

## TOWARDS A PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT MODEL FOR PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

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### ABSTRACT

This pioneering study is a path-breaking step towards the path of missionary excellence. Performance measurement provides a valuable tool to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness and continuous improvement. This study explores the possibility of performance measurement in faith-based organizations to suggest a model for performance measurement. Performance measurement within the religious and ecclesial context is an attempt to explore how our gifts are being offered in the service of the Lord.

In the process of developing this model, the researcher was able to identify the dimensions, duties, expectations and measurement factors and design a measurement evaluation form to measure the performance of priests and religious.

**Keywords:** *Performance Measurement, Dimensions, Duties, Expectations, Measurement Factors*

### INTRODUCTION

Clergy measurement is one area which still remains a territory unexplored. When I tried to inquire with some priests and religious: Can their performance be measured? The first reaction I received is: “How can you measure the grace? Impossible! How do you measure the quality of an interaction between a priest and a parishioner?”

It seemed to me like I was attempting to open a Pandora’s Box, if not a black box. In spite of being an insider, still there’s a lot of mystery, a lot to discover and explore. I felt that what is going within is difficult to perceive. The priestly ministry has its own unique character, and measuring it has its own unique challenges. One may not be able to get into the essence of it yet it’s worth trying. I believe it may be difficult but not impossible.

In my search for answers, I moved to some of the missions, where I felt strengthened and supported to pursue this interest. On my way back, I heard the whisperings of an elderly missionary: “Lord you are all that we have, and you give us all that we need. We offer you all that we are, and all that we have.” I told him how, I was touched and inspired. And he shared his great wisdom: “Remember, you are a gift of God. Gifts of God are for His mission and for His people.”

All that we are and all that we have belong to the Lord. In the parable of the talents (Mt.25:14-30); Jesus clearly emphasized that God expects us to use our God-given talents faithfully. It is not to inject fear in us but to be fruitful and accountable (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Performance measurement finds its place within the context of our deepest desire: we are wonderfully made and gifted to honor and bless God and serve him (1 Cor. 12.). St. Paul, writing to Romans (12:5-8), says “each member belongs to all the others... if your gift is to lead, do it diligently.” Performance measurement is to encourage and ensure that leadership gifts are being exercised faithfully and fruitfully.

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit” (1 Cor. 12, 4-7).

Performance measurement within the religious and ecclesial context is an attempt to explore how our gifts are being offered in the service of the Lord. The key purposes of a measurement here are identified from the Resources for Performance Management with Parish Personnel, in the Archdiocese of Chicago (2009). They are as follows:

- (a) to discover: where god is leading in the pastoral realities and missionary life; [*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves* (2 Corinthians 13:5)].
- (b) to focus: by re-centering oneself in mission by integrating personal, professional and parish commitment;
- (c) to promote: good stewardship of the ministerial, professional and personal gifts of priests and religious;
- (d) to learn and improve: by identifying strengths and areas for growth which will increase one’s effectiveness;
- (e) to be accountable: by assessing how well one has fulfilled one’s agreed upon responsibilities;
- (f) to inspire: effective performance management through ongoing communication regarding work expectations, implementation and contribution to mission.

In the religious circles performance and productivity are less about work accomplished, though, they are important; and more about the quality of the community in which Christ has first place, where love finds expression, and where the stewardship of gifts is understood as a grateful response to God’s gracious call ([www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org)).

“Successful fulfillment of the mission of the Church depends on the quality and dedication of personnel who are committed to excellence and continuous improvement of their own performance” (Cardinal George, 2011). One tool that is helpful in creating an environment that supports effective performance is performance measurement. It also shows the way to build effective systems to serve people. In other words, it is embarking on a journey of transformation.

Proverbs 19:20 clearly spells out some of the benefits of performance measurement of priests and religious: “Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom for the future.”

- (a) Performance measurement is a way to encourage a person's growth and maturation by enhancing his/her strengths and shoring up his/her weak areas;
- (b) Congregations demonstrating health, vitality, and growth are generally congregations who pay attention to their members and provide regular performance feedback as a way of encouraging and refining their work;
- (c) Celebrating ministry that has been done well is an encouragement not only to the person but also to the congregation;
- (d) For members of the congregation and its leaders to know that ministry is being observed and measured increases trust and encourages ownership of the Church's vision and goals.
- (e) Measurement also provides an opportunity to celebrate how God has used the individuals to bless his Church ([www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org)).

