcher's perspective did not overshadow the voices of the respondents.

5. Generalisability and Transferability

- **Scope and Cultural Context:** This study's findings are deeply rooted in the historical, cultural, and religious context of the Philippines, particularly within Catholic educational institutions. While the results may offer insights into the relationship between religious education and leadership formation, they may not be fully transferable to contexts outside the Philippines or to other religious educational institutions. The unique sociocultural dynamics of the Philippines. As well as the country's predominantly Catholic population, play a significant role in shaping the study's context-specific findings.

6. Challenges in Transcription and Language Nuances

- **Bilingual Data Complexity:** The interviews with Filipino women leaders were conducted in both English and Filipino, with participants often switching between the two languages within a single response. Although automatic transcription tools like Glean and Zoom were utilised to assist in processing the interview recordings, these tools faced difficulties in accurately capturing the nuances of bilingual conversations. As a result, the transcription frequently required extensive manual review and, at times, complete re-transcription to ensure accuracy and clarity.
- **Loss of Cultural Nuances and Expressions:** Filipino Language includes expressions and cultural nuances that do not have direct English translations, which posed additional challenges in conveying the precise meaning and

emotional tone of certain responses. Some expressions, idioms, or cultural references unique to the Filipino conversational style may not have been effectively translated or retained in the final English transcriptions. These limitations may affect the richness of the qualitative data, as some contextual or emotional subtleties could have been diminished in translations.

- **Increased Time and Resource Investment:** Due to the need for careful manual corrections of the automated transcriptions, the researcher invested significant time in verifying and refining each transcript. This additional step was crucial to preserving the integrity of the participants' responses but ultimately impacted the project's timeline and required unanticipated resources.

This limitation highlights the challenges inherent in bilingual qualitative research, particularly when relying on transcription technology that lacks sensitivity to non-English languages. While every effort was made to capture participants' voices authentically, future studies may benefit from employing professional bilingual transcribers or more advanced transcription software specifically designed for mixed-language data.

Conclusion

These limitations, though inherent in the research process, do not undermine the study's contribution to understanding the role of Catholic education in forming women leaders in the Philippines. Recognising these constraints provides a balanced view of the findings and highlights areas where future research might address gaps or extend the study's scope. Future studies could benefit from expanding the sample size, including more diverse perspectives, or exploring cross-cultural comparisons to build on this study's foundation.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

I. INTRODUCTION

This study explores the effects and influences of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines, focusing on how their education contributed to their leadership development and ethical and moral dispositions today. The research examines the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education, particularly in the moral formation of the faith, their pursuit of excellence towards service, respect for human dignity, solidarity with the community, and education for the common good. Central to this inquiry is an investigation into the impact of their formation within Catholic education, and the extent to which it contributed to how they are living out the ideals of the sacramental vision of leadership – Discerning Authority, Servant Leadership, and Inclusive Leadership. The study also examines other factors related to the formation of women leaders such as gender and societal biases, contemporary complex challenges that women leaders face today, and the support needed by women.

Understanding the effects and influences of Catholic education on women leaders is essential, given its massive educational reach in a majority Catholic country, it has the transformative potential for women empowerment and improving social, ethical, and economic conditions in the Philippines. By examining the historical and contemporary contributions of Catholic education to the leadership formation of women, this research identifies how programmes, activities, ethos, and interconnected factors within education impact the decision-making, professional choices, and societal commitments of women leaders, both in the Philippines and internationally.

Finally, the study provides actionable recommendations for enhancing the educational practices and formation programmes within Catholic educational institutions. These suggestions aim to empower women further, preparing them

for leadership roles by refining curricula, pedagogy, and institutional policies. In doing so, Catholic education can continue preparing female students to be leaders who are not only successful in their professional lives but also who are living out Christian values and morals, and committed to serving the common good as advocates of social justice and nation-building. Furthermore, the research offers insights that could inform similar initiatives and research in other predominantly Catholic nations, highlighting its relevance beyond the Philippine context.

