

Implementation and Reality of the Archdiocesan Schools of Zamboanga: Reflecting the Philippine Catholic Schools Standards Framework

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation and lived realities of the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS) in selected archdiocesan schools, focusing on five domains: Catholic identity and mission, leadership and governance, learners' environment, learners' development, and operational vitality. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were gathered through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with various school stakeholders. Findings indicated strong implementation across all domains, with Catholic identity evident in curricular integration, school activities, and institutional ethos. Leadership and governance were effective, supported by clear structures and competent administrators. Learners' development was reinforced through values education, fostering both character and academic growth, while operational vitality was demonstrated in efficient management systems. Key factors influencing PCSS implementation included strong leadership, professional development, curriculum coherence, and effective monitoring.

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Introduction

Catholic schools in the Philippines have long played a significant role in the moral, spiritual, and intellectual formation of young people. As institutions entrusted to the care of diocesan bishops, clergy, and lay partners, Archdiocesan Catholic schools embody the Church's mission to evangelize through education. Emerging in the post-Vatican II period, many of these schools were established to respond to the pastoral and educational needs of local communities and have since expanded in scope, enrollment, and influence. Over time, Catholic schools have evolved into recognized agents of social transformation, shaping learners' values, identity, and worldview through a faith-centered curriculum and school culture (Sarmiento, 2017).

Despite this enduring mission, Catholic education in the Philippines currently faces mounting challenges (Madrigal & Oracion, 2019). The pressures of secularism, consumerism, modernism, and rapid digitalization have increasingly affected Catholic identity, educational management, and curricular coherence. Studies have noted a gradual weakening of Catholic school identity and mission, alongside inconsistencies in the implementation of Catholic educational standards (Bual & Madrigal, 2018). These realities underscore the urgent need for Catholic schools to critically examine how their vision, mission, and practices are lived out within contemporary educational contexts.

In response to these challenges, the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) developed the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS) in 2016. Anchored on Church teachings and responsive to modern educational demands, the PCSS serves as a framework for assessing and strengthening Catholic identity, leadership and governance, learners' development, learners' environment, and operational vitality. The standards aim to guide Catholic schools in sustaining quality education while remaining faithful to their evangelical mission amid a pluralistic society (SCCE, 1977).



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While the Department of Education (DepEd) exercises regulatory supervision over all private educational institutions through policies such as the Revised Manual of Regulations for Private Schools in Basic Education found in DepEd Order No. 88 (DepEd, 2010), Catholic schools also remain accountable to Church teachings and pastoral directives. This dual accountability challenges Catholic schools to harmonize state-mandated educational standards with faith-based values, ensuring that pedagogy, governance, and institutional culture reflect both academic excellence and Gospel-centered formation.

Archdiocesan Catholic schools continue to emphasize integral human formation such as educating the mind, forming the character, and nurturing the soul. Rooted in Church teachings, Catholic education seeks to form learners who are morally upright, socially responsible, and spiritually grounded, capable of contributing meaningfully to both Church and society (CBCP, 1995). However, despite the promulgation of the PCSS, many diocesan schools have yet to undergo a systematic evaluation of their implementation, practices, and institutional realities in relation to these standards.

Given the limited empirical research on PCSS implementation in diocesan contexts, particularly at the basic education level, this study responds to a critical gap in Catholic education research. Building on the work of Bual and Madrigal (2018), one of the few documented studies on PCSS in the Philippines, the present research seeks to assess how Archdiocesan schools implement and live out the PCSS across five key domains. By examining enabling and hindering factors, best practices, and perceived challenges, this study aims to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy development, strategic planning, and continuous school improvement.

Ultimately, assessing the realities of PCSS implementation is essential in ensuring that Catholic schools remain faithful to their mission of evangelization through education. In doing so, Catholic schools can continue to offer a distinctive form of education—one that forms learners

not only for academic success but also for responsible citizenship, service, and lifelong commitment to Gospel values, as envisioned by both the Church



and the Philippine Constitution found in Article XIV, Section 5 of the Philippine Constitution (Republic of the Philippines, 1987).

Related Literature

Catholic education in Asia emerged from diverse socio-political and cultural contexts, evolving from an emphasis on intellectual excellence toward the deeper internalization of faith, values, and attitudes (Wilfred & Li, 2014). Rooted in the Church's evangelizing mission, Catholic education has been described as "born to evangelize people" (Tete, 2017). Historically, missionary educational initiatives in Asia, despite generating controversy, played a transformative role by opening societies to broader cultural engagement and the introduction of Christian faith, ultimately contributing to social development (Wilfred & Li, 2014).

