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# The Impact of Teaching Competency of Catechist toward the Spiritual Life of the Grade IX and X Students of Cabittaogan National High School, Philippines

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**Abstract:** The study wanted to determine the correlation between teaching competencies of the catechists and the spiritual life of students of Cabittaogan National High School, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. To support the study, theories were proposed concerning teaching competencies, doctrines, prayer, Holy Eucharist, and students' understanding. To enhance these theories, literature and studies were reviewed. The population of the study was all Grade IX and Grade X students of Cabittaogan National High School. To gather the data, validated questionnaires were used. The data were interpreted using statistical tools such as Weighted Mean and Pearson r Product Moment of Correlation. The study found that teaching competencies of the catechist were high (competent) and the level of students' understanding was high and their participation was also found high. The study found that there is a correlation between teaching competencies and the level of understanding of students, participation and their spiritual life. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study is rejected.

**Keywords:** *Teaching competency, spiritual life, level of understanding, the Holy Eucharist, participation*

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## I. Rationale/Introduction

Observing the world today particularly the youth, religion and spirituality are no longer in their mind and priority. Popular culture has influenced the life of the youth. Our contemporary world is somehow promoting an atheistic (Godless) kind of belief. As such the General Directory for Catechesis states that: "Atheism, understood as a negation of God, must, therefore, be regarded as one of the most serious problems of our time" (General Directory for Catechesis (GDC), 1998). Moreover, young children and youth indulge more and are overwhelmed by worldly affairs and modern gadgets that they consequently neglect or escape Sunday Masses or any Religious activities and worship. Spiritual life, one aspect of a human person is gradually condescending, and our Christian faith is shaken.

These realities raise the concern: "Does Religious education in schools have an impact on the Spiritual Life of the students?"

Teaching religion assumes a specific role in this context. Consecrated persons, together with other educators, have greater responsibility and are often called to ensure that religious education is taught in the schools, depending on the different school situations. This is because in some schools, the majority of the pupils/students are Christians, and in others, the population are mixed with other religions (Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools, 2003).

Religious Education in school fits into the evangelizing mission of the Church. It is different from, but complementary to, parish catechesis and other activities such as family Christian education or initiatives of the ongoing formation of the faithful. Religious education in schools gives the pupils/students' knowledge about Christianity and Christian life (CCE – Circular Letter, 2009)

The purpose of teaching religion is not just to explain the doctrines of the Christian faith or Catholic Church but what is most important is to inspire the youth, students to live their faith in their daily life which can be shown through their active participation in the Eucharistic celebration during Sundays. This is a particular challenge to the teaching competence of religious educators. Bishop Legaspi (2000) as cited by Gempesaw (2005) said, "The major improvements in the affectivity of our catechesis will come only if our catechists and religion teachers have been formed to think creatively in proclaiming the Person of Christ, Savior of the world, in direct relation with their context and daily experience."

Along with such concern, there is a need to have religion teachers/catechists who have the capability or competence, skills, down to earth and competitive, and are eager to respond to the needs of the time, fostering deep faith and spirituality, and above all true witnesses of Christ. SBI has been forming and educating young men and women to become professional catechists for more than five (5) decades now. It is the vision of the school to form a well-integrated and empowered catechist towards mature Christian faith. Since then SBI has been actively participating in the Church's mission and sending catechists to different public schools both elementary and high school to teach religion. Thus, the study would like to find out how competent the catechists are and to what extent catechesis has affected the spiritual life of the youth or students. For this study also, the teaching of religion is synonymous with catechesis in the school context.

### **Significance of the Study**

The result of this study may be helpful for the following institutions/persons: first, it will help the school administrators and formators of SBI to reassess the program in sending catechists to different schools. Second, this will help the formators in evaluating the student catechist's readiness for the mission, particularly in the teaching ministry. And lastly, the result of this study will help the student catechist and the researcher, as well, to boost his/her competencies as a professional catechist, teacher and evangelizer in the future.

This research study also may be used for future purposes that would benefit the schools, the catechists and the person who will use this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The discussion on the impact of teaching competence in religion on the spiritual life of the students cannot continue without understanding first what religion is and its role to human life, particularly in the spiritual aspect.

Religion is from the Latin word "Religare", or to bind back. Religion is a bond or a fellowship between man and his Creator (Agapay, 2010). Also, Abun, (2012) emphasizes that religion is a respect for what is sacred, reverence for the gods, obligation, the bond between man and the gods.

Love (2001), as cited by Bryant et al. (2003), also defined religion as a shared system of beliefs, principles or doctrines related to a belief in and worship of a supernatural power regarded as a creator. Thus, religion is the belief in the existence of God and its function is to unite the people who believe in the same God.

Religion is a universal human pursuit, affecting many different cultural parameters, spiritual concepts, and ideas, and influencing human thinking and behaviour by offering answers on the meaning of human existence (Agorastos et al., 2014). On the other hand, spirituality refers to a religious process of re-formation which "aims to recover the original shape of man," adapted to "the image of God" as represented by the founders and sacred texts of the religions of the world.

Catholic spirituality is the spiritual practise of living out a personal act of faith following the acceptance of faith. Although all Catholics are expected to pray together at Mass, there are many different forms of spirituality and private prayer which have developed over the centuries. Each of the major religious orders of the Catholic Church and other lay groupings has their unique spirituality - it is a way of approaching God in prayer and in living out the Gospel.

Carr (1996) argued that spirituality is so intimately rooted in the religion that to separate it from religion makes little or no sense. Thatcher (1996) also claims that spirituality can only be taught within a faith context and Fisher (2007) argued that one cannot be spiritual unless they have relationship or connectedness with God.

Religion and spirituality, thus, face each other as paradoxical twins. Without religion, we have no organized way of communicating or expressing truth, no sacred rituals to bind individuals into a living community. Yet without spirituality, we have no truth to celebrate and no contact with the living and no on-going nature of divine revelation (Tacey, 2004).

Christian spirituality is very essential particularly in knowing God, not just knowing about God, experiencing God to the full and attaining Christian authenticity in life and thoughts. Along with this concern, it is very clear that religion has a connection to the life of every person. Through religion, we can know God, worship and praise God, and it is also where we find the meaning of our existence. Thus, teaching religion or catechesis in school is very essential and helpful in nurturing the spiritual life of the students.

