Motivational Factors and Participation of Senior High School Students in Attending Online Masses

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted the suspension of masses. Thus, this started online masses and has been used by schools to allow students to attend the sacraments virtually. The study investigated how motivated and participative students are in online masses. The researchers investigated students' degree of motivation and level of participation, the differences when grouped according to the demographics, and whether a significant relationship exists between the two variables. This study focused on the four motivational factors for students to attend masses: requirement, meaningfulness, liturgical celebration, and parental influence, and served as the main theoretical framework for the study, along with other theories on the formation of habits. The measurement of the factors and the level of participation was done by using survey questionnaires. There were 298 respondents in this study. The study found a moderate degree of motivation and a high level of participation in attending online masses. Further, there were no significant differences in the degree of motivation and level of participation among the said variables, except in the variable of sex on the motivational factors of meaningfulness, liturgical celebration, and the level of participation. Finally, there was a significant relationship between the degree of motivation and students' level of participation. Based on the result of the study, the researchers proposed that an Enhanced Christian Life Formation Program be implemented so that students may regain a high appreciation for the Holy Mass and the sacraments.

Keywords: COVID-19, online masses, motivation, participation, students

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the pandemic reached the country in February 2020, the first case of COVID-19 in Bacolod City was reported on March 20, 2020 (CNN Philippines, 2020). Days before, the President placed the whole country into lockdown, with Local Governments to follow. In compliance with the government’s mandate, the Bishop of the Diocese of Bacolod suspended the public celebration of religious liturgies (Manilla Bulletin, 2020). Most of the sacred liturgies, including the Holy Eucharist, were held online to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Even as Churches started to gradually open again, the dispensation from the duty to attend Sunday Masses was not lifted by the Bishop.

Additionally, Augustinian education is one of the primary conduits of the Catholic Church for the formation of the sense of values of the youth (Menes, 2020). One integral part of Augustinian education is our devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

A study from Dioso (2014) has specified four aspects in which we can measure the student's motivation to attend masses: requirement, meaningfulness, liturgical celebration,
and parental influence. However, since the government's stay-at-home orders bind most young teenagers and adolescents, most of them only access religious liturgies via live streaming on the internet.

The recent developments in the modality of learning prompted the researchers to investigate, in the context of Senior High School students, how the online, blended learning scheme is enforced, in which students only access the Holy Eucharist via Livestream, how motivated the Senior High School Students in attending the online or live-streamed Holy Eucharist and how well they participate. The pandemic has created a novel way for students to experience the Holy Eucharist, and even though masses had been available via social communications, the recent pandemic highlighted the importance of social communications in the life of the Church.

The conduct of online mass is a new phenomenon in universities that was only implemented because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though online masses were already done in the past, few studies to none were conducted in schools related to motivational factors and participation of students. Thus, this study is conducted to fill in the gap in the literature. This study also aims to see if the said religious services offered by the university contribute to achieving the goal of peace, justice, and strong institutions in line with “Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development in the Age of Global Pandemic”.

The study's findings served as bases in the formulation of the Enhanced Christian Life Program to expose students to frequent confession, recollection, and celebration of the Holy Eucharist to give them more opportunities to be motivated and participative in attending masses, whether online or face-to-face.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Theoretical Background

This study theorizes that motivational factors influence the level of participation of students' attendance specific to online masses. Likewise, this study is anchored on forming habits in which the behavior intended to become a habit is regularly repeated (Lally et al., 2009). All occasions that could be used to make the act habitual are taken advantage of (Hernadez, 1995). Operant conditioning and interpretative voluntariness were used to explain how students are attending online masses because of given incentives and because of making attendance mandatory despite the resistance of students. Operant conditioning is when a reinforced behavior or habit is rewarded, and behaviors or practices that they want to decrease are reprimanded (Mcleod, 2018). Interpretative voluntariness is voluntariness that would be present under a person’s judgment when an opportunity or an ability is given (Glenn, 1965). Interpretative voluntariness is present, presuming that the requirement to attend virtual masses will be appreciated by students in their participation eventually in face-to-face celebration of masses so that they may have the ability to understand its importance and meaning in their Christian life fully.

2.2. Participants and Measures

The study had a total of 298 participants and classified them according to their demographics essential for the study. To identify the participants of the study, stratified proportional random sampling was utilized. This study used a descriptive, comparative, and correlational design, as it examined data based on a survey conducted when blended online learning was enforced.

2.3. Procedures

A modified research questionnaire from Dioso (2014) was used as the main instrument of the study. The modified questionnaire evaluated the extent of student's motivational factors on meaningfulness, requirement, liturgical celebration, and parental influence, as well as students' level of participation during online masses. The questionnaire underwent jury validation and reliability testing to ensure its validity and reliability. The participants were selected based on a criterion prepared by the researchers to ensure the participant's eligibility for participating in the survey.