A defining milestone in Catholic education was the Second Vatican Council convened by Pope John XXIII. Vatican II reshaped the Church's engagement with the modern world and produced sixteen foundational documents, including *Gravissimum Educationis*—the Declaration on Christian Education (Teicher, 2012). This document affirmed education as a fundamental human right and emphasized the Church's responsibility for the integral formation of the human person in intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual aspects (Paul VI, 1965). Christian education was articulated as a right of the baptized, oriented toward fullness in Christ and active participation in ecclesial and societal life.

Catholic schools have historically served as privileged instruments of the Church's salvific mission. *The Catholic School* (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) reaffirmed that education is inseparable from evangelization, highlighting the school's role in forming faith-filled communities while respecting cultural diversity. Rather than being monolithic, Catholic education reflects the varied charisms of religious congregations—such as the Jesuits, Benedictines, Franciscans, and Augustinians—each contributing distinct pedagogical traditions united by a common spiritual vision (Shuster, 1967).

Central to this vision is the Catholic curriculum, which integrates faith and reason and emphasizes wisdom, virtue, and discernment rather than mere technical skill acquisition (Sullivan, 2001). Scholars argue that Catholic identity cannot be confined to religious education alone but must permeate the entire curriculum, school culture, and lived experience (Congregation for



Catholic Education, 1988). This holistic approach is further enriched by liturgical and communal dimensions, as articulated by Harris's (1989) framework of *koinonia* (community), *leiturgia* (worship), *didache* (teaching), *kerygma* (proclamation), and *diakonia* (service).

In the Philippines, Catholic education has been consistently affirmed as integral to national development. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) emphasized that Christian education forms individuals who are morally grounded, socially responsible, and capable of contributing to civic life (CBCP, 1955). Catholic schools are viewed not as institutions separated from society but as formative communities that nurture faithful citizens committed to the common good.

Responding to contemporary challenges such as secularization, globalization, and accountability demands, the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) developed the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS) in 2016. The PCSS serves as a comprehensive evaluative framework organized around five domains: Catholic identity and mission, leadership and governance, learners' development, learners' environment, and operational vitality (CEAP, 2016). These domains reflect a systems-oriented understanding of school effectiveness, emphasizing interdependence among institutional structures and practices.

The Systems Theory provides a useful lens for examining Catholic school effectiveness, viewing schools as dynamic systems whose components interact to sustain growth and stability (Lai & Huili Lin, 2017). Applied to Catholic education, this perspective underscores that leadership, curriculum, culture, and operations must function coherently to advance the school's evangelizing mission (Garira, 2020).

Implementation studies further highlight the critical role of teachers and school leaders in translating policy into practice. Early fidelity-oriented models emphasized strict adherence to prescribed reforms (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977), while later approaches favored mutual adaptation, recognizing contextual complexity and teacher agency. (Grimmett, 1987).



While existing literature affirms the theological foundations, curricular vision, and evaluative frameworks of Catholic education, empirical studies examining the actual implementation of the Philippine Catholic School Standards—particularly in diocesan school contexts—remain limited. Previous research suggests that factors such as leadership, institutional capacity, and resource allocation influence Catholic school quality (Tejada & Madrigal, 2014), yet there is insufficient evidence on how these factors interact across PCSS domains in practice. Moreover, few studies adopt a mixed-method lens to capture both the extent of implementation and the lived realities of stakeholders. This gap underscores the need for systematic investigation into how Catholic schools enact the PCSS in everyday educational practice, thereby informing policy, leadership formation, and continuous school improvement.

In light of these forgoing, this study aimed to investigate the implementation and reality of the Archdiocesan Schools of Zamboanga reflecting Philippine Catholic School Standards Framework.

Specifically, it addressed the following questions:

1. How do the 6-Archdiocesan schools implement the Philippine Catholic School (PCSS) with regards to;
 - a. Catholic Identity and Mission (CIM)
 - b. Leadership and Governance (LG)
 - c. Learners' Development (LD)
 - d. Learners' Environment (LE)
 - e. Operational Vitality (OP)
2. What are the enabling and hindering factors that affect the implementation of the PCSS standards across all levels of education?
3. How do the catholic educators from the 6- ICAS schools perceive their teaching practices align to the PCSS standards?
4. What are the Diocesan schools' best practices and strategies used in implementing PCSS?