II. SYNTHESIS OF KEY FINDINGS

The study underscores the significant influences and effects of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines, particularly its role in shaping their moral compass, leadership styles, and commitment to the common good. Grounded in the principles of the Christian faith and values, Catholic education fosters a holistic framework for leadership formation. Its distinctive characteristics – moral formation in the faith, the pursuit of excellence toward service, respect for human dignity, solidarity in the community, and education for the common good - highlight its transformative potential in developing socially responsible and ethically and morally grounded leaders.

A. DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1. Moral Formation in the Faith

Catholic education emphasises moral formation in the faith as a cornerstone of its mission. Central to this influence is the foundational moral and faith formation provided through Religious Education and Theology classes, which are supported and strengthened by the role modelling of educators, school leaders, and religious figures in the educational community. Importantly, moral formation was not confined to formal classes but was also deeply embedded in the Catholic culture and ethos of the educational institution. This was evident in institutional mottos, the veneration of patron saints, and the integration of religious practices into daily school life. These elements collectively shape the moral and ethical

principles of women leaders in the Philippines, fostering a strong grounding in Christian values that guide their leadership styles and decisions.

2. Search for Excellence Towards Service

The pursuit of excellence in Catholic education transcends personal achievement, focusing instead on empowering students to use their talents and abilities excellently in the service of others. Academic and extracurricular programmes encourage intellectual growth, creativity, and leadership, all grounded in the mission to cultivate God-given talents and contribute meaningfully to society. This commitment to excellence ensures that students are not only prepared for professional success but also equipped to act as agents of positive change.

3. Respect for Human Dignity

At the core of Catholic education is the unwavering respect for the dignity of every individual. This principle is deeply rooted in the belief that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. Programmes like immersion experiences and outreach activities expose students to the realities of marginalised communities, fostering empathy, a sense of justice, and a commitment to equality. These initiatives help students internalise the importance of treating every individual with respect and compassion.

4. Solidarity with the Community

Catholic education instils a sense of solidarity by encouraging students to actively engage with and contribute to their communities. Partnerships with local parishes and organisations, as well as service-oriented activities, provide students with opportunities to practice collaboration, responsibility, and collective problem-solving. This emphasis on community engagement inspires students to work alongside others to address societal challenges, reflecting the interconnectedness and shared mission emphasised in Catholic social teachings.

5. Education for the Common Good

Education for the common good is central to the mission of Catholic education, aiming to prepare students to be leaders who prioritise the welfare of all. By

integrating Catholic social teachings into the curriculum and formation programmes, and promoting civic responsibility, Catholic educational institutions cultivate a commitment to creating equitable and sustainable communities. This vision extends beyond immediate service, empowering students to become transformative leaders dedicated to advancing justice and the common good.

B. SACRAMENTAL VISION OF LEADERSHIP

A key dimension of Catholic education's impact is its emphasis on the sacramental vision of leadership which integrates the principles of Christian values with leadership practice. This vision views leadership not merely as a secular function but as a means of embodying Christ's leadership and principles, focusing on Discerning Authority, Servant Leadership, and Inclusive Leadership.

Discerning Authority encourages leaders to exercise authority with compassion and engage in reflective decision-making guided by their Christian values as an exercise of discernment. The formation prioritises moral decision-making and integrity, providing a foundation that aligns with the teachings of the Catholic faith.

Servant Leadership prioritises the value of service in their leadership, by incorporating it into the curriculum immersion programmes and extra-curricular activities enriching this formation by exposing students to marginalised communities, fostering empathy, and cultivating a deep sense of social responsibility. These experiences enable students to internalise lessons of service, empathy, and justice, which are central to their roles as future leaders.

Inclusive Leadership emphasises welcoming and valuing all individuals, regardless of their background, gender, or socio-economic status. Catholic education fosters this through its commitment to the preferential option for the

poor, encouraging students to engage with diverse social realities and to see leadership as a service to others, especially the marginalised.

B. FORMATION TOWARDS LEADERSHIP

The formation towards leadership delves into the nuanced processes and outcomes of leadership formation within Catholic education. It illustrates how Catholic education developed women toward leadership, focusing on its contribution, limitations, and the broader societal and professional contexts.

The key contributions of Catholic education identified that Catholic education fosters the belief that gender is not a barrier to career or leadership roles. Most respondents strongly agreed that their formation supported this perspective, particularly in all-female educational environments. All-female Catholic educational institutions were highlighted as spaces that eliminated male-dominated leadership biases, allowing women to explore their potential more freely.