According to Bautista (1989) "Religious education by its very nature addresses the task of inner transformation. Education in the faith (the total life of faith and the quality of that faith-life) includes opening the hearts of the catechized and preparing them for total adherence to Christ.

Based on the nature of Christian faith, the religion program must integrate its intellectual (doctrinal), behavioural (moral), and affective (sacraments-worship) dimensions, ground them firmly in the Scripture and Church teaching, and relate them to the concrete, enculturated experience of the students (Bautista, 1989). These faith's three dimensions – doctrine, moral and worship – flow directly from Christ who is "the Truth," showing us the (moral) Way," sharing with us his eternal "Life in the sacraments and prayer (NCDP, 2007).

Therefore, religious education or catechesis must be holistic in approach and grounded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The word catechesis is derived from a Greek word which means "to resound" or "to sound from above". It means more than to instruct, but to resound the Word, the Word of the Scriptures and the Word made flesh which is the focal point of religious education as a term (Legaspi, 2007). Catechesis centres upon the person of Christ, this is because catechesis is above all about putting the person being catechized into contact with the Person of Christ (CatechesiTrandendae, 1994).

Through proper education of religion, it is possible to create the conditions for a person to develop a gift for searching and to be guided in discovering the mystery of his being and of the reality that surrounds him until he reaches the threshold of the faith (Consecrated Persons and Their mission in schools, 2003)

Along with the idea of proper education or teaching of religion, the catechist and other religious educators must first and foremost undergo pieces of training and formation. They should be the first to be educated about our Christian faith, equipped them with well-profound knowledge of Church doctrine, they should possess deep spirituality and lived a Christian life. Gone are the days that anyone can teach religion in school without proper training and formation.

SBI is a catechetical and formation centre, which aims to train and form young aspiring catechists. These aspiring catechists are the ones who respond to the call of becoming the heralds and echoes of Christ. They are trained, and they received proper education in all aspects of life (physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual) for them to become competitive and effective in the mission, particularly in the teaching ministry.

Part of the program of the Institute is to send these catechists to different public schools, both elementary and high school to teach religion. Being a catechist is not an easy task, as Legaspi (2007) says, "The catechist has to efface himself or herself before Christ, to be His faithful spokesman, resounding, or echo. Furthermore, he said that there is also an invitation to maintain if catechist wishes to be effective, a harmony between his/her teaching and living.

A catechist is not expected to be a professional theologian but he or she is expected to have a solid grasp of Catholic doctrine and worship and be familiar with Scriptures (Legaspi, 2007). A catechist must be competent in teaching about our doctrine, knowledgeable about the scripture, live a life of prayer and able to share it with his or her students and knows the importance of the sacraments.

The following discussions are explanations of the four competencies of teaching religion, which the researcher emphasizes in this study. The teaching of the Church (Doctrine) is the fundamental truth of our Catholic Christian faith which we profess particularly in the Creed. Our Catholic faith tells us that we are: 1) being created by God in His image and likeness; 2) being raised from rational creature to adopted sons/daughters of the heavenly Father by the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God; 3) being redeemed from our sinfulness; 4) graced by the Holy Spirit indwelling in us; and 5) destined for eternal life with God (NCDP, 2007).

The NCDP 1985 as cited in NCDP 2007, put great stress on the inner organic unity and coherence among the truths of the faith, the hierarchy of truths, and the life-giving, saving character of the doctrines of the faith. One concrete goal of the catechist, then, is to help others toward maturity in the faith systematically and holistically, by inter-relating the mysteries of our faith. Catechist should have a clear practical means of what is essential to teach relevant in the real-life situation.

Catholic doctrine must be taught as inspiring, uplifting, saving truths of the faith – never reduced to merely memorizing dry abstract formulas which are not properly understood and therefore actually irrelevant to the daily life of the catechized (NCDP, 2007)

It is also essential that a catechist is well-versed in the Sacred Scriptures or Holy Bible as the primary source of catechesis. The Sacred Scriptures is the most important source for proclaiming and educating in the faith because it is the divinely inspired Word of God. "Inspired" means that Scriptures presents in human language the Living Word of God. St. Paul affirms that "All Scriptures is inspired by God and profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy" (NCDP, 2007).

A fundamental principle of catechesis is to present the Gospel message, entire, in all its rigour and vigour. Moreover, the Biblical message itself objectively rules out "one single best catechetical methodology" (NCDP, 2007). Without Scripture text or verse, there is no Christian message.

Catechesis aims therefore at developing an understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God's Word so that the whole of a person's humanity is impregnated by that Word (CT, 1994). Talking about

Sacraments - these are the seven ritual sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ namely; Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the sick, Matrimony and Holy Order.

Ritual sacraments can be viewed primarily as “encounters with the Risen Christ,” drawing us into His Paschal Mystery, involving our active faith, within the context of the Christian community, the Church, and empowered by the Holy Spirit (NCDP, 2007) An effective catechetical approach to the sacraments must go beyond merely giving factual information about the sacraments and concentrate on inspiring those being catechized to a personal appreciation of the importance of the sacraments for living out the Catholic faith.

What is needed may be less stress on mere facts about: What is the sacrament called? Who administers or receives? How it is administered? When and where? But more emphasis on the Why? (NCDP, 2007). The catechist must focus on explaining the reasons why receiving and celebrating the sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist, is important in the life of every person.

Another competency that a catechist must possess is the life of Prayer which must be visible to the religion teachers and catechists. Catholic teachings about prayer are contained in the Catechism for the Catholic Church, where quoting St. John of Damascus, prayer is defined as "...the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God," St. Thérèse of Lisieux describes prayer as "... a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy."

By prayer, one acknowledges God's power and goodness, and one's neediness and dependence. It is, therefore, an act of the virtue of religion implying the deepest reverence for God and habituating a person to look to him for everything. Prayer presupposes faith in God and hopes in his goodness. By both, God, to whom one prays, moves the individual to prayer.

A prayerful catechist is God's joyful messenger. The prayerful life of the catechist is founded on the person of Jesus Christ. Prayer can be divided into vocal and mental types. Vocal prayer is that which is made by using some approved form of words, read or recited; such as the sign of the cross, the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office), the Angelus, grace before and after meals, etc.

