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Organizational Sustainability: A Study of Thriving And Declining Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region

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ABSTRACT

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Numerous religious organizations are declining. Some become stagnant and some thrive as it serves by number of years in approaching global social problems, especially in the consolidation of peace, humanitarian efforts and cultural exchange. This study assessed the organizational sustainability of thriving and declining chapters along Organizational commitment; Membership retention; Leadership succession; and Operational stability; identify the key challenges on sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters, along Governance; Leadership; Membership; and Community support and propose an organizational sustainability framework for Lay Dominican Chapters to ensure long term viability. This study conducted in the Bicol Region, specifically in the province of Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon covering the period from CY 2022 to 2024. This study

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used the Quantitative Method Research Design. The respondents of the study are members of the Lay Dominical Chapters. The study reveals that the Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region effectively blend universal principles with local practices in their spiritual and social endeavors. However, their long-term sustainability hinges on addressing challenges in governance, leadership development, membership engagement, and community outreach.

INTRODUCTION

Religious organizations play an important role in approaching global social problems, especially in the consolidation of peace, humanitarian efforts, and cultural exchange. Their participation in the consolidation of peace is crucial, since they often serve as mediators in promoting dialogue and understanding between divergent groups (Yana et al., 2024). In addition, these organizations mobilize resources for humanitarian efforts, providing help and support for vulnerable populations during crises, which emphasizes their critical role in global well-being (Saha, 2024). In addition, religious entities facilitate cultural exchange, filling gaps between societies and promoting mutual respect. Therefore, its influence is fundamental in the configuration of a more compassionate and interconnected world.

Religious organizations have historically carried out key roles in modeling communities, moral values, and cultural identities in various regions and periods of time. These institutions not only provide a spiritual guide but also influence public administration and politics, reflecting their full role within the company (Ongaro & Tantardini, 2024). In Indonesia, local wisdom and interreligious communication favor religious harmony, demonstrating how religious organizations contribute to social cohesion and cultural identity (Agung et al., 2024). Therefore, the continuous evolution of these organizations underlines their meaning in promoting ethical values and feeding a sense of belonging within different communities.

The profane religious organizations in the Philippines have played a central role in promoting sustainability and environmental management. These organizations take advantage of their moral authority to inspire community action towards sustainable practices, often punching faith and ecological responsibility. They contribute significantly to community development by implementing programs that argue for environmental education and the conservation of biodiversity (Ibones et al., 2024). However, numerous religious organizations are declining. Some become stagnant, and some thrive as it serves by number of years in approaching global social problems, especially in the consolidation of peace,

humanitarian efforts, and cultural exchange. They face challenges such as limited resources and different levels of commitment between members (Ingles, 2023). Despite these obstacles, their impact is obvious in an improvement in community engagement and increased awareness of sustainability problems, demonstrating their crucial position to promote a culture of environmental responsibility.

Further, this considerably influences social, cultural, and political dynamics, promoting community commitment and resolving various social problems. These organizations serve as vital platforms for collective action and advocacy and often fill the gaps in government efforts to meet the needs of marginalized populations. Ma (2025) underlines how new religious movements mobilize communities to participate in political processes, thus improving civic engagement. In addition, these groups often sail on complex cultural landscapes, promoting inter-confessional dialogue and mutual understanding. As Howlett (2025) noted, these basic initiatives reflect broader movements aimed at combating systemic inequalities and promoting social justice in various religious contexts.

The Bicol Region, known for its deep Catholic faith, is home to several Lay Dominican Chapters. Despite the region's strong religious tradition, there is a noticeable disparity between thriving and declining chapters. Some chapters have managed to sustain their activities through active leadership, strong financial management, and engaged members, while others face difficulties due to poor governance, weak leadership succession, and dwindling participation.