By doing so, this study offers a focused assessment of how selected Archdiocesan schools reflect the Philippine Catholic School Standards and contributes to the continuing improvement of Catholic education in the Philippines. It documents institutional realities, challenges, and best



practices that support learner formation, effective school leadership, and quality implementation of the K–12 curriculum within a Catholic framework. The findings also provide policy- and practice-relevant insights that may guide school improvement efforts and support accreditation and quality assurance initiatives such as PAASCU.

Theoretical Framework

The literature reviewed in the succeeding sections is based on the Philippine Catholic School Standard (CEAP, 2016) as the main source of the study. As the essential evaluative tool, PCSS impart the context and gauge which guides Catholic schools in the Philippines to re-assess their institutional practices for sustained holistic improvement. The objective of the study is to assess the realities and implementation of PCSS in education in the context of their Catholic identity and mission.

According to the CEAP 2016 publication, PCSS consists of five (5) crucial domains that concentrate on the many ways in which the Catholic school operates: a) Leadership and governance, b) learner development, c) learning environment, d) learning environment, and e) operational vitality are all aspects of the Catholic identity and purpose. A collection of 15 standards, 62 benchmarks, and rubrics are included in each domain. The Catholic schools must adhere to and uphold the 15 standards to be excellent and effective. These standards represent ideal competencies and expectations. For each criterion, there are benchmarks that must be met for a Catholic school to meet them. On the other hand, rubrics for assessing the Catholic school present four levels of reaching the set goals in ascending order: 1 initially meets benchmarks, 2-partially meets benchmarks, 3-fully meets benchmarks, 4 – exceeds benchmarks. (CEAP,2016).

Based on research made on PCSS with regards to diocesan schools, the research findings theorized that the length of service and designation, the demographics of the school personnel, school budget and school size are demographics of school influence which relate to the quality of Catholic education (Tejada and Madrigal, 2014). Their study was anchored on the Systems Theory, described as a theory originating from biology and cybernetics (Lai & Huili Lin, 2017). In Biology parts of the system are interrelated (Roy & Majumder, 2016) as cybernetics provides self-corrective



feedback which is highly significant to influence future behavior in a system to maintain its stability and growth (Lai & Huili Lin, 2017).

Moreover, The Systems Theory as a support framework which presupposes that all constituents of the system can be best understood when interaction happens rather than seclusion with other members in the system (Garira, 2020). Hence, using the perspective of Systems Theory and PCSS tools in assessment, Catholic schools can reach their supreme goal of evangelization because the five major parts of PCSS function independently to ensure the success of the whole school community (Paul VI, 1965). Besides, the PCSS collects, examines, and processes the diverse experiences from various sectors and stakeholders to develop one objective for the success and growth of the Catholic schools (CEAP, 2016).

Accordingly, applying the Systems Theory in education helps determine the most relevant educational management and operations for renewal if an evaluation is deemed necessary (Lai & Huili Lin, 2017). Hence, this theory can give the conceptual grounding to contend intermingling challenges by pinpointing potential constraints, analyze the interrelatedness and connections within a system.