Mental prayer is that which is made without employing either words or formulas of any kind. Catholics are exhorted to be careful of underrating the usefulness or necessity of vocal prayer. Common vocal prayers include the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, and the Apostles' Creed. Catholics consider vocal prayer an essential element of the Christian life. Vocal prayer can be as simple and uplifting as "Thank you, God, for this beautiful morning," or as formal as a Mass celebrating a very special occasion.

The impact of teaching religion towards the life of the students will depend upon the competency of the catechist and religion teacher. The NCDP (2007) stresses that “Any catechetical method is dependent, albeit partly, on the competence of the catechist using it for its effectiveness.

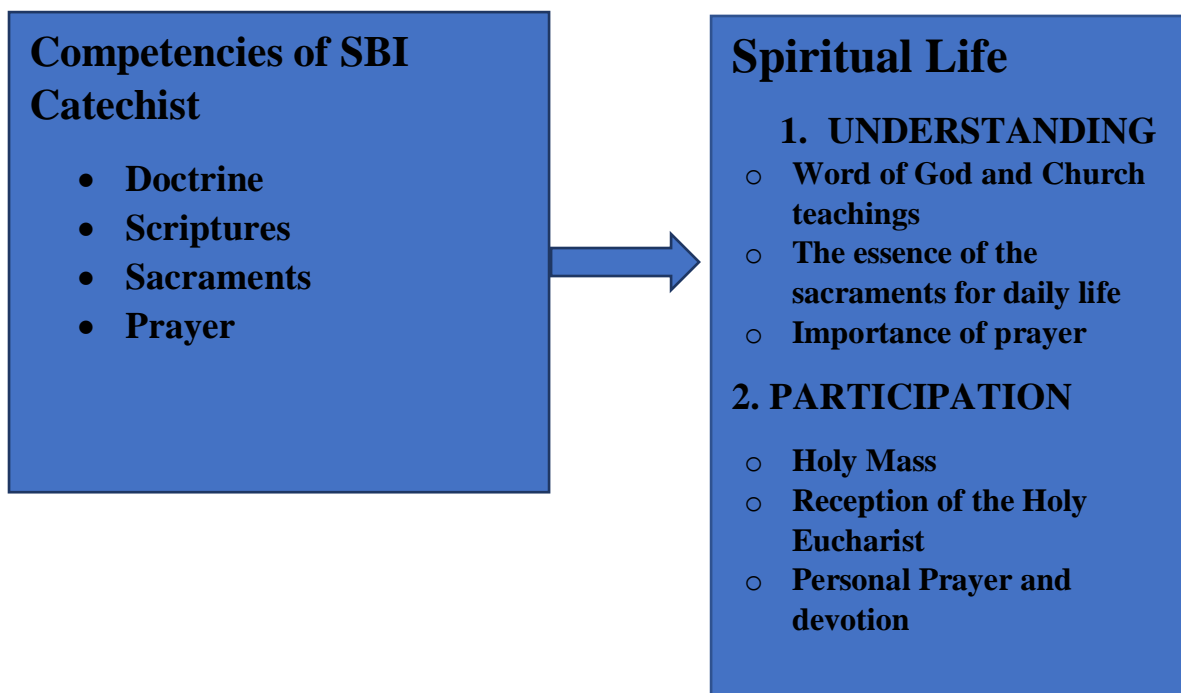
Achieving high levels of student understanding requires immensely skilful teaching. These include (a) Content of the Lesson and Materials used (b) Instructional methods and strategies (c) Evaluation and (d) teacher quality. The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (1991) stresses that in catechesis the learning process must be participative. We cannot go on with a pure banking method by which knowledge is simply deposited into the student's head. The students have to be consistently and constantly led to relate Christian truth to their lives.

Furthermore, effective catechesis can be done only by real catechists with various training, backgrounds, and methods, among Christians of different ages. Through their teachings in school, they touch the lives of the students and assist them to grow and mature in faith. The Catechist's conviction of God's message compels him/her to transmit the message with fidelity and truth. The catechist must always strive to be a sign, a bridge, a light and a witness to this truth so that he/she can lead his/her students to respond to the faith with firmness and

conviction. Indeed, the catechist's conviction in Christian faith and God's unconditional love stimulate his/her students to grow and mature in their faith spiritual life.

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE**



**Figure 1: Research Paradigm**

The research paradigm shows the impact of teaching competency of SBI Catechist toward the spiritual life of the Grade IX and X students of Cabittaogan National High School.

**Statement of the Problem**

This study is purposely conducted to assess the level of competency of the SBI Catechists and the impact of teaching religion toward the Spiritual Life of the Grade IX and X students of Cabittaogan National High School.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of teaching competence of the SBI Catechists in the following:

- a. Doctrine
- b. Scriptures
- c. Sacraments
- d. Prayer

2. What is the extent of the student's understanding in the following:

- a. Word of God and Church teachings
- b. The essence of the sacraments for daily life
- c. Importance of prayer

3. What is the extent of the students' participation in the following

- a. Holy Mass
- b. Reception of the Holy Eucharist
- c. Personal Prayer and Devotion

4. Is there a significant relationship between the teaching competences of the SBI Catechist on the spiritual life of the students?

### **Assumption of the Study**

The study is guided by the following assumptions:

1. The instruments used for data gathering are valid and reliable
2. The answers are honest
3. The variables used in the study are measurable.
4. The respondents' answers are reflective of their perceptions and knowledge about the competence of SBI Catechist in teaching religion

### **Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that teaching competence in teaching the religion of the SBI Catechist does not correlate with the spiritual life of the students in Cabittaogan National High School.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the study**

This study limits its investigation to the impact of teaching competence in the religion of the SBI Catechist on the spiritual life of the Grade IX and X students in Cabittaogan National High School.

In terms of teaching competency in religion, the study is delimited to the following areas: Doctrine, Scriptures, Sacraments and Prayer. With regards to the students' level of understanding, the study is delimited to the understanding of the following: Bible and the Church teachings, Essence of the Sacraments for daily life and the Importance of Prayer. While the level of students' participation is delimited to Holy Mass, Reception of the Holy Eucharist and Personal Prayer and Devotions.