The lay Dominican chapters in the Bicol region have evolved significantly since their creation, with the roots returning to early Spanish colonization. Historically, these chapters emerged as lay associations promoting the values and work of disseminating the Dominican Order, contributing to the broader social fabric of Philippine society (Gharala et al., 2025). Its sociocultural impact is deep, cultivating a strong sense of community through engagement in various local initiatives. In contemporary times, lay Dominicans focus on spiritual growth, educational programs, and community service, incorporating a commitment to justice and social empowerment (Flannery, 2024). This double role improves religious devotion and good social life in the Bicol region.

A key challenge in the region is the inconsistency in organizational commitment. Some Lay Dominican Chapters benefit from dedicated leaders and active members, while others struggle with declining engagement and ineffective governance structures. Financial limitations further strain these chapters, limiting their ability to organize activities and recruit new members. The lack of structured leadership development programs exacerbates the problem, as chapters struggle to find successors who can effectively manage operations and inspire members to remain active. One of the observations of a once-thriving Lay Dominican Chapter

struggling with leadership succession issues. When key leaders stepped down, the absence of a clear transition plan led to disorganization, declining member participation, and financial difficulties. This case highlights the importance of governance structures and succession planning in ensuring the sustainability of lay organizations.

Specifically, this study focused on the organizational sustainability of thriving and declining chapters in the Bicol Region. Addressing the problems faced by both thriving and declining Lay Dominican Chapters would significantly impact their organizational sustainability. For thriving chapters, targeted solutions could enhance their existing strengths, foster even greater member engagement, improve formation programs, and refine leadership development. This proactive approach could lead to increased vocations, more impactful apostolic activities, and a deeper integration of the Dominican charism within the local context, ensuring their continued vitality and relevance.

Equally, for declining chapters, addressing core issues could be pivotal for revitalization. Successful interventions might reignite member enthusiasm, attract new vocations, clarify their mission within the order and the local church, and foster stronger fraternal bonds. By tackling these challenges head-on, declining chapters could potentially reverse negative trends, rediscover their unique contributions to the Dominican family, and work towards a more sustainable and vibrant future. Ultimately, a focused effort on problem-solving across all chapters would contribute to a stronger, more resilient, and dynamically engaged Lay Dominican presence within the broader Dominican Order.

In general, Lay Dominican Chapters fosters a more vibrant and effective community. Open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving during chapter meetings can lead to clearer understanding, stronger bonds among members, and the development of practical solutions rooted in the shared wisdom of the group. This process empowers Lay Dominicans to better live out their vocation of prayer, study, community, and preaching in their daily lives. Thus, an organizational sustainability of thriving and declining chapters.

FRAMEWORK

This section establishes the theoretical framework underpinning the exploration of Lay Dominican chapters. Specifically, this study is anchored on the Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General System Theory (Challoner, 2025). Drawing upon General System Theory, the status of Lay Dominican chapters in the Bicol Region can be understood through the lens of interconnected and interdependent components striving for equilibrium within their environment.

Moreover, this study is likewise related to Resource-Based View Theory by Barney in 1991 (Mailani et al, 2024). RBV emphasizes internal resource differences between companies, even within the same industry, as the foundation for lasting competitive superiority. This theory offers significant insights into the organizational sustainability of chapters, whether thriving or declining, by emphasizing the strategic importance of their internal resources and capabilities. Likewise, this study is also anchored on the Management Theory articulated by Henri Fayol (Özay, 2024) placed considerable importance on the principle of division of work, suggesting that the specialization of tasks leads to greater efficiency and output. Challenges to sustainability emerge when chapters struggle to cultivate a strong sense of community and belonging, leading to member attrition and difficulty in attracting new individuals who resonate with the Dominican charism and are willing to actively participate.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Nestled within the vibrant Catholic landscape of the Bicol Region, the Lay Dominican Chapters stand as vital expressions of the Dominican charism, dedicated to prayer, study, community, and apostolic service. Specifically, this study assessed the organizational sustainability of thriving and declining chapters along Organizational commitment; Membership retention; Leadership succession; and Operational stability; identify the key challenges on sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters, along Governance; Leadership; Membership; and Community support and propose an organizational sustainability framework for Lay Dominican Chapters to ensure long term viability.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used the descriptive quantitative method research design. This allowed for a comprehensive assessment on the organizational sustainability of thriving and declining chapters in Bicol Region.Quantitative research is a systematic investigation that uses numerical or statistical data to quantify and measure variables, test relationships between them, and establish generalizable findings. It operates with the goal of objectivity, aiming to provide precise and measurable results that can be analyzed statistically. The quantitative data done through surveys to be administered to a sample of Lay Dominican chapters members in Bicol Region. It was used in assessing the organizational sustainability of thriving and declining chapters along Organizational commitment;