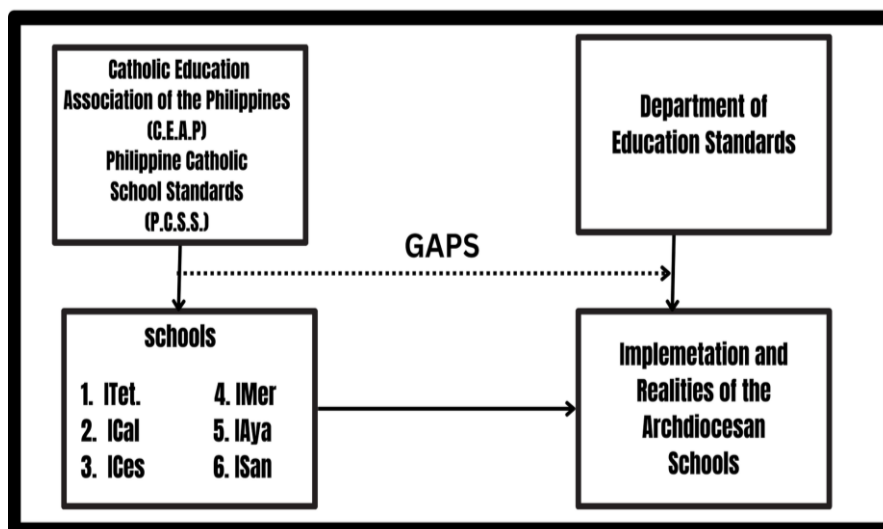


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study



Methods

The study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach to comprehensively examine the implementation of the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS) across six ICAS-affiliated Archdiocesan schools in Zamboanga City. In the first phase, a quantitative approach was used to determine respondents' levels of perceived agreement regarding the implementation of the five PCSS domains: Catholic Identity and Mission, Leadership and Governance, Learner Development, Learners' Environment, and Operational Vitality. In the second phase, a qualitative approach was undertaken to further explain, elaborate, and contextualize the quantitative results by examining the extent and nature of PCSS implementation across the six school sites. Findings from the quantitative phase informed the development of interview and focus group discussion (FGD) protocols, thereby guiding the selection of key issues for deeper exploration and strengthening methodological triangulation and the overall validity of the study.

The participants of the study consisted of administrators, teachers, non-teaching personnel, and parent-officers from six ICAS, Inc. Archdiocesan schools in Zamboanga City. Inclusion criteria required respondents to be fully vaccinated adults due to the data collection period coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants possessed direct experience and sufficient knowledge regarding the realities and implementation of the PCSS within their respective school contexts. A total of 161 respondents participated in the quantitative phase of the study. To establish statistical precision, the margin of error was calculated using a 95% confidence interval ($z = 1.96$), with a population proportion of 0.5 and a sample size of 161, yielding a margin of error of 7.7%. Respondents were then proportionately distributed across the six participating schools.

Data collection was conducted over a six-month period during the COVID-19 pandemic and involved multiple sources, including survey questionnaires, interviews, FGDs, field visits, and document analysis. Following approval of the research proposal, permission was obtained from ICAS, Inc., and formal authorization to use the PCSS instrument was secured from the CEAP National Office. Orientation meetings were conducted with school heads and faculty members to explain the purpose and objectives of the study, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement. Survey questionnaires were then



reproduced and distributed in both printed form and through online platforms.

Quantitative data were gathered using a standardized PCSS survey questionnaire adapted from the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) and the PCSS Framework Manual. The survey measured respondents' perceptions using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Prior to data collection, the adapted instruments were subjected to expert validation by university-based specialists, and recommendations were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, and construct alignment. The instrument underwent pilot testing and reliability analysis. Since the instrument was adopted from the CEAP National Office, internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha, while inter-rater correlation was also examined. Results indicated high internal consistency across all PCSS subdomains, with coefficients approaching 1.00, suggesting that items within each domain consistently measured the same latent construct.

In addition to the survey, qualitative data were gathered through field visits, semi-structured interviews, and FGDs conducted at the school level. Secondary data such as enrollment figures, available resources, resource gaps, dropout rates, repetition rates, pupil-teacher ratios, pupil-classroom ratios, and survival rates were also collected to provide contextual background. Four FGDs were conducted in each school, grouped according to participant roles: administrative staff, teachers, non-teaching personnel, and parent-officers. Each FGD was facilitated by a designated moderator, and grand tour questions, such as identifying action plans to improve PCSS domains perceived as weak, guided the discussions.

In the data analysis, quantitative responses were coded and treated using Kruskal-Wallis statistical tool, as the survey responses were ordinal and did not meet assumptions of normality. Percentages and medians were used to determine respondents' levels of agreement and the extent of PCSS implementation across the five domains. Qualitative data from interviews, FGDs, observations, and field notes were analyzed using Framework Analysis adapted from Bual and Madrigal (2018), which is grounded in symbolic interactionism. This theoretical lens facilitated an understanding of how participants constructed meanings around PCSS implementation through social interactions within their school environments. The analysis involved familiarization with the data, identification and interpretation of thematic frameworks, indexing, charting, and mapping with detailed



interpretation. Both inductive and deductive strategies were employed. Inductively, recurring patterns and shared meanings were identified using Taguette, an open-source qualitative analysis software. Deductively, findings were examined for consistency and applicability across the six school sites.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained electronically through Google Forms or via printed copies, and participants were informed of the study’s purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The Data Privacy Act of the Philippines was strictly adhered to, and technology-assisted data collection methods were utilized to minimize health risks during the pandemic.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of the Philippine Catholic School standards (PCSS) by the 6-Archdiocesan schools across six domains

