

**STUDENT DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN CICM
SCHOOLS: A POLICY STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to give answers on the pressing concern regarding the perceived non-alignment between student-discipline and the practice of Catholicity in CICM schools. The study further investigated to proposed policies to address the disciplinary needs of the CICM schools vis-à-vis Restorative justice. The study participants included administrators, faculty and students in five (5) CICM high schools located throughout the country for the school year 2014–2015. The researcher used a researcher-made questionnaire consisting items dealing with demographic characteristics of the participants, the extent of practice of Catholicity and the current practices of the five CICM high schools in handling disciplinary cases in terms of the implementation of decision and discipline. Results revealed that practice of Catholicity along curriculum and good policies on students' discipline is "always" evident while along school management, school environment and personal aspects, Catholicity was "often" evident. This result is attested by students' participation in religious and social activities, policies on reverence and respect to the rituals and doctrines of Catholic faith. Inferential tests revealed that there exists significant difference in the extent of practice of Catholicity along the specific indicators among the CICM schools. The Disciplinary Management System (DMS) of the CICM high schools is "satisfactory" for the reason that DMS provide the system of protocol in handling disciplinary cases; likewise, teachers were consulted when modifications on school policies were made. Parents appreciate the way teachers reach out to them when their children are having disciplinary problems. Among the commonly cited causes of dissatisfaction were lack of sense of urgency to implement disciplinary action for the violations committed, inconsistency of decisions, biased decisions meted, not meting same punishment for the same offense/misconduct, and imposing severe punishment for minor offenses. Participants are highly aware that heinous crimes and sexual immorality are considered major violations and are unacceptable in CICM Catholic schools.

Keywords: *Student discipline, catholicity, CICM schools, disciplinary cases*

INTRODUCTION

The Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM), an International Religious Missionary Congregation arrived in the Philippines in 1907. As a religious missionary congregation, the members share in the call of Christ to become proclaimers and evangelizers of the Good News especially to those who are in the margins of society. Such proclamation takes several forms. For CICM, parish involvement is one of the concrete realizations of such calling. This concrete manifestation of parish involvement is evidenced by the fact that over the years, CICM pioneered in the creation of a number of parishes especially in the northern part of the Philippines. One other type of mission engagement the congregation has taken as an expression of this positive response is school apostolate. Historically, the CICM congregation made its presence felt significantly in several parishes it organized through its school apostolate. Over time, however, a number of these schools have been turned over to their respective Dioceses. To date, only six have been retained and these are: St. Louis University, Baguio City; University of St. Louis, Tuguegarao City; St. Mary's University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya; St. Louis College, San Fernando, La Union; St. Louis College Manduae, Cebu City; and CICM Maryhill School of Theology, Quezon City.

CICM schools are members of both the basic and higher educational institutions in the Philippines. As academic institutions, they cannot discount the fact that they are agents in preparing students to be professionally competent and service-oriented individuals. They are instruments of students' successes in the different fields of endeavors. Besides, CICM schools are also Catholic institutions. That means they follow certain rubrics as mandated by the Holy See, such that the teachings should be in accordance with what the Roman Catholic Church prescribes. These rubrics can be narrowed down to Jesus' teaching such that in the school, Theological Formation, Values Education and Christian Living subjects are part and parcel of the whole school curriculum. Without such, CICM schools as Catholic institutions should cease to exist. That is why, Christian formation is important in the realization of the schools' identity as Catholic. Through this formation, CICM schools commit themselves to make the presence of Jesus alive in the hearts and minds of the students.