Membership retention; Leadership succession; and Operational stability and in identifying the key challenges on sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters, along Governance; Leadership; Membership; and Community support Statistical analysis conducted on the survey data to derive meaningful insights and identify any significant trends or patterns.

Research Site

This study was conducted in Bicol Region specifically in the province of Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon. The selection of the Bicol Region, as the study site was strategic due to the documented presence of both thriving and declining Lay Dominican chapters within its geographical boundaries.The Bicol Region is home to various Lay Dominican communities, with a focus on Albay and Camarines Sur for studying contrasting chapter dynamics. Albay, particularly Oas, exhibits declining membership, while Legazpi and Daraga host thriving communities. Conversely, Camarines Sur, the region's largest province, was chosen for its thriving Calabanga chapter, though it also has declining chapters in Tigaon and Pili-Naga. Other provinces like Camarines Norte and Sorsogon were also considered to provide a broader understanding of the diverse factors influencing Lay Dominican chapters across the region.

Respondents

The primary respondents of the study are the members of the Lay Dominican chapters in Bicol Region specifically in the province of Albay, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte. They were considered as respondents because they can share their personal experiences needed for the study and they are deemed knowledgeable and competent to provide the necessary data.

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was prepared composing of several indicators to avoid leading the respondents and to gain as much information on the phenomenon as possible. To ensure that the instrument comprised the themes and areas that the study was supposed to examine, the items included in the questionnaire were subjected to validation by member from the Lay Dominican Chapters. Face and content validity are questionnaire measurement techniques used to judge and quantify measurements that appear acceptable to the general public and highly qualified experts. These experts are the Regional President, and the Thriving and Declining Presidents. The instrument is primarily guided by the foundational Four Pillars of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Prayer, Study, Community,

and Preaching (or Apostolate) and is lived out according to the official Rule of the Fraternities of Lay Dominicans, which has been updated through various versions. The study used a Likert-type of survey questionnaire that gave the respondents four (4) choices of answers on the sustainability.

Sampling Technique

To choose the respondents for this research, a simple random sampling methods was employed. Simple random sampling, a form of convenient sampling, involved the random selection of a subgroup of respondents from the overall population, ensuring that each member had an equal likelihood of being chosen. In this research, simple random sampling was utilized to select members of the Lay Dominican chapters. The researcher selected the specific chapters (e.g., Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon) to ensure the sample includes groups known to represent both extremes those that are demonstrably thriving and those that are declining. After the groups are selected, the subsequent sampling of individual respondents usually employs a census approach, where the research attempts to collect data from all available members within those chosen chapters. The final count of 112 respondents across the four provinces represents the total number of members who volunteered or were accessible enough to complete the survey, serving as the participating sample from the pre-selected organizational units. This method was applied to determine the number of members serving as respondents, allowing for the acquisition of insights from individuals possessing specific expertise relevant to the study.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of acquiring reliable data, a questionnaire was administered. The statistical analysis in this study relied on the weighted meanin assessing the organizational sustainability of thriving and declining chapters. This method facilitated the determination of the total number of respondents, the nature of their responses, and the frequency of the phenomena under examination.In the data analysis of the key challenges by the respondents, frequency and ranking methodologies were employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the most prevalent and significant challenges faced in the context of Lay Dominican chapters.