Catholic education also emphasises values like compassion, social responsibility, and moral integrity which shape leadership styles of women leaders. Many leaders attributed their decision-making skills and resistance to corruption to Catholic moral teachings, which provide a clear ethical framework.

Mentorship and community support played an important role in the formation of women towards leadership. Respondents emphasised the importance of mentors within Catholic education and external networks such as Catholic lay organisations, reflecting the Church's teaching on holistic formation. Catholic education offered a structured mentorship and role models, giving inspiration and fostering leadership development.

There is also a strong focus on service. Leadership is often framed as an extension of service aligning with the sacramental vision of servant leadership rooted in the Christian principles of the "preferential option for the poor". Many respondents linked their careers in public service and humanitarian work to their Catholic education.

Women leaders also emphasised the value of collaboration. Women leaders often emphasised collaborative, empathetic, and detail-oriented leadership styles, reflecting Catholic values of mutual respect and inclusivity.

Despite these strengths, the study identifies challenges and limitations within Catholic education. Socio-cultural factors and family influences can sometimes dilute their impact on moral and leadership formation and principles. Moreover, there is a recognised need for deeper engagement with contemporary issues such as diversity, inclusivity, and critical thinking. Participants also noted varied perceptions of intellectual rigour, with some suggesting that Catholic education lacks the intensity found in non-Catholic educational institutions. However, this perception contrasts with research conducted by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies (PIDS; 2022: p7), which found that private schools outperformed public schools in the Philippines in academic achievement. This difference may be attributed to contextual factors such as variations in educational policies, teaching methodologies, or cultural expectations across different social demographics. These limitations highlight areas where Catholic education can adapt and evolve to better serve and form its students.

The study also highlighted the persistent gender and societal biases against women's leadership. Despite Catholic education's empowering role, societal biases often hinder women's leadership progression, particularly in male-dominated fields. Gender stereotypes and the undervaluation of women's contributions remain obstacles.

While Catholic education provides moral clarity, its rigidity can clash with the personal decision-making and discernment required in contemporary leadership roles such as debates on public health issues like abortion and gender issues. Some respondents felt constrained by the inability to critically address contentious moral issues within Catholic frameworks.

Respondents also highlighted the need for continuous formation. Occasional retreats and spiritual programmes are insufficient for addressing the emotional, moral, and ethical challenges faced by leaders in high-pressure environments.

Respondents called for sustained, context-specific support that integrates spiritual and professional growth.

While Catholic education often instils a sense of mission and purpose, it may not always guide individuals toward specific passions or career paths, leaving some leaders to find their own direction.

One of the opportunities for growth identified is enhancing critical thinking, by incorporating more open dialogue and critical engagement with contemporary issues. This engagement will better prepare leaders for complex challenges.

There is also a need for broader mentorship programmes, by expanding mentorship initiatives to include diverse perspectives can address limitations in leadership formation. Stronger societal partnerships can also be strengthened through collaboration with families, civil society, and lay organisations which can amplify Catholic education's impact on leadership development.

Finally, the practical outcomes of Catholic education affirm its potential to prepare students for leadership through mentorship, value-based learning, and community involvement. However, the study also highlights inconsistencies in translating these values into real-life leadership roles, signalling the need for continuous improvement and support. By addressing these challenges, Catholic education can enhance its ability to produce leaders who are both morally grounded and effective in navigating the complexities of modern society.

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

A. Theoretical Implications – Holistic Formation Paradigm

The study reinforces the role of the holistic formation paradigm within Catholic education as a significant contributor to the leadership formation of women in the Philippines. This highlights the importance of incorporating the sacramental vision of leaders into broader leadership theories, especially in contexts with strong Catholic influences. It underscores the potential for Catholic education's leadership formation to bridge the gaps in secular leadership models by emphasising on the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education and the Sacramental vision of leadership. The

findings suggest that a combination of academic rigour, moral formation, and experiential learning such as immersion programmes, create a more comprehensive and holistic model for developing leaders who are morally sound, ethically aware, and socially responsible. This paradigm could inform future research on integrating spiritual and moral dimensions into leadership education.