After careful review of the common administrative documents of the schools where the researcher has been assigned, one document stood out in the researcher's attention: The Student Handbook/Planner. One section in the handbook is on Student Discipline. The said section on student discipline is considered to be a very vital part because it explicitly describes how students are expected to behave inside the school campus. A careful review and analysis of the provisions of this particular section, however, reveal that the schools' disciplinary management system seems to favor punitive approach. This is made obvious by the long enumeration of offenses with their corresponding sanctions and penalties. The presence of a Committee on Discipline in every institution does not guarantee a restorative judgment on offending students because, more often than not, the deliberation and hearing of offenses of students focus on the sanctions and penalties rather than on measures to help the students rise above their offenses and begin restoring their broken selves after realizing their mistakes. If this is the reality in CICM schools, and these are Catholic schools, are these schools not accountable for upholding punitive policies? If a school is truly Catholic in its core values, there is a need to model one's discipline management system akin to that of Jesus, especially when He encountered sinners during His time. Jesus confronted sinners and challenged them to renew their lives. But, never did Jesus impose penalties or sanctions on those people.

As part of the academic community of CICM schools in the Philippines, the researcher decided to make an in-depth study on the nature and system of managing student-discipline in CICM schools to serve as basis for the formulation of appropriate policy recommendations, specifically addressing concerns on student-discipline, policy recommendations that would be truly reflective of the schools' identity as Catholic. The main purpose of this study is to provide an empirical basis for the improvement of the discipline management system currently being used by CICM schools. Living with Jesus is manifested through living life to the fullest, bearing in mind one's limitations and weaknesses. In a way, the community, especially the students, may be animated to appreciate and live life the CICM way as a natural consequence of their exposure to CICM education.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the student discipline management system becomes the bridge that connects the Catholicity of the school and its effect in the animation of the young people. The crucial element, therefore, is whether discipline management system is faithful and consistent with the objective and identity of the school being Catholic or whether the discipline management system produces life-giving results to students who are in their formative years.