Research Ethics Protocol

This study adhered to strict ethical standards. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained through a consent letter. Respondent anonymity was guaranteed, and the dignity of participants was prioritized through careful

question design. The researcher is committed to the independent and impartial presentation of all collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This results and discussion section systematically addressed the status of these chapters across key dimensions policy, membership profile, financial stability, and activities, providing a detailed snapshot of their current operational landscape.

1. Organizational Sustainability of Thriving and Declining Chapters

This section delves into an assessment of the organizational sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region, distinguishing between those identified as thriving and those facing decline.

a. Organizational Commitment

This assessed the level of dedication and sense of belonging exhibited by members within the Lay Dominican Chapters across the Bicol Region. It explores the factors that foster or hinder members' commitment to the chapter's mission, activities, and overall well-being, providing insights into the strength of the internal bonds that contribute to organizational sustainability.

Table 1

Organizational Commitment

Indicators	WM	AI
Express a deep emotional connection and identification with the chapter and actively participating in social aspects of chapter life.	3.21	A
Regularly attend meetings, volunteer for tasks, and contribute constructively to discussions and decision-making processes, showing a sense of ownership over chapter outcomes.	2.88	A
Demonstrate alignment with the chapter's Dominican charism and mission through consistent actions, advocacy, and financial or resource contributions.	3.37	HA
Proactively offer skills and time for chapter initiatives, demonstrating a sense of duty and a desire to contribute to the common good of the community.	3.17	A
Communicate openly and honestly, resolve conflicts constructively, and demonstrate respect for diverse perspectives, fostering an environment of psychological safety.	3.12	A
Consistently receive recognition and appreciation for their contributions, both formally and informally, and perceive that their input influences chapter decisions	2.70	A
AWM	3.07	A

Legend: 4-3.26-4.00-Highly Agree 3-2.51-3.25-Agree 2-1.76-2.50-Moderately Agree 1-1.00-1.75-Not Agree

The data shows that demonstrating alignment with the chapter's Dominican charism and mission is the strongest indicator of engagement with a weighted mean of 3.37or Highly Agree, implying that a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the core values resonates most deeply with members. This is further supported by a high score in proactively offering skills and time with a weighted mean of 3.17 or Agree and deep emotional connection and active participation in social aspects with 3.21 or Agree. However, members feel less recognized for their contributions and perceive less influence on chapter decisions with 2.70 or Agree, and their regular attendance and constructive participation in discussions also score lower with 2.88 or Agree. This highlights a potential disconnection between members' willingness to contribute and their perception of being valued and impactful within the chapter's formal processes.

All six indicators collectively drive organizational sustainability by ensuring a deep, multifaceted member commitment that guarantees stable operations and mission longevity. The indicator with the highest mean, demonstrating alignment with charism and mission, directly secures Normative Commitment,

ensuring the chapter's core identity and purpose are upheld and passed on, which is vital for long-term survival. This is strongly supported by the proactive sense of duty. Furthermore, the deep emotional connection and the presence of open communication and psychological safety generate powerful Affective Commitment, minimizing turnover and guaranteeing a stable membership base to execute the mission. Finally, the practical indicators, regular attendance, contributing constructively, and the feedback loop of receiving recognition and having influence ensure Continuance Commitment, guaranteeing the active human and financial resources needed to sustain day-to-day operations and fund future initiatives.

Engaging and fostering a more vibrant chapter, it's fundamental to bridge the gap between members' strong sense of mission and their perception of influence. This means not only continuing to emphasize the Dominican charism but also actively implementing strategies that ensure members feel genuinely heard and appreciated. Chapters may consider more formalized recognition programs, create clearer pathways for member input to shape decisions, and actively solicit feedback on how contributions are acknowledged. This can transform a strong sense of duty and emotional connection into more consistent active participation and a heightened sense of ownership over chapter outcomes.