“By their fruits you shall know them” (Mt. 7:16). Christ deserves the very best from his chosen ones. So, we are called to performance measurement because we are called to serve Christ with excellence (White, 2009).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The story of measurement begins as early as creation itself. God made the earth, determining the days and nights, dividing light and darkness, separating water and earth, numbering the stars and calculating space and time (Gen. 1:1-31; Ps.147:4). Further, God gave exact instructions to Moses about numbering the people of Israel, and about creating the tabernacle using exact measurements (Dewel, 2011). Noah built his ark as commanded by God (three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high and took in two pairs of every kind of creatures (Gen. 6:1-22). The fourth book in the Bible is titled the book of Numbers. Even in the New Testament, we find Jesus saying, the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Mt. 10:30). Thus God is a God who sees, acts and measures. And man continues this story as “measurer of all things” (Klein, 1989).

Measurements can be traced throughout the history of mankind. At birth we are put on a measuring scale to record our weight. Since then, from the moment our alarm clocks wake us up in the morning, we spend a lot of time every day measuring things: time and date (clocks and calendars); finances (paychecks, bank accounts, budgets, credit, investments); shopping (price comparisons, product quality ratings); weather (temperature, precipitation, wind velocity, humidity, barometric pressure); vehicle operation (speed and gas gauges, maintenance records, specifications); travel (schedules, fares, locations, directions, distances); quantities (lengths, volumes, weights); food (size of portions, recipes, calories, fat content); education (grades, competencies, credentials); health (vital signs, lab tests, body temperature, pulse, weight); sports (scores, batting averages, records); politics (opinion polls, votes, election results, voter attitudes) (Spitzer, 2009).

At work, there are even more measurements. Some form of measurement is involved in almost everything we do in life. However, most of our daily measurements are so habitual that we hardly notice them, much less label them as measurement. It is rather obvious that in a complex world of today, if we didn't have measurement to guide our choices and decisions, we would be in great trouble. If we don't measure, we would never be on time, our health would be at risk, our finances would be in shambles, and we would be constantly running out of gas. We would never know hot or cold, rich or poor, young or old. There would not have

been art and music, dance and drama. Thus, the very word measure pervades all fields (Spitzer, 2007).

Without measurement, things cannot be replicated, managed or appreciated. To a large extent, the way we measure determines the success. What makes measurement so compelling is its capacity to instigate informed action and provide opportunity for people to engage in the right behavior at the right time. In an era of unprecedented speed, complexity, volatility and risk, there is very little room for error. The business imperative today is not just to perform excellently, but also consistently. Organizations that understand and use performance measurement to manage their strategy, systems, and processes more effectively and more consistently will have competitive advantage. Therefore, performance measurement can no longer be optional (Spitzer, 2007).

A recent study indicated that 93 percent of organizational leaders believe that measurement is important in influencing business outcomes. However, only 35 percent of respondents rated their organization's performance measurement systems as effective or very effective (Spitzer, 2007).

Performance measurement was foremost intended for the business sector but in the recent times, the gap between business sector and non-profit sector has narrowed considerably. There is a growing demand for performance measurement in nonprofits due to the evolving pressure on showing effectiveness (Behn, 2003).

Performance measurement may sound like a business term in the context of faith-based organization like Church. Certain circles, may set as flat-out for secularizing the sacred. "The church is not a business but it has a stewardship responsibility to use its resources wisely" says Charles Zech, the director of the Center for the Study of Church Management at Villanova University (Hannum, 2011).

According to Peter Denio, project coordinator at the National Leadership Roundtable for Church Management in the USA, Church must adopt, to the extent possible, from the business and non-profit sector the best practices such as transparency and accountability in planning, financial reporting, and decision-making; collaboration with lay experts; good communication practices; and performance measurement so as to effectively utilize parish resources in service to the mission of the Church (Hannum, 2011).

Often, the dilemma of the Church is to how to apply theologically the good business practices. Both non-profit and for-profit models are about planning, stewardship, enhancement of leadership, measurement, evaluation, and accounting. But while efficiency dominates the for-profit model, nonprofits and faith-based organizations must balance efficiency with relationships and mission (Hannum, 2011). Measuring performance can transform the religious personnel to improve their relationships and facilitate growth and learning toward more effective ministry in the missions.

Good management in dioceses and religious organizations has always been a concern since its credibility has been terribly damaged by poor management in recent times. Catholic institutions all over the world have thousands of priests and religious and a few million employees with an annual budget of over \$100 billion, which makes it comparable in size to many big business enterprises. Therefore, synergy, efficiency, compliance, measurement and

best practices are not just for business but also important for a stronger Church and its people (<http://www.uscatholic.org/church/2011>).

For the purpose of this research, a performance measurement is defined as: the process of understanding how well the members of religious organization manage their roles and responsibilities and what value they deliver for the service recipients, the community and all the stakeholders while living their charism/ intended purpose (Moullin, 2002).