The study was conducted last November 06 and 07, 2017 in Cabittaogan National High School in Sta. Catalina Ilocos Sur, Grades IX and X students.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES**

This chapter reviews the related theological literature on teaching religion and spirituality. To have a better and clearer view, the researcher tried to read and review some related literature and studies.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The Church has always considered catechesis as one of her primary tasks. Before Christ ascended to his Father after his resurrection he gave the apostles a final command, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20a). Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation, CT, (1994), says that Jesus entrusted his disciples the mission and power to proclaim to humanity what they had heard with their ears, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the word of life. He also entrusted them with the mission and power to explain with authority what he had taught them, his words and actions and to educate and instruct them in this life.

Emanated from Christ's mission, Catechesis has become a basic part of the Church's mission. The mission is to sow the Word of God and seeks to deepen the understanding of Christian faith through catechesis.

The National Catechetical Directory for the Philippines (2007), quote Vatican II's Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, defines catechesis as that integral part of evangelization which aims to make man's faith living, conscious and active through the light of instruction. Likewise, the Catechism of the Catholic Church stipulated that catechesis is an education of faith of children, young people and adults which includes the teaching of Christian doctrine.

The basic tasks of catechesis include teaching the people of God: 1) to know – promoting knowledge of the faith – both what we believe as Christian (e.g. the Creed), and how we believe (our act of believing); 2) to follow Christ in loving service – moral formation and transformation by graced sharing in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord, unto "Newness of Life"; 3) to pray and worship – celebrating Christ's salvific presence in the Sacraments; and 4) build up the Christian community and share in its mission (NCDP, 2007). The specific aim of catechesis is to develop initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful, young and old. It is, in fact, a matter of giving growth, at the level of knowledge and in life, to the seed of faith sown by the Holy Spirit with the initial proclamation and effectively transmitted by baptism (CT,1994).

Legaspi (2007) in his book *Passion for Catechesis*, wrote down some criteria and norms to measure authentic catechesis. Some of these norms are:

- Catechesis centres on the mystery of the Trinity and Christ's saving work. The spirit and content of catechesis are inspired by the axiom, "through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit." If catechesis loses sight of these three elements or neglects their close relationship, it is not faithful to the Christian message (GDC, 1997).
- Catechesis presents the Christian message in its entirety and in such way that the inter-relationship of its parts is maintained – catechist must make a point of giving the whole message of Christ without neglecting or distorting anything, and in expounding it they will follow a line and structure that highlights what is essential (CT, 1994)
- Authentic catechesis adapts to the circumstances of those being catechized. Catechesis must consider learning theory and other factors – cultural, sociological, and psychological – which influence human behaviour and values.

In teaching religion, the task of the catechist is to prepare the students to be receptive and assist them to be in communion with God and to proclaim the Christian message clearly and relevant to their life. The catechist must aim to help the students grow in their spiritual life and respond to God in faith with authenticity.

The demands of this mission are placed upon the educators/catechists. They are not only teaching the doctrines but they need to live what they teach, for it is through their witness that catechists act as "tagapamagitan" (mediator) between the catechized and the Risen Christ. This mediation is accomplished by exercising the full powers and capacities of the catechists. Catechists represent Christ and His message before others, but never substitute Christ or the inner working of the Spirit (NCDP, 2007).

Bautista (1989) said that "Man as a spiritual being (capable of higher concerns and rising above the material), must cultivate a sense of spirituality in consonance with his nature and respond to God in faith." Along with this thought, as a spiritual being, our inmost desire is to be with Him at the end of time, but this can only happen if we live a holy life. Let us not forget that we are created in the likeness and image of God, therefore, we must cultivate and live a life according to the pattern of our creator.

In some of St. Paul's letters, he says' we are called to shake off our egos, "crucify the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24), renew our inmost being (Eph 4:23), and put on Christ. This is our essential identity. Our task is to realize, cooperate with, and grow into the spirit that defines us. As a spiritual being, we must put on Christ as the centre of our life, follow His precepts rather than our earthly and human desires.



Walters (1999) in his book *The Spirituality of the Handmaid* said that spirituality is a process whereby humans strive to open themselves to the divine spirit creatively indwelling in them and in the rest of the world and that “we are tabernacles of the spirit, participants (whether we acknowledge it or not) in the sacred.

### **Review of Related Studies**

In the British educational context, children and young people’s spiritual development is a specific aspect of the religious education curriculum. Ruddock and Cameron (2010) in their study as cited by Grajczonek (2016), found a list of activities practices in religious education in schools which may encourage the student’s spiritual development:

- Allowing students to explore values and beliefs particularly in religious beliefs and how they affect people's lives
- Encouraging students to explore and develop what animates themselves and others
- Encouraging students to reflect and learn reflection
- Developing a climate or character within which all students can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
- Accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals

In line with the findings above, Baumgartner and Buchanan (2010), as cited by Grajczonek (2016) in his study on *Spiritual Development and Religious Education in the Early Years*, also offer some practical strategies for the religious educator that support the students’ understanding of and approach to spirituality which includes three elements:

- A sense of belonging – nurtured when students are given opportunities to contribute and given important things to do or thanked when they have shared or helped so that they experience their value as members of the classroom community
- Respect for self and others – this will be nurtured when their opinions, likes and dislikes are asked for without prejudices.
- An awareness and appreciation of the unknown – organizing mini spiritual recollections or retreat, encouraging them to appreciate the beauty and mystery of nature.

In today's standards, many people seem to view schooling as just an instrument to find a job which is a means to prepare students to become effective workers and secure a better future. Knowledge and skills are prioritized but not the values and their faith. Within such an environment, teaching religion is irrelevant. Amidst the competing skills and information that we expect students to master, where does knowledge of the human spiritual life fit in? The above-mentioned guidelines, as recommended by Ruddock and Cameron (2010) and Baumgartner and Buchanan (2010), can be the answer for teaching religion within the current environment although it is in a foreign context.

Berryman (1992) conducted a study on how to teach religion effectively. As a result of his study, he developed the *Godly Play*, an imaginative approach to religious education, the goal of which is to teach religious language, parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action all of which would make the students more aware of God’s presence in their lives.

In line with his approach, Yust (2003) proposes that spiritual formation must be in line with human development. EAUDE (2005) concretized the aspects or elements of spirituality that teachers can include in their classroom programs which include time and space for reflection, wonder and awe, and prayer.