The psychological and professional findings from Cox (2024), Oso and Oloko (2024), and Järvinen Presley (2024) strongly connect to the three components of organizational commitment and the observed chapter indicators. Cox's emphasis on emotional resilience and adaptability aligns with Affective Commitment, mirroring the chapter's need for a deep emotional connection and psychological safety to sustain itself through challenges. Oso and Oloko's finding that growth opportunities and career engagement bolster commitment and well-being highlights the need for the chapter to provide members with recognition and opportunities for influence, thereby feeding the Continuance Commitment that ensures members feel valued and professionally invested. Lastly, Järvinen Presley's tenure-based observations—where long-term members are cultural anchors—underlines the importance of Normative Commitment, reinforcing the chapter's high score in alignment with the mission and charism; this commitment ensures that veteran members remain engaged to transmit the essential identity and values to newer, potentially disconnected members, thereby ensuring organizational stability.

b. Membership Retention

This assessed the ability of Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region to retain their active members over time. It investigates the various factors

influencing members' decisions to remain engaged with the chapter, including the perceived value of membership, the quality of activities, and the overall sense of community.

Table 2
Membership Retention

Indicators	WM	AI
Demonstrates consistent membership retention rates, evidenced by low attrition and long-term participation, indicating a sustainable and engaging community.	3.32	A
Activities and programs are intentionally designed to align with the Dominican charism and address the spiritual, intellectual, and social needs of members, fostering a sense of purpose and relevance	3.46	HA
Actively solicits and responds to member feedback, providing resources, support, and opportunities for members to address personal and communal challenges within a Dominican framework.	3.03	A
Fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment through regular social events, small group gatherings, and mutual support networks, creating a sense of belonging and camaraderie.	3.15	A
Provides opportunities for members to deepen their faith, develop their spiritual gifts, and contribute to the mission of the Dominican Order, leading to personal growth, fulfillment, and a sense of purpose.	2.89	A
Implements a structured and welcoming onboarding process for new members, including mentorship, orientation, and opportunities for early involvement, ensuring a smooth transition and fostering a sense of belonging from the start.	2.65	A
AWM	3.08	A

Legend: 4-3.26-4.00-Highly Agree 3-2.51-3.25-Agree 2-1.76-2.50-Moderately Agree 1-1.00-1.75-Not Agree

The average weighted mean of 3.08 or Agree indicates a generally positive level of membership retention across our Dominican chapters the Bicol region. However, the variation in agreement across the indicators highlights specific areas, particularly onboarding and opportunities for spiritual growth and mission involvement that warrant focused attention and improvement to ensure the continued vitality and engagement of our local membership. Leveraging the strengths identified in other areas can inform strategies to address these challenges.

Organizational sustainability hinges directly on membership retention, which is an outcome of effectively implementing the five stated indicators. A chapter that demonstrates a consistent membership retention rate is fundamentally

sustainable because its core membership base is stable. This stability is achieved by designing activities and programs intentionally aligned with the Dominican charism that meet the deep spiritual and intellectual needs of members, thus providing a sense of purpose and relevance. Furthermore, actively fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment through social events, alongside implementing a structured and supportive onboarding process for new members, directly builds the essential sense of belonging and camaraderie that prevents early attrition. Finally, the sustainability loop is reinforced by actively soliciting and responding to member feedback and providing opportunities for personal and spiritual growth, which consistently validate the members' involvement and lead to their long-term fulfillment and continued participation.

The membership retention in our Bicol region is that while it have a solid foundation of positive member experience, it must proactively address the identified areas of lower agreement, specifically onboarding and opportunities for spiritual growth and mission involvement. This requires a targeted approach, leveraging the successful strategies evident in areas with higher agreement within our local chapters. By focusing on enhancing the initial integration of new members and enriching the avenues for spiritual development and mission contribution in ways that resonate with our Bicol context, it can ensure the long-term vitality, deepen the engagement and strong sense of belongingness of our entire membership across the region.