2.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive, comparative, and correlational analyses were used to analyze the data gathered. The researchers used the Mean for descriptive analysis, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) for comparative analysis, and Pearson r (Pearson
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1
Degree of Motivation and Level of Participation of Senior High School Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningfulness</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgical Celebration</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Influence</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Participation</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the difference in the means is significant when p<0.05

The sample mean was used to determine the degree of the motivational factors and the level of participation of the Senior High School students. The data in the table shows that the degree of motivation in attending online masses for the motivational factors of requirement [M = 3.25], meaningfulness [M = 3.42], Liturgical Celebration [M = 3.29], and parental influence [M = 3.09], when taken as a whole, is moderate. However, the study found a high level of participation [M = 3.92] in students who attend online masses. This is supported by the theory of operant conditioning, in which desirable behaviors or habits are rewarded (Mcleod, 2018). Online masses are an academic requirement in CLF classes, in which attendance is considered a minor performance task. Thus, participation is viewed as a reward (favorable academic grade) requirement. Therefore, the participation of students is high because they are rewarded with satisfactory grades afterward.

Table 2
The difference in the degree of motivational factors in terms of “meaningfulness” and “liturgical celebration” of the Senior High School Students when grouped according to sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningfulness</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>2.321</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgical Celebration</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.093</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the difference in the means is significant when p<0.05

T-test independent samples were used to determine the significant difference in the degree of motivational factors in terms of “meaningfulness” and “liturgical celebration” that affect the online mass attendance of the Senior High School Students when grouped according to sex. There is a significant difference in the degree of motivational factors in terms of “meaningfulness” [p = 0.021] and “liturgical celebration” [p = 0.002] that affect the online mass attendance of the Senior High School students when grouped according to sex. The results show that more women attend mass more because of the liturgical celebration than men. Thus, the liturgical celebration of the mass motivates women more than men because they associate meaning with it. Knowing how women are more motivated because they find meaning in the mass, it could be correlated that they are also motivated because of the liturgical celebration because the liturgical celebration is what we do in the mass, which they tend to find more meaningful than men. This agrees with what Murphy (2016) has written about the gender gap in religiosity. She writes that generally but not universally, women are more religious than men, especially in Christianity, and that women involve themselves more in religious activities.

Table 3
The difference in the degree of motivational factors in terms of “requirement” and “parental influence” of the Senior High School Students when grouped according to sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.707</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0.480</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Influence</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the difference in the means is significant when p<0.05
T-test independent samples were used to determine the significant difference in the degree of motivational factors in terms of “meaningfulness” and “liturgical celebration” of the Senior High School Students grouped according to sex. There is no significant difference in the degree of motivational factors in terms of “requirement” \[ p = 0.480 \] and “parental influence” \[ p = 0.874 \] that affect the online mass attendance of the Senior High School students when grouped according to sex. Therefore, in terms of requirement and parental influence as a motivational factor, both male and female students are likely to have the same attitude about this factor. The results agree with the conclusion of Madrigal’s (2007) conclusion in a similar study, where he concluded that there is no significant difference in the level of understanding of the Holy Eucharist of fourth-year high school students based on gender. This is also supported by the theory of interpretative voluntariness, which acknowledges the resistance of students who are required to attend online masses; therefore, required as a motivational factor in attending online masses does not pose a significant difference based on gender. This is supported by Dioso (2014) when he references what Pedrosa (2011) has found in her study in his reference that there was no significant difference in the motivational factor of parental influence when grouped according to sex. Sex, as a factor, is negligible when it comes to religious activities imposed by the school.

### Table 4
The difference in the level of participation of the Senior High School Students when grouped according to sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Participation</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.363</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the difference in the means is significant when \( p < 0.05 \)

Pearson’s \( r \) was used to determine the significant relationship between motivational factors that affect the online mass attendance of Senior High School students and their participation during the online masses. There is a significant relationship between motivational factors that affect the online mass attendance of the Senior High School Students and their participation during the online masses \( p = 0.000 \). Therefore, motivational factors play a significant role in participation in online masses. This affects the attendance of students during online masses. Whatever the degree of motivational factors of students in attending online masses affects the level of participation of students and the quality of students’ attendance during online masses. This significant relationship is supported by Tagle (2016) when he said that young people are looking for a credible, believable, and authentic manifestation of Jesus. Students’ motivation in attending online masses, which has a great correlation to their participation, should be taken as a manifestation that students if motivated, would participate actively in the celebration of the virtual masses.

### 4. CONCLUSION

The study’s results suggest that motivational factors (requirement, meaningfulness, liturgical celebration, and parental influence) affect students’ attendance in online masses.
masses. With the right motivations for students, their participation in online masses would also correspond to the level of participation in online masses and, later on, face-to-face celebrations of the mass.

Women tend to have higher motivation, as well as participation during online masses, than men. This is due to women being more involved in religious activities during the pandemic. Thus, this considered them more religious than men in general.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers have many to thank for the success of this study: First, to the Almighty God, the Eucharistic Lord, that has never broken his promise that "whether two or three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20). Even as churches closed due to the pandemic, you have inspired people to help bring the church to our homes and our mobile screens. The researchers are grateful to the original owner of the research instrument who allowed us to further his study of the "Motivational Factors Influencing Students' Attendance on Scheduled Masses" and apply it to the present context facing students under online learning. We thank the Integrated School (Grades 11 & 12) for allowing and facilitating the success of this study. We are also grateful to those who contributed ideas and suggestions for the success of this study.

6. REFERENCES