Bellous and Csinos (2009) point out four important aspects of creating an environment to nurture spiritual wholeness. Within the educational setting, religious educators enable students to express their

spirituality. These four aspects include an explicit education of four styles of expressions: words, emotions, symbols and actions. These aspects, Bradford (1991), in his study about the spiritual needs and potential of the child and young person, recommended that spiritual development should be a process by which our human spirituality is established, grows in relationship with and concern for others is extended into devotional spirituality.

Spirituality is innate to all humans. It is something that comes or arises from our deepest humanity. Spiritual life (spirituality) develops when it is nourished and cared for. One of the tasks of catechists is to help children and young people develop their spiritual life and rootedness in God.

In terms of pedagogy, students want teachers to be spontaneous. The more interactive teachers are in the classroom, the less intimidated, and more open students will be (McCrinkle, 2005). The teacher must not only be credible in style but also a good communicator himself/her. Nowadays, students do not expect the teachers to know all about their lifestyles or to embrace their culture but rather more understanding and respect.

In terms of content, Rossiter (2002), argued that “appropriate content selection is fundamentally important for making religious education a subject that can challenge students to think critically, which is of great importance in establishing the relevance of the content for students.”

The content of religious education classes should be about real life or contemporary issues that touch the spiritual dimensions of life. The content of what we are teaching must be relevant to the life and interest of the students. Indeed, the challenge for Religious Educators is often the question “How to communicate and contextualize the topic to the students to be relevant to their life?”

It is important that religion teachers design plan and creative activity that is relevant and appropriate for enhancing the spiritual life of the students. It is also implied that catechists and other religious educators are competent, knowledgeable, creative, and be able to integrate and transmit God's message in a manner appropriate to the students.

### III. Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, methods and procedures are done in conducting this research, research instrument used, the locale of the study and population, data gathering procedures and statistical treatment of data.

#### **Research Design**

The study is descriptive-correlational research design. Burn and Grove (2003), as cited by Bulaay et al. (2015), define a research design “as a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings.” Therefore, it is a detailed outline of how an investigation or research study will take place. A research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing data collected.

On the other hand, correlational research method determines the relationship of different variables. According to Creswell (2008) as cited by Evangelista (2015) “correlational design is useful to researchers who are interested in determining to degree two variables are related, however, correlational research “does not “prove” a relationship; rather, it indicates an association between two or more variables.”

Through this study, the researcher considered both the strength and size of the correlation number in interpreting results and statistical significance indicates an association between two variables.

### **The locale of the Study**

This study was conducted to the Grade IX and X students of Cabittaogan National High School. The school is situated at Sta. Catalina, Ilocos Sur.

### **Population**

The respondents of the study were the Grade IX and X students of Cabittaogan National High School. There were two sections in every year level with a total population of 123 students but the actual population of respondents who are present was only 100 students; 29 students of Grade IX section Narra, 25 students of Grade IX section Mahogany, 21 students of Grade X section Palomaria and 25 students of Grade X section Tanguile.

### **Data Gathering Instruments**

The instrument used in gathering data is questionnaires. The researcher formulated a questionnaire composed of four parts. The first part shows the demographic profile of the students. The second part indicates the level of competency in teaching the religion of the SBI Catechist. The third part measures the student's level of understanding. While the fourth and last part measures the student's level of participation. The questionnaires were validated by two Doctor of Education and graduates of SBI and Religious Sister who are teaching Religious Education for quite some time.

In interpreting the data on the level of competence in teaching religion, the following scale was used:

| <b>Range</b> | <b>Description</b> | <b>Equivalent Level</b> |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 4.21 – 5.00  | Very competent     | Very High               |
| 3.41 – 4.20  | Competent          | High                    |
| 2.61 – 3.40  | Moderate           | Average                 |
| 1.81 – 2.60  | Not competent      | Low                     |
| 1.00 – 1.80  | Very incompetent   | Very Low                |

In terms of interpreting the data on the level of students understanding, the following scale was used:

| <b>Range</b> | <b>Description</b> | <b>Equivalent Level</b> |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 4.21 – 5.00  | Excellent          | Very High               |
| 3.41 – 4.20  | Very Good          | High                    |
| 2.61 – 3.40  | Good               | Average                 |
| 1.81 – 2.60  | Fair               | Low                     |
| 1.00 – 1.80  | Poor               | Very Low                |

In terms of interpreting the data on the level of student participation, the following scale was used:

| Range       | Description    | Equivalent Level |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| 4.21 – 5.00 | Regular        | Very High        |
| 3.41 – 4.20 | Almost Regular | High             |
| 2.61 – 3.40 | Irregular      | Average          |
| 1.81 – 2.60 | Occasional     | Low              |
| 1.00 – 1.80 | Never          | Very Low         |

### Data Gathering Administration

In administering the research, the researcher sought permission from the School Principal of Cabittaogan National High School, with the support of our School Head and Administrator. The questionnaires were administered and retrieved personally by the researcher.

### Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were used in the treatment of the data in this study. Two statistical tools were used to interpret the data namely the Weighted Mean and the Pearson r Product Moment of Correlation. The Weighted Mean was used to measure the level of competency in teaching religion and the level of students' understanding and participation. While Pearson r Product Moment of Correlation was used to determine the relationship between the level of competency in teaching religion and spiritual life.

### IV. Findings

The findings of the study are arranged according to the arrangement of the statement of the problems. The study wanted to determine the correlation between teaching competencies of the Catechists and the spiritual life of the Grade IX and Grade X of students of Cabittaogan National High School, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. It specifically answered the following questions:

**Problem 1: What is the level of teaching competence of the SBI catechists in the following:**

- a. Doctrine
- b. Scriptures
- c. Sacraments
- d. Prayer

The tables below present the data on the four competencies mentioned above in teaching religion particularly in school.