The indicators for Membership Retention are strongly supported by the psychological and organizational findings, all pointing toward achieving organizational sustainability through robust Affective Commitment. The need for inclusive leadership and a sense of belonging advocated by Ayyaswamy et al. (2025) and Conroy and Morton (2024) is directly addressed by the chapter's practices of fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment and implementing a structured and welcoming onboarding process. These create the Affective Commitment (the desire to stay) necessary for low attrition and long-term participation. Furthermore, the emphasis by McLaughlin (2024) on meaningful relationships and shared activities directly validates the chapter's success in designing activities and programs aligned with the charism that meet spiritual, intellectual, and social needs, and in providing opportunities for spiritual growth and mission contribution. These efforts ensure members find deep purpose and fulfillment, which are the essential emotional anchors that sustain membership in competitive or challenging environments.

c. Leadership Succession

This focuses on the vital aspect of leadership succession within the Lay

Dominican Chapters of the Bicol Region. It assesses the presence and effectiveness of mechanisms for identifying, developing, and transitioning future leaders within the chapters in Bicol Region, and the broader region.

Table 3
Leadership Succession

Indicators	WM	AI
Maintains a documented and regularly reviewed leadership succession plan, outlining clear criteria, timelines, and processes for identifying and developing future leaders.	3.00	A
Actively identifies members with leadership potential through observation, nomination, and self-identification, and provides structured mentorship and development opportunities tailored to individual needs	2.85	A
Leadership transitions are characterized by a seamless transfer of knowledge, responsibilities, and relationships, minimizing disruption and ensuring continuity of chapter operations and mission.	2.81	A
Provides access to leadership training, workshops, and opportunities for members to practice and refine their leadership skills through active participation in chapter projects and initiatives.	2.68	A
Cultivates a culture of shared leadership, ensuring a diverse pool of members with the necessary skills, experience, and commitment to assume leadership responsibilities when needed.	2.75	A
Engage in intentional knowledge transfer, delegate responsibilities, and provide opportunities for shadowing and co-leadership, fostering a supportive environment for the development of future leaders.	3.02	A
AWM	**2.85**	**A**

Legend: 4-3.26-4.00-Highly Agree 3-2.51-3.25-Agree 2-1.76-2.50-Moderately Agree 1-1.00-1.75-Not Agree

The Agree rating of 2.85 across all indicators among the four groups of respondents shows a general awareness and some level of effort towards leadership succession in Bicol region. The variation among the indicators, with several leaning towards the lower end of the scale and interpretation, shows that a more strategic and coordinated approach is needed to strengthen all aspects of leadership succession. This includes learning from successful local chapters, providing targeted resources and training, and fostering a culture that actively identifies, develops, and supports future leaders to ensure the long-term sustainability and vitality of our Dominican presence in the Bicol region.

All these indicators are fundamentally integrated into the concept of

Leadership Succession and are paramount for achieving organizational sustainability. Sustainability requires more than just a large membership; it demands continuity of effective leadership. This continuity is secured by maintaining a documented and regularly reviewed leadership succession plan, which serves as the blueprint for longevity. The plan is executed by actively identifying and providing structured mentorship and development for members with leadership potential, thereby guaranteeing a pipeline of willing and capable future leaders. Furthermore, true sustainability is evident when leadership transitions are seamless, minimizing disruption to operations and the mission. This smoothness is achieved through continuous effort to cultivate a culture of shared leadership and intentional knowledge transfer, where skills are refined through access to training and opportunities for co-leadership, ultimately ensuring that the organization does not become overly dependent on any single individual, making its future resilient and enduring.

This means actively identifying and sharing successful leadership development models from thriving Bicol chapters, cultivating shared leadership, strategically allocating resources for targeted training and mentorship programs, and consciously cultivating a region-wide culture that prioritizes the identification, nurturing, and support of future leaders. By moving beyond general agreement to concrete, collaborative action, we can ensure a robust pipeline of capable leaders to sustain and invigorate our Dominican presence throughout the Bicol region for years to come.