Table 1
Agreement on Catholic Identity and Mission

State-ments	Level of Agreement (%)					Median	Adjectival Interpretation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un-decided	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree		
1.	67	31.7	1.2	0	0	5	Very High
2.	47.8	45.3	6.2	0.6	0	4	High
3.	55.3	38.5	6.2	0	0	5	Very High
4.	46	48.4	5.6	0	0	4	High
5.	46	50.3	2.5	0.6	0.6	4	High
6..	46.6	44.1	4.3	0	0	4	High
7.	46	50.9	3.1	0	0	4	High
8.	46	51.6	2.4	0	0	4	High
9.	54.7	43.5	1.9	0	0	5	Very High
10.	48.8	45.6	5	0.6	0	4	High
11.	46	50.3	3.7	0	0	4	High
12.	46.6	49.1	3.7	0.6	0	4	High



The respondents' levels of agreement on the domain of Catholic Identity and Mission across the six ICAS-affiliated Archdiocesan schools indicate, in general, a consistently high to very high level of agreement across all twelve statements, suggesting strong alignment between school practices and the core principles of Catholic identity and mission.

Looking deeply at the table, majority of the respondents strongly agree (67%) to the statement that the philosophy, vision, mission statements and core values are centered on Jesus Christ, rooted in Gospel values, and aligned with Church teachings and practices. The same can be observed for the statements that school policies and levels of relationships conform to the values of the Gospel that include sharing, service, solidarity, integrity, justice, truth, humility, and charity (55.3%,) and the integration of culture and faith, and faith and life are essential to the school's Catholic identity and mission (54.7%,). This further means that their level of agreeableness to these statements is very high and the quality of Catholic education according to this domain in the archdiocesan schools is very high.

Taken collectively, the findings show that the domain of Catholic Identity and Mission is strongly embedded in school culture and practice across the six schools. The high level of agreement underscores the institutions shared commitment to sustaining their Catholic character, values formation, and mission-driven educational practices, consistent with the expectations set forth in the PCSS framework.

Table 2
Agreement on Leadership and Governance

State- ments	Level of Agreement (%)					Media n	Adjectival Inter- pretation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1.	45.3	46.6	8.1	0	0	4	High
2.	37.9	40.4	16.1	5	0.6	4	High
3.	44.7	33.5	17.4	3.7	0.6	4	High
4.	44.1	50.9	5	0	0	4	High
5.	49.8	37.9	12.4	0.6	0	4	High
6.	49.1	48.4	2.5	0	0	5	High
7.	41	52.8	6.2	0	0	4	High
8.	41	51.6	7.5	0	0	4	High
9.	34.8	55.9	9.3	0	0	4	High
10.	44.7	47.8	7.5	0	0	4	High
11.	44.1	50.9	5	0	0	4	High



The respondents’ levels of agreement on the domain of Leadership and Governance across the six ICAS-affiliated Archdiocesan schools show a generally high level of agreement across all eleven statements, reflecting positive perceptions of the schools’ leadership structures, administrative practices, and governance processes. Additionally, the findings also suggest a strong consensus among respondents regarding various aspects of leadership, governance, and educational practices within the archdiocesan schools, reflecting commitment of administration and teachers to values-based education and spiritual development.

Some variation was observed in Statements 2 and 3, which had higher percentages of Undecided responses and small instances of disagreement, suggesting minor uncertainty regarding specific governance processes. Despite this, the overall perception of leadership performance remained high. Overall, the data indicate that the six schools maintain strong and effective leadership and governance practices aligned with PCSS expectations.

Table 3
Respondents Agreement on Learners Development

State-ments	Level of Agreement (%)					Median	Adjectival Interpretation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1.	48.4	42.9	8.7	0	0	4	High
2.	52.2	39.8	8	0	0	5	Very High
3.	48.7	47.2	2.9	1.2	0	4	High
4.	49.1	49.1	1.8	0	0	4	High
5.	46	52.8	1.2	0	0	4	High
6.	38.5	54	6.8	0.7	0	4	High
7.	37.3	55.9	6.2	0.6	0	4	High
8.	49.1	46	4.3	0.6	0	4	High
9.	42.9	53.4	3.7	0	0	5	High
10.	32	59.3	5	3.7	0	4	High
11.	41.6	56.5	1.9	0	0	4	High
12.	45.3	50.9	3.1	0.6	0	4	High
13.	53.4	44.1	2.6	0	0	5	Very High
14.	53.4	44.1	2.6	0	0	5	Very High
15.	46	52.2	1.8	0	0	4	High
16.	44.1	46.6	8.7	0.6	0	4	High
17.	41.6	54.7	3.1	0.6	0	4	High