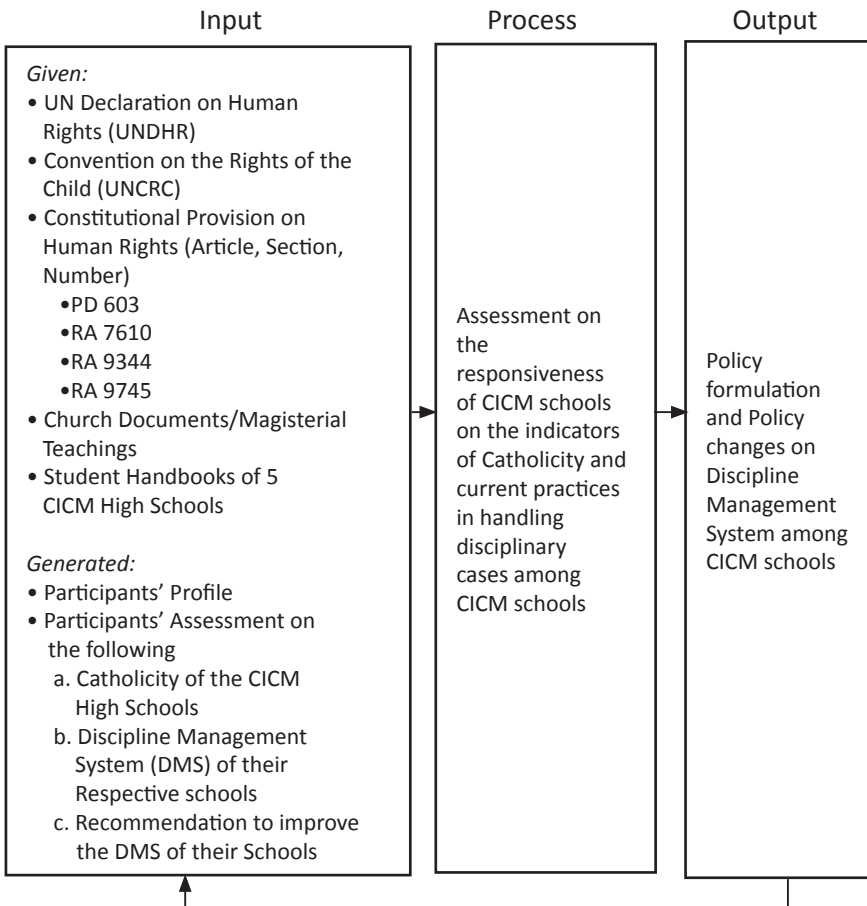


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 illustrates how the study was conceptualized. It started from inputs from different sources, both theoretical and from actual practice, from global declarations to national commitments, from church documents to school-based handbooks that provided the background information on the research. The inputs to the actual research came from two sources, a survey done to students, teachers and administrators and a focus group discussion done to a different set of students, teachers and administrators with the addition of parents and external community members. Data generated from the two instruments were processed using defined indicators covering a wide range of school concerns that have direct impact on school discipline. As designed, the findings generated a number of recommendations that became the output of the study.

Statement of the Problem

This study attempted to shed light on the pressing concern regarding the perceived non-alignment between student-discipline and the practice of Catholicity in CICM schools.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of practice of Catholicity in the five CICM high schools along the following areas of concern:
 - a. curriculum;
 - b. policies on student discipline;
 - c. school management;
 - d. school environment; and
 - e. personal considerations?
2. What is the extent of practice of Catholicity in terms of handling disciplinary cases of students in the five CICM high schools?
3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of practice of the five CICM high schools on the indicators of Catholicity when grouped according to classification of participants?
4. Is there a significant difference in the extent of practice of Catholicity in terms of handling disciplinary cases of students in the five CICM

high schools when grouped according to school and type of participants?

5. What policies can be formulated or what policy changes can be proposed to address the disciplinary needs of the CICM schools vis-à-vis Restorative justice?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study. Descriptive survey method was used to ascertain the extent of practice of Catholicity and the current practices in handling disciplinary cases of the CICM high schools. On the other hand, focus group discussion was used to gather qualitative data needed to validate the information gathered from the administrators, faculty, parents, community members and students.

Using triangulation, this study collected data from more than one level of persons, from students, their administrators and teachers. All three groups were asked to provide data as to the extent of practice of Catholicity and current practices in handling disciplinary cases in their respective schools.

In terms of the methods of triangulation, the study made use of questionnaire and informal interview with other students, faculty, administrators, parents and community. Qualitative and quantitative data were blended at the level of interpretation; that is, merging findings from each technique to derive consistent outcome. The purpose of combining the data collection method was to provide a more holistic and better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Participants of the Study

The study participants (N=991) were the administrators (n=10), faculty (n=53), and students (n=928) in five (5) CICM schools, namely: St. Louis College of La Union, St. Louis College Cebu, St. Louis University

Baguio, University of St. Louis Tuguegarao, St. Mary's University Bayombong. Ten percent (10%) of the total population of the CICM schools constituted the participants which were obtained using simple random sampling technique.

Research Instruments

A self-made questionnaire, which had gone through content validation by the Research Director of the University of St. Louis Tuguegarao, was pilot tested to 25 teachers and 25 students. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient of 0.87 was derived. To substantiate data from the survey, questions were asked from the focus group to determine the extent of practice of Catholicity in the 5 CICM high schools.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, permission was sought from the Office of the President. Such permission was presented to the Principal before the students and teachers were requested to respond to the questionnaire. Informed consent was likewise obtained from the participants prior to the administration of the questionnaire.

Participants' assessment on the extent of practice of Catholicity and the current practice in handling disciplinary cases in their respective schools, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with the parents, other faculty members and students, community members and administrators. They were interviewed to flesh out essential information about the Catholicity of schools and their disciplinary management system.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data gathered were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics. Frequency count, percentage, mean, standard deviation were computed. Weighted mean was used to ascertain the trend in the responses of the participants. Interpretation of the assessment results were based on the given scale:

Mean range	Adjectival Value	Descriptive Value
3.25-4.00	Always	The practice is consistently manifested or evident
2.50-3.24	Often	The practice is generally manifested or evident
1.75-2.49	Sometimes	The practice is occasionally manifested or evident
1.00-1.74	Never	The Practice is not manifested or not evident at all

For the qualitative data, thematic and trend analyses were utilized. The commonalities and differences in the qualitative responses of the faculty, students, administrators, parents and community were identified, analyzed and categorized according to area of concern where they should be properly addressed.