B. Practical Implications - Educational Policy and Curriculum Development

Insights from the study can inform Catholic Educational institutions on how to improve educational policies and further develop its curricula especially focused on the leadership formation programmes for women. They can further enhance proven effective methods of experiential learning such as immersion activities, community service, and volunteering programmes. These hands-on and community-focused exercises are effective ways of fostering leadership responsibilities and good Christian values such as integrity, compassion, and empathy.

Catholic educational institutions can further integrate contemporary social issues, such as diversity, inclusivity, critical thinking, and discernment into their curricula to ensure relevance in a modern, pluralistic society while maintaining its Catholic identity and mission. Enhancing mentorship and faculty training programmes can ensure educators embody the values they teach, providing students with real-life role models of Christian leadership.

C. Policy and Social Implications - Strengthening Social Responsibility

Catholic education can use the study's findings to advocate for stronger partnerships between educational institutions, parishes, lay organisations, and non-government institutions to expand the societal impact. By fostering respect for human dignity and solidarity with the community, Catholic education equips students to promote the common good and to be leaders ready to address complex contemporary challenges and systemic social inequalities. This approach and collective efforts can inspire policies and initiatives that prioritise marginalised communities as a means of living out the "preferential option for the poor." The principles of the preferential option for the poor are especially relevant, as emphasised in various Church documents such

as Pope John Paul II's *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, 42 and *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004, 182.

Catholic education must actively engage in dialogue around evolving societal norms, including issues of gender, sexuality, and interfaith relations. This engagement could model how faith-based education can remain relevant in a globalised and diverse world while being true to its charism, mission, and identity. Programmes aimed at psycho-social and spiritual poverty can help Catholic educational institutions address less visible but equally critical forms of marginalisation.

IV. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The following recommendations are grounded in the lived experiences and personal narratives of the women leaders who participated in this research. They are not speculative or theoretical in nature; rather, they have emerged organically from data collected from surveys and interviews, supported by the robust review of literature and Church teachings. These insights reflect the authentic voices of women educated in Catholic institutions in the Philippines, who are now exercising leadership in various professional and social contexts. As such, these recommendations aim to inform strategic improvements in Catholic education, particularly in leadership formation, by addressing real challenges, values, and aspirations expressed by those who have undergone this formation themselves. In doing so, they seek to offer concrete, mission-aligned guidance for Catholic educators, policy-makers, and Church leaders committed to forming ethical, moral, inclusive, and socially engaged future leaders.

A. Actionable Steps for Leadership-Focused Catholic Formation

1. Practical Curriculum Design

Revise curricula to incorporate practical and contextually relevant modules that promote moral formation and leadership development. These modules should address contemporary societal challenges such as gender equality, diversity, and social justice, enabling students to navigate real-

world dilemmas with moral and ethical clarity while exercising the discernment process. Facilitating structured discussions and reflective practices around these topics will equip students with critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of their roles as leaders in an interconnected world.

To reinforce their core values, integrate simple and memorable phrases that resonate with students. Examples like “Women of Faith and Service”, “Cura Personalis” (Care for the whole person) or “Building the Kingdom of God” serve as enduring reminders of their mission and purpose. Additionally, include narratives of female saints and exemplary women leaders who embody the sacramental vision of leadership. These stories can inspire and motivate female students, providing relatable role models who demonstrate faith, courage, and compassion can be harmonised in leadership.

2. Empowering Women through Specific Formation

Develop programmes specifically tailored for women that empower them to showcase their talents, explore their passion, and cultivate the confidence needed to excel in leadership roles. These initiatives should create supportive environments where women can refine their skills, take on challenges, and grow as leaders. The successful practices of all-female institutions, which have proven effective in fostering women’s leadership, can be adapted and integrated into co-educational settings to ensure that women continue to thrive in diverse academic and professional environments.

In addition to skill development, these programmes should address the challenges of societal gender bias, equipping women with strategies to navigate and overcome systemic inequalities. Training in assertiveness, negotiation, and discerning authority can help women effectively challenge stereotypes and lead with confidence. Catholic educational institutions

should also establish initiatives and resources that provide ongoing support for women facing gender-related challenges, such as mentorship networks, female faith groups, counselling services, and access to advocacy organisations. By offering both formation and tangible support, Catholic education can ensure that women are empowered to lead while feeling supported in their journey.