**Table 1.a**  
**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Teaching Competency in terms of Doctrine**

| Items  | Mean        | Description      |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| My Religion Teacher/Catechist:   |             |                  |
| 1. Is confident and knowledgeable about the teaching of the Catholic Church.             | 4.05        | Competent        |
| 2. Is creative and innovative in presenting the lesson that can easily be understood.    | 4.11        | Competent        |
| 3. Integrates our experiences in his/her lesson.   | 4.04        | Competent        |
| 4. Encourages us to share our experiences, knowledge and ideas about the lesson.         | 4.02        | Competent        |
| 5. Explains well the important points of the Catholic beliefs (faith) in his/her lesson. | 4.05        | Competent        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>   | <b>4.05</b> | <b>Competent</b> |

**Legend:**

- 4.21 – 5.00 Very Competent/Very High
- 3.41 – 4.20 Competent/High
- 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate/Average
- 1.81 – 2.60 Not Competent/Low
- 1.00 – 1.80 Very Incompetent

As shown in the table, the overall weighted mean reveals that the level of teaching competence in religion in terms of Doctrine is "High" with a computed mean of  $X=4.05$ . Taken singly, all items in the table show that SBI Catechists are "Competent" in this field.

**Table 1.b**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Teaching Competency in terms of Scriptures**

| Items  | Mean        | Description      |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| My Religion Teacher/Catechist:   |             |                  |
| 1. Uses the Bible in his/her teaching  | 3.79        | Competent        |
| 2. Can expound the meaning of the Holy Bible based on our experiences        | 3.86        | Competent        |
| 3. Motivates us to read, understand the message of the stories in the Bible. | 3.93        | Competent        |
| 4. Integrates Biblical text, stories in his/her lesson.                      | 3.72        | Competent        |
| 5. Has the ability to deepen and clarify our human experiences.              | 3.82        | Competent        |
| 6. Has the ability to ask relevant/meaningful questions about our lesson.    | 4.02        | Competent        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>   | <b>3.86</b> | <b>Competent</b> |

**Legend:**

- 4.21 – 5.00 Very Competent/Very High
- 3.41 – 4.20 Competent/High
- 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate/Average
- 1.81 – 2.60 Not Competent/Low
- 1.00 – 1.80 Very Incompetent

The overall weighted mean rating as shown in the table reveals a "High" ( $X=3.86$ ) level of competency in teaching religion integrating the Word of God taken from the Scriptures or Holy Bible in their lessons. All items in the table show that SBI catechists are "Competent" in the field of teaching the use of Scriptures or Holy Bible.

**Table 1.c**

**Mean Rating Showing the Teaching Competency in terms of Sacraments**

| Items   | Mean | Description |
|---|------|-------------|
| My Religion Teacher/Catechist:  |      |             |
| 1. Is competent enough in discussing the sacraments.  | 4.04 | Competent   |
| 2. Uses varied instruction materials in his/her lesson.                                       | 3.53 | Competent   |
| 3. Capable of explaining difficult terms to clearly describe the different Sacraments.        | 3.93 | Competent   |
| 4. Lead us to meaningful learning about the importance of sacraments in our spiritual growth. | 3.93 | Competent   |

|  |             |                  |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| 5. Develop our critical thinking by posing situations that will lead us to reflect on the importance of sacraments in our day-to-day life. | 3.92        | Competent        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>   | <b>3.87</b> | <b>Competent</b> |

Legend:

4.21 – 5.00 Very Competent/Very High

3.41 – 4.20 Competent/High

2.61 – 3.40 Moderate/Average

1.81 – 2.60 Not Competent/Low

1.00 – 1.80 Very Incompetent

The data in table 1.c reveals that the level of teaching competency of religion on the Sacraments is rated “High” with an overall weighted mean of  $X=3.87$ . Specifically, all items got a “Competent” remarks, competent enough in discussing the sacraments ( $X=4.04$ ), uses varied instruction materials in his/her lesson ( $X=3.53$ ), capable in explaining difficult terms to clearly describe the different Sacraments ( $X=3.93$ ), leads to a meaningful learning about the importance of Sacraments in spiritual growth ( $X=3.93$ ) and develops critical thinking by posing situations that will lead to reflect on the importance of Sacraments in day-to-day life ( $X=3.92$ ).

**Table 1.d**

**Mean Rating Showing the Level of Teaching Competency in Religion in terms of Prayer**

| Items   | Mean        | Description      |
|---|-------------|------------------|
| My Religion Teacher/Catechist:  | 4.08        | Competent        |
| 1. Manifests a prayerful life.  |             |                  |
| 2. Expresses profoundly the importance of prayer and the necessity to pray. | 3.97        | Competent        |
| 3. Uses the motivational technique in teaching about the Basic Prayer.      | 3.93        | Competent        |
| 4. Able to cite examples or integrate prayer in his/her lesson.             | 3.82        | Competent        |
| 5. Encourages everyone to be prayerful through his/her examples.            | 4.03        | Competent        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>3.97</b> | <b>Competent</b> |

Legend:

4.21 – 5.00 Very Competent/Very High

3.41 – 4.20 Competent/High

2.61 – 3.40 Moderate/Average

1.81 – 2.60 Not Competent/Low

1.00 – 1.80 Very Incompetent

As we can glean on the table 1.d, the overall weighted mean of the teaching competency in religion along with prayer got a mean of  $X=3.97$  or “High”.

Taken them singly, item 1 shows “competent” ( $X=4.08$ ) level of manifesting prayerful life. The second item which “Expresses profoundly the importance of prayer and the necessity to pray” is computed  $X= 3.97$ , while item three which “Uses the motivational technique in teaching about the basic prayer” has a mean of  $X=3.93$ . The fourth item, which is “Able to cite examples or integrate prayer in his/her lesson”, got 3.82 mean. Lastly, in item five, “Encourages everyone to be prayerful through his/her examples”, has a computed mean of  $X=4.03$ . Overall the teaching competency in religion in terms of prayer is remarkably “Competent”.

**Table 1.e**  
**Mean Ratings Showing the Summary on the Level of Teaching Competency in Religion**

| Variables                    | Mean        | Descriptive Rating |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| a. Doctrine                  | 4.05        | Competent          |
| b. Scriptures                | 3.86        | Competent          |
| c. Sacraments                | 3.87        | Competent          |
| d. Prayer                    | 3.97        | Competent          |
| <b>General Weighted Mean</b> | <b>3.94</b> | <b>Competent</b>   |

Legend:

4.21 – 5.00 Very Competent/Very High

3.41 – 4.20 Competent/High

2.61 – 3.40 Moderate/Average

1.81 – 2.60 Not Competent/Low

1.00 – 1.80 Very Incompetent

The table, which summarizes on the level of the teaching competency of religion in terms of Doctrine, Scriptures, Sacraments and Prayer, shows a "High" remark with a general weighted mean of  $X=3.94$ . This implies that SBI catechists are "Competent" in the field of teaching religion, particularly in school.