To test the hypotheses, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the differences in the extent of practice of Catholicity along the 5 major areas of school concern and current practice in handling disciplinary cases when participants are grouped according to classification and schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of Practice of Catholicity in terms of Curriculum, Policies on Student Discipline, School Management, School Environment and Personal Indicators

Along the area of Curriculum, extent of practice of Catholicity is “always” evident as reflected in the discussion and development of values. This is based on the extra-curricular and co-curricular activities as well as practice of living out the values in and outside the classroom. This finding affirms that the practice of Catholicity in the realm of curriculum is manifested in the schools studied. This is a positive indication that the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church which gives emphasis on the significance of a school as a Catholic institution of

learning is manifested by the schools through their instruction that has formative value and where the students encounter the Christian message through the gospel and various branches of knowledge.

In the area of School Policies on Student Discipline, consistency in the policies on student-discipline, equality in the enforcement of such policies, values of humility, forgiveness and respect of persons are consistently enforced. This indicates that the CICM schools recognize the importance of disciplinary policies and actions in the school setting to establish and maintain harmony between and among students so that all become witnesses to the life of Christ in their dealing with one another, despite the challenges of secularism (Ex Corde Ecclesiae, 1990).

With regard to School Management, the schools have generally practiced and adequately provided avenues for the exercise of Catholicity particularly in dealing with discipline-related concerns. The schools also demonstrated fair treatment in giving students what they deserve which implies that the schools have practiced impartial conduct in addressing discipline measures in the school.

For School Environment Area, students generally experience a learner-friendly school as they consider their school, as conducive for learning, as a place where they feel the sense of belongingness, safety, security, fairness, sympathy and appreciation of others. This finding indicates that the schools as learning institutions are true venues for promoting peace, order and safety to its clients.

The extent of practice of Catholicity along personal expectations is generally evident as revealed by their high assessment on indicators such as: students feel important in school, are attended to in times when they have personal needs and concerns in schools, have approached and talked to someone in school when they have problems and considered the school as their second home. This implies that the school has shown utmost charity on them despite their shortcomings and faults.

Extent of Practice of Catholicity in terms of Handling Disciplinary Cases of the CICM High Schools as to the Implementation of Decision and Discipline

The study revealed that the schools “often” practice Catholicity in handling disciplinary cases and the implementation of decisions on discipline as well as students’ discipline is “always” evident.

Indicators such as reward on their effort, honesty and unbiased decision-making based on information and compliance with accepted procedure and mechanisms in the implementation of discipline and the presence of students’ voice and representation in decision-making are often evident in the schools. Schools “always” practice fair treatment in giving students what they deserve. This implies that the school management demonstrates activities that are directed to the attainment of a Catholic identity. The school management policies on erring students are governed by the principle of “ethics over things”.

Test of Difference in the Extent of Practice of Catholicity in terms of Curriculum, Policies on Student Discipline, School Management, School Environment and Personal Dimensions when Grouped according to Type of Participants and the Schools

When grouped according to type of participants, significant difference exists in the assessment of the administrators and the students in the extent of practice of Catholicity of the CICM schools. Significant differences likewise exist among the five (5) CICM high schools in terms of curriculum, policies on student-discipline, school management, school environment and personal dimensions.