Thus, performance measurement provides a valuable tool to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness and continuous improvement (Kennerley and Neely, 2003). This study explores whether there is room for performance measurement in faith-based organizations.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Objectives

To design a performance measurement model for priests and religious.

### Research Design

This study adapted the mixed method approach with an exploratory design using stratified random sampling. The size of the sample was disproportionate because of the nature of the study.

The population of the study covered two hundred and seventy four (274) SVD religious priests, twenty-four (24) finally professed religious brothers, one hundred and ninety one lay men (191) and three hundred and thirty nine (339) lay women who are formal employees and beneficiaries of the services of SVD institutions/mission centres; comprising parishes, schools and mission animation and development centres in the three SVD provinces of Philippines namely, central, south and north. The targeted respondents were also heterogeneous in nature.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSIONS

### Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents according to classification found that among the employees in the SVD organization, women are pre-dominant group (339, 40.9%) because of the nature of missionary apostolates namely, parish ministry and educational institutions.

When grouped according to the educational attainment, the majority (431, 52.1%) of the respondents were Bachelor's degree holders and a much fewer number had Doctorate degree (74, 8.9%).

In terms of assignment, nearly half of the respondents belong to parish ministry (214, 25.8%) and support service (226, 27.3%).

The length of service, revealed that the majority of the respondents (397, 47.95%) have been in the service for more than seven (7) years. However, two-third of the respondents (300, 36.23%) have 1 to 3 years of service.

| Variable                      | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Classification</b>         |           |            |
| Priests                       | 274       | 33.1%      |
| Religious (Brothers)          | 24        | 2.9%       |
| Laymen                        | 191       | 23.1%      |
| Laywomen                      | 339       | 40.9%      |
| <b>Educational Attainment</b> |           |            |
| Bachelor's Degree             | 431       | 52.1%      |
| Master's Degree               | 323       | 39%        |
| Doctoral Studies              | 74        | 8.9%       |
| <b>Assignment</b>             |           |            |
| Parish                        | 214       | 25.8%      |
| Institutional/ Administration | 388       | 46.9%      |
| Support Service               | 226       | 27.3%      |
| <b>Length of Service</b>      |           |            |
| 1 – 3 Years                   | 300       | 36.23%     |
| 4 – 6 Years                   | 131       | 15.82%     |
| 7 Years or More               | 397       | 47.95%     |

Tab.1 Demographic Profile

### Performance Measurement Model for Priests and Religious

The performance measurement model for priests and religious is born in the very process of this study. The four constructs namely: Dimensions, Duties, Expectations and Measurement Factors were grown at every stage of the study.

The treatment of the data through the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) obtained psychometric properties of 0.987. The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Barlett's Test of Sphericity was very high (Alpha Co-efficient 0.985). It indicated that the variables do relate to one another. Therefore, factor analysis is adequate measure to break the components of the instrument. Hence, the original nine duties in the preliminary form were reduced to six because of the fusion of some of the duties in each of the dimensions. In the priestly dimension Liturgy and Pastoral Care was grouped into one and renamed as Sanctification with fourteen expectations. The Preaching and Teaching was bridged into Proclamation with eight expectations in the prophetic dimension. Mission Animation was termed as Pastoral Care with four expectations. Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation was classified as Mission Animation with thirteen expectations. The kingly dimension which consists of Leadership and Administration and Management was called as Governance with twenty one expectations. In the religious dimension, the Faithfulness to Evangelical Counsels was modified as Witness with ten expectations.

The outcome of the study resulted in identification of the Four (4) Performance Dimensions: Priestly, Prophetic, Kingly and Religious; six (6) Duties: Sanctification, Proclamation, Pastoral Care, Mission Animation, Governance and Witness; seventy (70) items of Expectations and fifteen (15) Measurement Factors: Approachability, Availability, Charity, Commitment, Conviction, Creativity, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Initiative, Integrity, Interpersonal Skills, Knowledge, Persuasiveness, Prudence and Reliability.

In the pictorial model Fig.1, this process of performance measurement is depicted in the inner circles. The circle is not static; it spirals upward and inward, touching God, oneself and others (all stakeholders). The dimensions (Venn diagram – 4 centre circles) are the starting and the end point of the measurement process. They are not only the deepest point, but the most pervasive influence. They represent harmony between the inner and outer sides of life and ministry.