The foundational principles of successful Leadership Succession are strongly reinforced by the contemporary organizational research, validating the chapter's approach to achieving organizational sustainability. Kimanzi's (2024) suggestion that involving stakeholders cultivates ownership aligns directly with the goal of cultivating a culture of shared leadership and actively identifying members with leadership potential through observation and nomination, ensuring future leaders are invested in the chapter's success from an early stage. This preparation is critical for the seamless continuation of the mission, which Cooper (2024) notes requires situational leadership to navigate diverse transitional contexts effectively. Most critically, Neal's (2024) emphasis on mentoring emerging leaders to transmit values and mission validates the core practice of providing structured mentorship and development opportunities and engaging in intentional knowledge transfer. These combined practices ensure that leadership transitions are characterized by a seamless transfer of knowledge and responsibilities, thereby protecting the chapter's operational stability and long-term vitality.

d. Operational Stability

This assessed the consistency and reliability of the day-to-day operations and resource management within Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region. It examines factors such as the regularity of meetings and activities, the efficiency of administrative processes, and the effective management of financial and human resources within the specific context.

Table 4

Operational Stability

Indicators	WM	AI
Maintains diversified and sustainable funding streams through regular member contributions, fundraising initiatives, and potential grants, ensuring financial stability and long-term viability	2.50	A
Implements clear financial reporting procedures, regular audits, and open communication with members regarding budget allocation and expenditures, fostering trust and responsible stewardship.	2.97	A
Maintains a comprehensive and regularly updated manual of policies and procedures, ensuring consistency, clarity, and adherence to established guidelines in all chapter operations	2.80	A
Utilizes effective project management techniques, including detailed planning, task delegation, and timely evaluation, to ensure the successful execution of all activities and programs.	2.80	A
Strategically allocates and manages its human, financial, and material resources, prioritizing activities that align with its mission and maximizing impact within available constraints.	2.77	A
Demonstrates agility and resilience in responding to internal and external changes, proactively identifying and addressing challenges through flexible planning, collaborative problem-solving, and continuous improvement initiatives.	3.03	A
AWM	2.81	A

Legend: 4-3.26-4.00-Highly Agree 3-2.51-3.25-Agree 2-1.76-2.50-Moderately Agree 1-1.00-1.75-Not Agree

An average weighted mean of 2.81 across all indicators for operational stability in Bicol region shows a general awareness and some level of implementation of key practices. However, the variation among the indicators, particularly the lower rating for diversified funding, highlights areas needing focused attention and improvement to ensure the long-term organizational sustainability and effectiveness of all Dominican chapters in Bicol region. A strategic and coordinated effort to strengthen these operational foundations is essential.

All the listed indicators are essential for Operational Stability, which is the backbone of organizational sustainability. Financial stability is guaranteed by maintaining diversified and sustainable funding streams alongside implementing clear financial reporting and regular audits, which fosters member trust and ensures the long-term viability of the chapter. Operational consistency, which minimizes risk, is achieved by maintaining a comprehensive and regularly updated manual of policies and procedures and by strategically allocating and managing all resources to align with the chapter's mission. Furthermore, the ability to execute its core functions successfully depends on using effective project management techniques for all programs. Critically, to sustain itself over time, the chapter must demonstrate agility and resilience in responding to both internal and external challenges through flexible planning and continuous improvement, ensuring that mission delivery is never permanently disrupted.

Given the lowest score in maintaining diversified and sustainable funding streams, the chapter's long-term viability is at risk. While current financial reporting practices foster trust, an over-reliance on a limited number of funding sources or inconsistent fundraising efforts could lead to instability. The chapter may prioritize developing a robust and varied fundraising strategy. This could involve exploring new grant opportunities, increasing member contribution engagement through clearer communication of impact, or organizing novel community-based fundraising initiatives. Strengthening this area will not only ensure financial stability but also empower the chapter to more effectively pursue its mission and adapt to future challenges, ultimately bolstering its overall resilience and growth.