**Problem 2. What is the level of understanding of students in the following:**

- a. Word of God and Church teachings
- b. Importance of the sacraments for daily life
- c. Importance of prayer

**Table 2.a**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Student's Understanding in The Word of God and Church Teachings**

| Items   | Mean        | Description      |
|---|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Understanding the Word of God affecting my spiritual life.                               | 4.15        | Very Good        |
| 2. The Word of God leads me to have a better understanding of my spiritual life.            | 4.10        | Very Good        |
| 3. I find meaning in understanding the teaching of the Church.                              | 4.03        | Very Good        |
| 4. Obtaining profound knowledge about the teachings of the Church deepen my spiritual life. | 3.83        | Very Good        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>4.03</b> | <b>Very Good</b> |

Legend:

4.21 – 5.00 Excellent/Very High

3.41 – 4.20 Very Good/High

2.61 – 3.40 Good/Average

1.81 – 2.60 Fair/Low

1.00 – 1.80 Poor/Very Low

The data in table 2.a tells that the student's level of understanding in the Word of God and Church Teachings is "Very Good" or "High" rate and has computed the mean of  $X=4.03$ . This signifies that the student(s) has understood the lesson with regards to the Word of God and Church Teachings. This also implies that SBI catechists clearly explained and presented their lesson well.

**Table 2.b**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Student’s Understanding in the Essence of the Sacraments for Daily Life**

| Items  | Mean        | Description      |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Discussions about the Sacraments help me to deepen my understanding of their importance in my daily life. | 3.99        | Very Good        |
| 2. Understanding the seven Sacraments bring me closer to God and others.                                     | 3.95        | Very Good        |
| 3. Being aware of its importance allows me to integrate my learnings into action.                            | 3.85        | Very Good        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>   | <b>3.93</b> | <b>Very Good</b> |

*Legend:*

4.21 – 5.00 *Excellent/Very High*

3.41 – 4.20 *Very Good/High*

2.61 – 3.40 *Good/Average*

1.81 – 2.60 *Fair/Low*

1.00 – 1.80 *Poor/Very Low*

Gleaning on Table 2.b, the data show that overall student's understanding of the essence of the sacraments for daily life is "High" with an overall weighted mean of  $X=3.93$ . It reveals that student(s) has "Very Good" understanding in all items and aware of the importance of Sacraments in daily life.

**Table 2.c**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Student’s Understanding the Importance of Prayer**

| Items  | Mean        | Description      |
|--|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Understanding the importance of prayer leads me to become a prayerful person. | 3.96        | Very Good        |
| 2. Prayer leads me to deeply listen and communicate with God                     | 3.97        | Very Good        |
| 3. Understanding the importance of prayer helps me to become spiritually mature. | 4.05        | Very Good        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>   | <b>3.99</b> | <b>Very Good</b> |

*Legend:*

4.21 – 5.00 *Excellent/Very High*

3.41 – 4.20 *Very Good/High*

2.61 – 3.40 *Good/Average*

1.81 – 2.60 *Fair/Low*

1.00 – 1.80 *Poor/Very Low*

As revealed on table 2.c, the overall weighted mean of  $X=3.99$  remarks a “High” level of understanding with regards to the importance of prayer. The result implies that the student’s level of



understanding in this matter is “Very Good”. Taken them singly, the first item which is “Understanding the importance prayer leads me to become a prayerful person” has a mean of  $X=3.96$ . In item two (2) which is “Prayer leads me to deeply listen and communicate with God” got a computed mean of  $X=3.97$  while item three (3) which is “Understanding the importance of prayer helps me to become spiritually mature” got the highest computed mean of  $X=4.05$ .

**Table 2.d**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Summary on the Level of Student’s Understanding**

| Variables                                       | Mean        | Descriptive Rating |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| a. Word of God and Church Teaching              | 4.03        | Very Good          |
| b. The essence of the Sacraments for daily life | 3.93        | Very Good          |
| c. Importance of prayer                         | 3.99        | Very Good          |
| <b>General Weighted Mean</b>                    | <b>3.98</b> | <b>Very Good</b>   |

*Legend:*

4.21 – 5.00 *Excellent/Very High*

3.41 – 4.20 *Very Good/High*

2.61 – 3.40 *Good/Average*

1.81 – 2.60 *Fair/Low*

1.00 – 1.80 *Poor/Very Low*

The summary on the level of student’s understanding with regards to the Word of God and Church Teaching, Essence of Sacraments for daily life and Importance prayer. The general weighted mean of  $X=3.98$  or “High” signifies that the student(s) level of understanding is “Very Good”.

**Problem 3. What is the extent of students’ participation in the following:**

- a. Holy Mass?
- b. Reception of the Holy Eucharist?
- c. Personal Prayer and Devotion Mean?

**Table 3.a**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Student’s Participation in Holy Mass**

| Items   | Mean        | Description           |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I attend Holy Mass every Sundays and days of obligation                          | 3.61        | Almost Regular        |
| 2. I actively participate in all parts of the holy Mass (including proper gestures) | 3.61        | Almost Regular        |
| 3. I respond actively to the dialogues of the Holy Mass                             | 3.71        | Almost Regular        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>3.64</b> | <b>Almost Regular</b> |

*Legend:*

4.21 – 5.00 *Regular/Very High*

3.41 – 4.20 *Almost regular/High*

2.61 – 3.40 *Irregular/Average*

1.81 – 2.60 *Occasional/Low*

1.00 – 1.80 *Never/Very Low*

With regards to the student's level of participation in Holy Mass, the data marks a "High" rate or "Almost Regular" with an overall weighted mean of  $X=3.64$ . Specifically, students attend Holy Mass every Sundays and days of obligation ( $X=3.61$ ), actively participate in all parts of the Holy Mass ( $X=3.61$ ) and respond actively to the dialogues of the Holy Mass ( $X=3.71$ ).