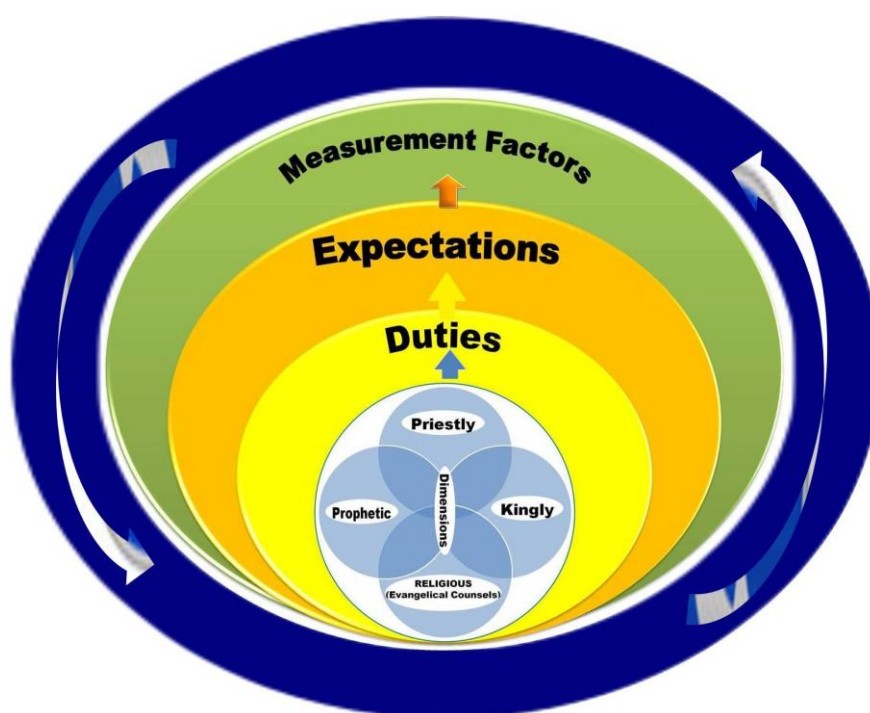


Figure 1. Performance Measurement Model for Priests and Religious

The Venn diagram within the unfolding circles represents the merging of the individual and the organizational potential, SVD Society and the Church charisms, earthly and spiritual ministries (priestly, prophetic, kingly and religious) of the priests, religious and the laymen and women (stakeholders), and leading towards the higher performance which is symbolized in the upward movement of the circles and the central arrows. The intersection of four circles in the Venn diagram implies that dimensions have mutual association and priests and religious have multiple roles to perform.

Performance of multiple roles necessitates self-discovery of one's identity. Identity has to do with role and function and one's place in society. It is negotiated by feedback, especially from peers, superiors, stakeholders who affirm one's life style, ministry, projects, and

behavior and thereby contribute to a sense of comfortableness in the way one perceives himself or herself to fulfill one's duties.

This multiple feedback is signified in the unified movements of the circles which involves the participation of all the stakeholders (priests, religious brothers and laymen and women) upon which the theoretical framework of the research was founded.

The developing person wants more. Self-discovery of these dimensions leads the way to perform one's duties passionately, and expectations become outcomes along the way. The task is to find oneself and internalize stakeholder's expectations.

The measurement factors are determined based on the expectations of duties. They address the dynamics of growth, the standards that help to explain why one person meets the expectations while another exceeds them; why one leads upward, whereas another remains in the same place.

Why measure priests performance is well captured in the expression of St. Arnold Janssen, the founder of SVD Society. He deeply believed that a priest is called by the Father, sent by Jesus and led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore he inspired his priests saying "all must serve the triune God; all must be conquered for the Trinity; all must be done in its name; all hearts must become Its abode; all men must come to know and love and adore the triune God" (Sandkamp, 2010).

This message of the founder captures the power and spirit of performance measurement envisaged by the researcher and hopes that it will touch and transform the performance of SVDs in the Philippines to lead them upward.

## CONCLUSIONS

This pioneering study was able to achieve its objectives by developing a performance measurement model. The researcher adapted exploratory research design and mixed method approach. The data was treated using Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

The suggested performance measurement model can provide empirical data to measure, recognize and reward good performance. It will be a vital tool for administrative and developmental actions.

This pioneering study will have policy implications particularly in the formation of priests and religious and may contribute to a new paradigm, and a new mindset in the management of human resources in the SVD religious organization. The performance measurement model suggested can serve as an effective tool for developing a formation manual as well as evaluating formation programme. The study in itself is educative and informative about one's duties and expectations.

This pioneering study is a path-breaking step towards the path of missionary excellence and can be subjected to further tests by the researchers. Future researchers can build on this data; use the tools and techniques developed or tested in this research for performance measurement in the religious sector, test or discover new factors and generate new learning.



Further research on this topic can help to enhance the performance measurement literature, particularly in the religious sector, by providing validated measures of performance measurement systems. A similar study can be carried out in other religious congregations and dioceses customizing this performance measurement questionnaire or performance evaluation form. Using this performance evaluation form, the performance evaluation of SVDs can be conducted in all the SVD provinces in the Philippines.

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