3. Balancing Leadership Traits

Incorporating modules and programmes focused on Discerning Authority, Servant Leadership, and Inclusive Leadership equips students with the skills and traits needed to become well-rounded and effective leaders. These programmes foster a balanced approach to leadership by cultivating humility alongside assertiveness, moral clarity with openness to diverse perspectives, and the ability to seamlessly transition between being a supportive follower and an inspiring leader. By emphasising these complementary traits, Catholic education prepares students to navigate the complexities of modern leadership while staying grounded in its Christian roots.

B. Strengthening the Role of Educators

1. Strengthening Formation for Educators

Role Modelling of Educators. Investing in the continuous formation of teachers, school leaders, religious, and priests is essential to ensuring that Catholic educational institutions maintain a strong foundation of moral and ethical leadership. These key figures play a pivotal role as role models, exemplifying the Christian values they teach and inspiring both students and their peers. Ongoing professional and spiritual development programmes should focus on deepening their understanding of Catholic teachings, enhancing their ability to embody these values in daily interactions, and equipping them to address contemporary moral

challenges with wisdom and compassion. By nurturing the growth of educators as moral exemplars, Catholic education reinforces its mission to form leaders who are grounded in faith and dedicated to serving the common good.

2. Continuing Professional Development

Teachers as lifelong learners. To ensure the continued effectiveness of Catholic education in leadership formation, it is essential to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for educators. These opportunities should enable teachers to stay updated on best practices in Catholic education, moral formation, and leadership development. Active participation in national and international professional development programmes, as well as faith-based educational conferences, can be particularly impactful. Engaging with peers facing similar challenges and circumstances allows educators to exchange ideas, share innovative strategies, and adapt proven practices to their own contexts. This collaborative learning fosters a culture of continuous improvement, empowering educators to better fulfil their roles as mentors and role models for future leaders.

3. Bridging Theory and Practice

Faith in Action. Ensure that the values and principles instilled through Catholic education are actively reflected in students' leadership behaviours and decision-making. This requires creating opportunities for students to practice these values in real-world settings, bridging the gap between theoretical instructions and practical application.

To deepen this formation, Catholic education should provide opportunities for students to engage with diverse realities, including interacting with individuals from other religious backgrounds, communicating with non-Catholic ideologies, and exploring areas that may challenge their faith.

These experiences can help students strengthen their moral clarity, enhance their understanding of different perspectives, and develop their capacity to apply their Christian values thoughtfully and effectively in pluralistic and sometimes challenging environments. Through such initiatives, Catholic education prepares students to be confident and inclusive leaders who can navigate complexity while remaining steadfast in their commitment to faith and service.

C. Supporting Parents as Partners in Formation

1. Parent Education Programmes

Developing workshops for parents is crucial to aligning the home environment with the values promoted in Catholic education. These programmes can provide guidance on fostering moral development, leadership qualities, and faith-centred decision-making in their children. By equipping parents with the tools to reinforce these principles, Catholic education ensures a consistent and supportive foundation for students' growth.

Additionally, organising regular parent-child activities within Catholic educational institutions can deepen parents' understanding of the values their children learn at school. These interactive events can serve as opportunities for families to experience and practice these values together, creating a seamless connection between school teachings and home life. Such initiatives strengthen the partnership between families and schools, ensuring that both environments collaboratively nurture students into compassionate, morally grounded, and effective leaders.

D. Sustained Formation and Support for Alumni

1. Post-Graduation Support

Develop comprehensive alumni programmes that foster continuous pastoral, moral, and leadership development. These programmes could include retreats, peer mentoring, and leadership workshops designed to address the unique challenges alumni face in their professional lives.

Alumni associations can also serve as support networks, offering members a sense of community and solidarity, much like the support provided by professional groups and networks. Additionally, Catholic education can encourage professional groups and networks to play a role in this by offering guidance and supervision to ensure the continuity of this supportive environment.

2. Spiritual Formation and Mentorship

Create field-specific mentoring programmes that pair alumni especially new graduates, with seasoned professionals in their respective fields. These mentors can help alumni navigate complex moral and ethical challenges while fostering their moral integrity and spiritual growth.