**Table 3.b**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Student's Participation in Reception of the Holy Eucharist**

| Items  | Mean        | Description           |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I focus on the presence of God.   | 3.98        | Almost Regular        |
| 2. I prepare myself in silence and ask God's grace before receiving the Holy Eucharist | 3.89        | Almost Regular        |
| 3. I receive the Holy Eucharist with reverence   | 3.82        | Almost Regular        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>   | <b>3.90</b> | <b>Almost Regular</b> |

*Legend:*

- 4.21 – 5.00 Regular/Very High
- 3.41 – 4.20 Almost regular/High
- 2.61 – 3.40 Irregular/Average
- 1.81 – 2.60 Occasional/Low
- 1.00 – 1.80 Never/Very Low

Table 3. b, which presents the student's level of participation with regards to the reception of the Holy Eucharist, shows a "High" or "Almost Regular" rating with an overall weighted mean of  $X=3.90$ .

**Table 3.c**

**Mean Ratings Showing the Level of Student's Participation along Personal Prayer and Devotion**

| Items  | Mean        | Description           |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Prayers become an important routine in my life                        | 3.99        | Almost Regular        |
| 2. I have a sense of commitment to put prayer in every aspect of my life | 3.77        | Almost Regular        |
| 3. I indulge myself to have personal devotion as my religious practice   | 3.76        | Almost Regular        |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>   | <b>3.84</b> | <b>Almost Regular</b> |

*Legend:*

- 4.21 – 5.00 Regular/Very High
- 3.41 – 4.20 Almost regular/High
- 2.61 – 3.40 Irregular/Average
- 1.81 – 2.60 Occasional/Low
- 1.00 – 1.80 Never/Very Low

As shown in table 3.c, the overall weighted mean of  $X=3.84$  comments "Almost Regular" or "High" level of participation with regards to personal prayer and devotion. Taken them individually, the first item which is "Prayers become an important routine in my life", has a mean of  $X=3.99$ . Item two (2, which is "I have a sense of commitment to put prayer in every aspect of my life", got an average mean of  $X=3.77$  while item three (3), which is "I indulge myself to have personal devotion as my religious practice", has a mean of  $X=3.76$ .



**Correlation Showing the Relationship between the teaching competency of religion and the Student's level of Participation**

|  | $\Sigma$                           | XY             | X <sup>2</sup>  | Y <sup>2</sup>  | r             |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Competencies of Teacher</b>         | <b>X =15.75</b><br><b>WM=3.94</b>  | <b>179.235</b> | <b>248.0625</b> | <b>129.5044</b> | <b>0.7869</b> |
| <b>Level of Students Participation</b> | <b>Y = 11.38</b><br><b>WM=3.79</b> |                |                 |                 |               |

Legend:

X – variable of teaching competency

Y – variable of student's level of understanding

$\Sigma$  - Summation of either X and Y variables WM – weighted mean

4.21 – 5.00 Very Competent / Regular / Very High

3.41 – 4.20 Competent / Almost Regular / High

2.61 – 3.40 Moderate / Irregular / Average

1.81 – 2.60 Not Competent / Occasional / Low

1.00 – 1.80 Very Incompetent / Never / Very Low

As drawn from table 5, it clearly shows that there is a significant relationship between the teaching competency of religion and student's level of participation, as indicated by the computed correlation ( $r=0.786988$ ) which denotes high significant relationship. This means that the more competent the religion teacher is, the higher is the impact on the student's level of participation.

**Table 4.c**

**Correlation Coefficients Showing the Impact between the Teaching Competency of Religion toward the Spiritual Life of the Students**

| Items   | $\Sigma$                           | XY              | X <sup>2</sup>  | Y <sup>2</sup>  | R            |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>Teaching competency of Religion</b>                                      | <b>X= 15.75</b><br><b>WM =3.94</b> | <b>367.4475</b> | <b>248.0625</b> | <b>228.9805</b> | <b>.6545</b> |
| <b>With a variable of X</b>   |                                    |                 |                 |                 |              |
| <b>Impact on Spiritual Life (Student's understanding and participation)</b> | <b>Y=23.33</b><br><b>WM=3.89</b>   |                 |                 |                 |              |
| <b>With a variable of Y</b>   |                                    |                 |                 |                 |              |

Legend:

X – Variable of teaching competency

Y – Variable of student's level of understanding

$\Sigma$  - Summation of either X and Y variables WM – weighted mean

4.21 – 5.00 Very Competent / Regular / Very High

3.41 – 4.20 Competent / Almost Regular / High

2.61 – 3.40 Moderate / Irregular / Average

1.81 – 2.60 Not Competent / Occasional / Low

1.00 – 1.80 Very Incompetent / Never / Very Low

As can be gleaned from the data in table 6, it shows that the computed correlation coefficient of ( $r=.6545$ ) denotes a substantial or significant relationship. This implies that the teaching competency of religion has a significant impact on the spiritual life of the students. The data presented indicate that the more competent the religion teacher is, the higher is the impact on the spiritual life of the students.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the level of the teaching competency of the SBI Catechists in terms of Doctrine, Scriptures, Sacraments and Prayer confirms a “High” remark with a general weighted mean of  $X=3.94$  which means competent. This means that SBI catechists are “Competent” in the field of teaching religion along with four areas such as sacraments, prayer, doctrine and scripture.

In terms of students’ understanding, the study found that in general term the student’s level of understanding is “Very Good” with an overall weighted mean of  $X=3.98$  which means very good along three dimensions such as the Word of God and Church Teachings, importance of the sacraments for daily life, and importance of prayer.

In terms of the level of students’ participation, the study found that the students had a high rating on participation along with the attendance of the Holy Eucharist/Holy Mass, reception of the Body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and on personal prayer and devotion.

Based on Pearson  $r$  computed the correlation, the study found that there is a substantial or significant relationship between teaching competency of religion and the impact toward the spiritual life of the students. This implies that SBI catechists are competent in teaching religion and it has a significant impact on the spiritual life of the students. The data presented indicate that the more competent the religion teacher is, the higher is the impact on the spiritual life of the students. Therefore, the hypothesis that teaching competence in teaching the religion of the SBI Catechist does not impact on the spiritual life of the students in Cabittaogan National High School is rejected.

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