Test of difference in the current practice in handling disciplinary cases of the CICM high schools in terms of the implementation of decision and discipline when grouped according to type of participants and the schools

The assessment of the administrators and students in relation to current practices in handling disciplinary cases along implementation

of decision and implementation of discipline differs significantly. In the same vein, significant difference, likewise, exists in the assessment of the 5 (five) CICM high schools in terms of the implementation of decision and implementation of policies on discipline. The aforementioned findings from the Survey Questionnaire are further complemented, reinforced and affirmed by the findings from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) which delved on qualitative information about the extent of Catholicity in the current Discipline Management System (DMS) and practices of the schools under review. Hereunder are the findings from the FGD tool:

4.1 The system allows the practice of having a student handbook that guides the teachers and students on disciplinary policies and sanctions and communication notebooks where teachers and parents have informal conferences about the child's performance and behavior. In addition, the DMS was found to provide the system of protocol in handling disciplinary cases. The teachers, likewise, find it satisfactory because their ideas are solicited when modifications are made in the policies. However, issues like laxities and inconsistencies are apparent reasons for dissatisfaction of the DMS.

4.2 In general, it is noted that all the FGD participants were happy with the DMS. They found that the DMS is functional in maintaining balance in the school environment. Parents appreciate the way teachers reach out to them when their children are having disciplinary problems. Teachers revealed that they were happy considering that disciplinary decisions resulted to the transformation of erring students. However, differences of responses were cited from faculty, parents, administrators, students and the community. Their unhappy assessments stemmed from the dichotomy of the behaviors of the students and what the schools strive for in terms of the essence of Catholicity in the school and at home.

4.3 While participants were happy with the way DMS was implemented, they also cited some instances when they were unhappy. Among the commonly cited causes of their dissatisfaction in the system were: (1) lack of sense of urgency to implement disciplinary action for violations committed, (2) inconsistency of decisions, (3) biased decisions meted, (4) not meting same punishment for same

offense/misconduct and (5) imposing severe punishments for minor offenses.

4.4 All groups of participants attested to the manifestations of Catholicity in the schools. These are manifested on: (1) student participation in religious and social activities, (2) policies on reverence, (3) respect to the rituals and doctrines of Catholic faith, (4) ensuring the conduct of due process through investigation and deliberation of erring students before decisions are made, (5) administration's show of understanding and moral support to erring students, and (6) the display of values such as forgiveness, respect, justice and compassion.

4.5 Participants agreed that heinous crimes and sexual immorality are considered major violations and are therefore unacceptable in the CICM Catholic schools.

CONCLUSION

The empirical findings in this study provided a new understanding of restorative justice being a sound and effective means of developing responsible students. The findings substantially indorse the concept of an effective discipline that was built on the practice of the values of respect, responsibility and relationship. The characteristics of a sound disciplinary system were confirmed in the findings of the study such as immediacy, consistency, being impersonal and that the same punishment for same offense/misconduct. Positive approach is found to be an effective way of preventing misconduct and not on imposing penalties.

Moreover, the present study provides additional evidence with respect to the practice of Catholicity in the school that although laws were provided to ensure uniformity, consistency and fair implementation, processes and implementing groups affect the way it was implemented. Views in the implementation of discipline vary based on one's scope of authority as affirmed in the findings of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are derived:

Review, enrichment, approval and adoption of the proposed policy change in the student Discipline Management System (DMS) of CICM schools.

A follow-up study by individual schools is recommended to make a more in-depth analysis of the patterns of misbehavior committed and the effects of the sanctions given to erring students so that appropriate school-based recommendations for improvement can be formulated and implemented. In that way, the DMS becomes dynamic and truly responsive to the environmental context of its student population.

A follow-up study is, likewise, recommended to determine the effectiveness of implementing the sanctions/punishments laid down in the current handbook/planner using the students as participants. Data from a study of this nature will give school administrators a firm handle to understand the world of their erring students and the consequences of the decisions they make on them while still in their fold.

This study may be replicated or adopted by other schools if found applicable to their own situation or circumstance.

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