Table 3 presents the respondents’ levels of agreement on the domain of Operational Vitality. In general, the results show a high to very high level of agreement, suggesting that the schools efficiently manage resources, facilities, and operational systems to support teaching and



learning. Statements with the highest medians of 5 were interpreted as Very High, reflecting strong consensus on effective operational planning, resource allocation, and institutional sustainability. The remaining statements generally attained medians of 4, corresponding to a high level of agreement, indicating positive perceptions of day-to-day operational practices.

Table 4
Respondents Agreement on Learning Environment

State- ments	Level of Agreement (%)					Median	Adjectival Inter- pretation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecide d	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1.	52.8	45.3	0.6	1.2	0	5	Very High
2.	49.7	47.8	1.2	1.2	0	4	High
3.	51.5	43.5	5	0	0	5	Very High
4.	46	47.8	6.2	0	0	4	High
5.	44.1	48.4	7.5	0	0	4	High
6.	36	53.4	9.9	0.6	0	4	High
7.	50.9	42.9	6.2	0	0	5	Very High
8.	41.3	55	3.8	0	0	4	High
9.	54.7	42.2	3.1	0	0	5	Very High

In terms of the learning environment, results reveal that the respondents collectively suggest a high level of agreeableness across, with some aspects rated as Very High, such as the rituals, devotions, customs and traditions that promote the Catholic Christian faith and the school's vision, mission and core values are celebrated, and there are spaces and time in the school that allow for the experience of God's presence in self, others and creation. Further, the leaders and members of the school community serve as models exemplified by professional competence and Christian service. According to the respondents, the schools also give due recognition and communicate the learners' achievements and contributions to school life and mission.

The median values are generally high across the statements, indicating a consistent trend of positive agreement among respondents across schools. The respondents adhere that the learning environment in the archdiocesan schools positively incorporates the PCSS's fourth domain.



Table 5
Respondents Agreement on Operational Vitality

State-ments	Level of Agreement (%)					Median	Adjectival Interpretation
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1.	52.8	45.3	1.9	0	0	5	Very High
2.	46	50.3	3.7	0	0	4	High
3.	49.7	47.2	2.5	0.6	0	4	High
4.	49.1	48.4	15.9	0.6	0	4	High
5.	47.8	46.6	5	0.6	0	4	High
6.	53.4	43.5	2.5	0.6	0	5	Very High

Data also reveal a strong commitment to operational vitality within the school. This can be characterized by policies and practices that promote fairness, unity in diversity, positive conduct, and compassionate personal care and management. Further, the respondents agree that there is also an interfaith engagement in the schools.

Table 6
Kruskal-Wallis Level of Agreement on PCSS 5-Domains

School	Chi-square	Degrees of Freedom	P-value	Effect Size
ITet	36.9	5	0.16	0.0998
ICal	22.1	5	0.24	0.2451
ICes	16.0	5	0.67	0.1814
IAya	39.2	5	0.13	0.0812
IMer	29.0	5	0.08	0.0998
ISan	13.0	5	0.10	0.0115

To determine if there is a variation in the responses, a Kruskal-Wallis H-test was performed. The data of non-parametric test conducted across six archdiocesan schools to analyze the level of agreement to the five domains of PCSS as can be observed therein show that there are no differences in the level of agreement across the schools. Thus, pairwise comparison (post hoc) in this case is not needed as the responses show no indicative variation.



Enabling and hindering factors affecting the implementation of the PCSS, educators perceptions of their teaching practices and schools' practices and strategies in implementing PCSS

The themes evolved out from the interviews and FGDs reflect the unique ethos and practices of Catholic education in the context of the six archdiocesan schools in Zamboanga City. The first emergent theme is centered on the characteristics, values, and activities associated with Catholic schools. One question underlying this qualitative analysis could be, what are the defining characteristics and values of Catholic schools run by the church, and how do these institutions incorporate religious teachings into their curriculum and ethos? Clearly, the respondents provided answers that these schools prioritize religious teachings into their curriculum, not solely developing the intellectual capabilities of learners but at the same time nurturing character of students regardless of religious affiliations.