Establish collaboration with Catholic lay organisations such as Christian Life Community, Opus Dei, and other Catholic groups. These partnerships can provide alumni with sustained spiritual guidance, access to faith-based resources and a strong sense of within a supportive community.

3. Building Networks and Connections

Position Catholic educational institutions as key hubs for professional networking, enabling women leaders to connect with organisations that offer career development, advocacy opportunities and ongoing support. By doing so, Catholic education can expand its mission beyond serving

current students to fostering the growth and success of its graduates, empowering them to lead and thrive in their professional and personal lives.

E. Integrating Leadership and Social Responsibility

1. Discernment and Critical Thinking

Moral formation in the faith should prioritise cultivating the virtue of discernment, particularly in addressing complex and challenging issues. To prepare leaders for navigating diverse and multifaceted environments, integrate critical thinking modules and explore multi-faith perspectives as part of the curriculum. Programmes should not only promote meaningful discussion but also emphasise active listening, empathy and the ability to suspend judgment, fostering a well-rounded and thoughtful approach to decision-making.

2. Diversity Engagement

Develop programmes that immerse students in diverse societal contexts at the local, national, and international levels. These initiatives should provide opportunities to interact with individuals and communities whose cultural, religious, and social experiences differ from those formed by Catholic education, Philippine culture, or traditional religious upbringing. Collaborative activities with groups of other faiths, or those with religious affiliation, can focus on shared goals such as social responsibility, nation-building, the preferential option for the poor, and the promotion of the common good.

Additionally, Catholic education should broaden its emphasis on the preferential option for the poor to include support and integration of people with disabilities. Greater social awareness of their needs and their full inclusion in the educational community are essential components of fulfilling the mission of Catholic education.

F. Addressing Systemic Challenges and Gender Biases

1. Mentorship and Advocacy for Women Leaders

Establish mentorship programmes aimed at nurturing emerging women leaders by pairing students with experienced mentors who can guide them through the challenges of male-dominated fields. Alumni can play a pivotal role in offering advice, sharing experiences, and providing valuable insights to support the development of current students.

Advocate for cultural and institutional reforms to normalise and promote women's presence in leadership roles. Ensure that gender equity is not merely a concept taught in classrooms but a value actively practised within the institution. Such efforts should also aim to reshape societal perceptions of women in leadership, fostering an environment where their contributions are fully recognised and valued.

2. Creating Safe Spaces for Open Dialogue

Incorporate safe spaces within the curriculum to facilitate open and respectful discussions on complex and controversial topics, including gender equality, LGBTQ+ inclusion, reproductive issues, abortions and interfaith relationships.

By addressing these sensitive issues within a Catholic educational setting, students can explore and engage with them in a guided, values-driven manner. Collaborating with parents ensures that these conversations are grounded in Christian principles, offering students the benefit of moral guidance and positive role models. This proactive approach equips them to navigate these challenges with confidence and compassion later in life.

V. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

A. Expanding the Scope

1. Future research could examine the influence and effects of Catholic education on women leaders beyond the Philippines or in non-Christian majority countries. Such studies could provide insights into the global applicability of Catholic education leadership formation.

B. Comparative Research of Leadership Formation

1. Comparative studies could explore the influence and effects of Catholic education on the leadership formation of male leaders in the Philippines, highlighting potential gender-based differences and commonalities.
2. Research comparing Catholic and Non-Catholic education institutions within the Philippines could offer valuable insights into the unique contributions, advantages, and limitations of faith-based education.

C. Research on Inclusivity in Catholic Education

1. Future studies could investigate how Catholic education better serves diverse populations, including LGBTQ+ individuals, members of other faith traditions, and people with disabilities. Research in this area would provide guidance on fostering inclusivity and equity while maintaining the foundational principles of Catholic education.

VI. FINAL REFLECTION

This research aimed to explore the extent of the influence and effects of Catholic education on the formation of women leaders in the Philippines. It sought to identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing pedagogies, practices, and programmes within Catholic education in shaping women as future leaders.