In addition, since the analysis is descriptive and exploratory, it outlines the key features and values associated with Catholic education embodied by Christian virtues and values. Further, aside from the distinctive characteristics of the schools, the competent teachers and administrators also help shape its ethos and curriculum.

Meanwhile, the second theme focuses on the integration of Jesus Christ and Gospel values into all aspects of education within the six schools. This integration encompasses aligning the vision and mission of the schools with Christ. It also connects the lessons and learning plans to actual life experiences centered on Jesus and Mary. As the learners see the same, they can emulate these values and virtues. Objectives underlying the analysis for the second emergent theme could include shaping the student character and values for holistic development. Results reveal that the integration of Jesus and Gospel values extends beyond mere curriculum alignment but by also embodying these values, even long after students graduate.

The third emergent theme of this qualitative analysis is the enforcement and communication of school policies and rules. According to the excerpts, clear and consistent enforcement of policies and regulations is of utmost importance. This will encourage a conducive learning environment. The strategies and practices employed by the six schools vary, however, all prioritize enforcement and communication of policies and rules such as giving memos, regular monitoring, and orientation sessions at the beginning of each school year for teachers, staff, and learners.



The last emergent theme of this analysis focuses on the integration of collaboration, student-centered strategies, values education, and the incorporation of Catholic teachings into the educational process within a comprehensive approach to school management. From the excerpts, various activities such as conduct of faculty meetings for updates and/ or progress made is one of the effective aspects of ensuring good management practices. Another is on how the school addresses concerns within the school community and regular monitoring of enforcement of school policies. Most of the interviewees also said that the school also provides professional development opportunities for teachers and staff. This further reciprocates into better overall service to the school or institution.

The descriptions provided by the faculty and administration personnel of what a Catholic school is reveal common themes that characterize an educational institution (refer to appendices for excerpts). Most of the FGD participants said that there is a holistic approach to education, where academic excellence with moral development is paramount. First, the excerpts highlight the importance of Catholic teachings and values in shaping one's educational experience. School activities are also infused with these teachings that also prioritize values in interaction with students, parents, and administrative support. An emphasis was also made on the significance graduates of the schools may make in the workplace and the community in general. They depict that Catholic schools not only aim to ensure financial success of graduates but also encourage them to serve for the common good of society. This is reflected in the emphasis on instilling a moral compass and values that will serve as guide for the student's lives focusing on genuine service. Additionally, the participants of the FGDs also highlight the inclusive nature of Catholic schools, welcoming students from all religious backgrounds. Adherence to the school's rules and regulations is likewise emphasized, suggesting a commitment in maintaining a respectful and disciplined learning environment.

“An ideal Catholic school is depicted as a place where the curriculum centers on Christ, and where all members of the school community strive to embody Christ's example” (S1). This excerpt thus can mean that graduates of these schools are equipped intellectually, morally, and spiritually.



According to the records of the FGDs, both faculty members and administrative staff recognize the paramount importance of consistently reinforcing and integrating the school's core values found in the PVMGC, into the various aspects of school life and education. Teaching practices that are aligned with the PVMGC were emphasized by faculty members. According to them, this will enable learners to be exposed to these values from the outset. Likewise, the role of teachers is vital in modeling or embodying these values through their respective actions, behaviors, and, by being an example in adhering to schools' policies. By doing so, it will cultivate a positive school culture.

Administrative staff on the other hand support these efforts by ensuring that the PVMGC are prominently displayed throughout school grounds, integrated into the curriculum and daily activities. This can lead to a sense of individual responsibility towards the school's vision and mission, encouraging formation and engagement in Catholic activities among students, teachers, parents, and staff.

"PVMGC must not only be understood but also lived out in everyday interactions and experiences" (S4). This integration serves as the cornerstone for developing responsible, morally upright individuals who can potentially contribute to the community/ society.

Both faculty and administrative staff recognize the pivotal role of school administrators in enforcing school policies and regulations. The constant communication and updates from school officials proves to be vital in disseminating school activities and expectations. The administrators also remind the teachers to ensure compliance with policies, as well as helping them establish effective teaching practices. These sentiments were also echoed by administrative staff. They said that the school officials proactively disseminate and enforce school policies. There were also seminars and orientations conducted so that school personnel will be familiar with the policies of the school.

"Through communication, guidance, and support, school administrators play a crucial role in cultivating a culture of compliance and accountability within the school community". (S1-S6)

In synthesis, all personnel underscore the significance of integrating spiritual and intellectual development into the educational process. Best practices include incorporating teachings about the Catholic faith into their lessons,



starting with a prayer, and often encouraging students to attend mass. Effective spiritual formation programs are also seen to create a supportive environment for exploration and growth. This will help foster critical thinking and even mentorship to students.

“By integrating spiritual values into education and learning experiences, teachers aim to create an environment where students can thrive intellectually and spiritually, guided by the principles of faith and values”. (S1-S6)

Conclusion and Recommendation

The present study determined the level of implementation and realities of the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS) in the six archdiocesan schools with respect to the five domains, namely: Catholic Identity and Mission (CIM), Leadership and Governance, Learners’ Development, Learners’ Environment, and Operational Vitality. Results reveal a high degree of implementation, evident by the high agreement in each of the domains as revealed by the survey participants.

Overall, there is a high level of implementation and realities of the Philippine Catholic School Standards across the six archdiocesan schools. This underlines the dedication of the schools’ administration and students to upholding the standards of Catholic education. Through this assessment, it became apparent that these schools were profoundly committed.

In addition, the effective leadership and governance structures within these institutions resulted in sound decisions and strategic plans aligned with the schools’ mission and vision. A culture of accountability is also being upheld across the schools.

The schools also prioritize the holistic development of students, which further solidifies the commitment to nurturing not only the academic aspect but also the spirituality of students. Character formation is also a result of these efforts.

While there are challenges and areas for improvement, such as the need for continuous professional development and curriculum enhancement, there were also notable insights that can be extracted from this study. These include the full support of school administrators, visible reminders of the



PCSS standards within school premises, and monitoring, supervision, and evaluation mechanisms to ensure adherence to policies, standards, and regulations.

In general, this mixed-method study reveals that the level of implementation and realities of the PCSS serves as a testament to the enduring commitment of the Catholic Church in providing quality education to students in the Archdiocese of Zamboanga. By embracing these values, standards, benchmarks, and principles found in the PCSS, these schools create a strong foundation for sustaining Catholic education and advancing their mission of faith-based, holistic formation.

Based on the findings and results of this study, there is still room for improvement in the implementation of the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS) in the 6 archdiocesan schools of Zamboanga. Thus, the following are hereby recommended:

1. Foster stronger leadership and governance support for the PCSS implementation by continually providing the six (6) archdiocesan schools administrators and mid-level leadership with necessary resources, training, workshops and guidance by the Catholic Church and all concerned agencies (National, regional, and local level) and ministries. Capacitate administrators and mid-level leaders on curriculum enhancement aligned with values education and character formation with the Gospel values at the core of the learning process.
2. Enhance continuously the professional capacity of teachers and administrative staff to deepen their understanding and increase their skills and creative application of the PCSS within their specific educational environments, enabling them to incorporate and inculcate these standards into their work strategies and the local needs of the communities they serve.
3. Encourage stakeholders – parents, learners, and all other individuals and entities, engagement that will foster increased cooperation and collaboration among community members all across various levels. Stakeholders may be involved in the decision-making process of the schools and may also provide feedback on PCSS implementation.



4. Form different committees and technical working groups to support teachers and staff in implementing the PCSS thoroughly and systematically at the archdiocesan level.
5. Conduct regular reviews of the schools' curriculum and academic programs to ensure PCSS alignment to statutory and regulatory requirements. This may include updating of teacher's instructional materials, strategies, and performance outputs that integrate Catholic teachings across all subjects and levels.
6. Conduct monitoring and evaluation activities continuously to assess effectiveness of PCSS realities and implementation to help identify areas for improvement.
7. Conduct a survey to determine stakeholder satisfaction level on curriculum, PCSS implementation and possible suggestions for improvement of policies.
8. Strengthen PCSS implementation to diverse culture of students and/ or communities served by the six (6) schools through targeted trainings in teaching methodology and inclusive programs all while keeping Catholic values as moral compass.

The successful and sustained implementation of the Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS) in the six archdiocesan schools of Zamboanga requires a collaborative, systematic, and values-driven approach. Key recommendations highlight the critical roles of strong leadership, continuous teacher development, active stakeholder involvement, aligned curriculum, and consistent monitoring and evaluation. By prioritizing these domains, the schools can effectively address their unique contexts while remaining faithful to Gospel values and the mission of Catholic education. With shared commitment and ongoing reflection, the archdiocesan schools can continue to nurture students who are not only academically competent but also morally upright and socially responsible.



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