The findings underscore the significant contributions of Catholic education to society and its role in nurturing women leaders. At the same time, the study revealed areas for improvement. Some of these findings may be contentious or disagreeable to certain members of the Catholic community, particularly educators. However, highlighting these weaknesses is essential for fostering growth and ensuring the continuous development of Catholic education.

Acknowledging and addressing these shortcomings is a crucial step toward embodying the Christian values that Catholic education seeks to instill. A deeper understanding of the *Sacramental Vision of Leadership* could guide Catholic education toward greater discernment in exercising authority. To sustain its prominence in the educational landscape, Catholic educational institutions must practice humility and service, even as they lead in providing high-quality education. Furthermore, inclusivity by embracing diverse perspectives and schools of thought without prejudice will be critical to Catholic education's ongoing relevance and success.

This research was driven by a personal desire to contribute meaningfully to a cause larger than myself. While this work represents only a modest contribution to the field of Catholic education, it is a heartfelt effort to advocate for women in leadership, address societal inequities, and support the betterment of Philippine society. Like the widow's offering described in the Gospel of Mark, this research is a contribution made out of personal limitation but given with a generous heart.

To conclude, I draw inspiration from the story of *The Widow's Offering in Mark 12:41-44*:

The Widow's Offering

⁴¹ He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums.

⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.

⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury.

⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

In the same spirit, I offer this research, however humble, with the hope that it may contribute to the continuing growth and improvement of Catholic education and its mission in society.

Ad Majórem Dei Glóriam!

All For God's Greater Glory!

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

Unique Identifier Code: _____

CONSENT FORM

Title of the Research: **Formation of Women Leaders: The extent of the influence and effects of Catholic Education in the Philippines**

Main investigator and contact details:

Joanna Marie Oliva
183397@live.stmarys.ac.uk
joeyoliva@gmail.com
+44 7902394355
+63 9328654825

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that only the responses from females who studied in Catholic educational institutions and those of legal age (18 years old and above) are qualified to take part in the research.
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
4. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.
5. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
6. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to the University processing the personal data I supplied. I agree to process such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print).....

Signed.....

Date.....

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return it to the main investigator named above.

Title of Research: **Formation of Women Leaders: The extent of the influence and effects of Catholic Education in the Philippines**

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Name: _____ Unique Identifier Code: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

I, Joanna Marie Oliva, a doctoral student of St Mary's University, Twickenham, London taking up PhD in Education researching the extent to which Catholic Education affects and influences the formation of women leaders in the Philippines.

It aims to seek the perspective of women leaders of the Philippines who studied in Catholic educational institution/s during their formative years and how their education affected and influenced them in pursuing and executing their leadership roles today. Possible recommendations for improving the practice of Catholic education in forming its students towards leadership will be produced from the study to inform future policy in schools and more widely.

A summary of the findings will be available to all participants upon completion of the research by request. The results of the research may support future planning and structure of education within the Philippines. A copy of the dissertation may be stored in St Mary's University Open Research Archive (SORA).

You have been invited to take part voluntarily as one of the female leaders of the Philippines who studied in a Catholic Educational institution. The research will take place after being provided with this participant information sheet and a consent form for signing. If you agree to take part in the research, this study will be in the format of a short interview (30 - 40 minutes). This interview will take place on a conveniently agreed date and time which will be recorded and the notes transcribed. All identifiable information provided will be anonymised, remain strictly private and confidential, and will be destroyed following the completion of the project.

I look forward to you participating in my research but if you have any further questions you can contact me Joanna Marie Oliva: 183397@live.stmarys.ac.uk / joeyoliva@gmail.com or my research supervisor at St Mary's University in Twickenham, London: Prof. John Lydon: john.lydon@stmarys.ac.uk or Dr. Chris Richardson: chris.richardson@stmarys.ac.uk

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET TO KEEP TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX C: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER



University
Twickenham
London

23 January 2023

Dear Joanna

I am writing to confirm that your application for ethical approval of your research enquiry has been approved at Level 1.

Researcher's name: Joanna Marie S. Oliva

Regnum: 183397

Title of project: The extent to which Catholic Education affects and influences the formation of women leaders in the Philippines

Supervisor: Prof. John Lydon / Dr Chris Richardson

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Dr Mary Mihovilović

Institute of Education Ethics Sub-Committee Representative

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