The research findings on operational stability strongly connect to the chapter's need for effective management and resilient operations to ensure its long-term sustainability. The revitalizing role of lay people in leadership and engagement highlighted by Jeanpierre-Bryant (2024) directly underscores the importance of the chapter's practices in strategically allocating human resources and utilizing their skills to drive activities. Furthermore, Huseman's (2024) emphasis on visionary and inclusive leadership as a differentiator between thriving and declining institutions reinforces the necessity for the chapter to implement clear financial procedures and maintain comprehensive policy manuals; this structure provides the transparency and consistency that both visionary and stable leadership require. Ultimately, these external findings validate the chapter's focus on structured financial management, resource allocation, and policy adherence, all of which are critical factors that build the agility and resilience necessary to withstand internal and external changes, thereby ensuring continuous operational stability and organizational sustainability.

2. Key challenges on sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters

This section identifies the primary challenges impacting the sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters within the Bicol Region, drawing upon the assessments of their current status and organizational sustainability.

a. Governance

A key challenge in the sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters lies in establishing dynamic and inclusive governance structures that effectively respond to local socioeconomic factors and infrastructure limitations in the Bicol region.

Overall, across the four provinces, the development and implementation of clear and updated policies and procedures is the most significant challenge in terms of governance, ranking first with the highest total frequency. Prioritizing effective decision-making processes is the second most emphasized area. A dedication to open and transparent governance ranks third, indicating its importance across the region. Ensuring consistent and effective enforcement of rules and regulations is the fourth most frequent concern, followed by actively conducting regular policy reviews and updates, which ranks fifth. Facilitating constructive dialogue to ensure alignment on governance matters is the area receiving the least overall attention among these provinces.

Table 5

Governance

Indicators	f	Rank
Clear and updated policies and procedures are being developed and implemented	106	1
Effective decision-making processes are being prioritized	72	2
Dedicated to open and transparent governance	61	3
Ensuring consistent and effective enforcement of our rules and regulations	52	4
Regular policy review and updates are being actively conducted	46	5
Facilitating constructive dialogue to ensure alignment on governance matters	29	6

This shows that the primary governance efforts across these locations are directed towards establishing a strong procedural foundation and ensuring efficient decision-making. While transparency and rule enforcement are also important, they are collectively perceived as less pressing than the initial stages of policy development and effective processes. Facilitating dialogue on governance

appears to be the most stable aspect across the region.

Clear and up -to -date policies for lay Dominicans play a key role in promoting community involvement, promoting spiritual growth and ensuring adherence to the mission of the Order. The policies informed by broader social structures, as observed in Montero (2025), highlight the need for continuous adaptation in organizational practices. Petrozziello (2025) emphasizes the influence of political measures on community dynamics, showing the importance of reliable guidelines. In addition, Rackham (2024) criticizes existing systems that can undermine spiritual and community reach, reinforcing the need for attentive political development of enabling Lay Dominicans in their mission.

The text identifies several critical challenges to organizational sustainability. Chijere (2024) points to the dangers of non-profit social enterprises lacking clear succession strategies, which can lead to knowledge loss and weakened relationships. Pérez (2025) highlights political and institutional hurdles, advocating for democratic pedagogical approaches in community learning within impoverished regions like the Dominican Republic to promote participatory sustainability. Ford et al. (2024) further emphasize economic constraints and resource sustainability issues, particularly regarding water in small Caribbean island developing states, stressing the need for innovative governance and sustainable economic models.

b. Leadership

Sustaining effective leadership in Lay Dominican Chapters faces hurdles such as limited resources for training and development, potential for volunteer burnout due to insufficient support, and the need for leaders to adapt to evolving social values within the local Bicolano context while remaining rooted in Dominican tradition. T

Table 6

Governance

Indicators	f	Rank
Challenges exist in identifying and developing future leaders.	106	1
Leadership succession planning requires further development.	68	2
Leadership skills development is an ongoing consideration for current leaders.	50	3
Leadership engagement in chapter activities varies.	37	4
Motivation and delegation of tasks to members presents certain complexities.	29	5
Leadership burnout is a factor to be addressed.	17	6

The most significant leadership challenge is the difficulty in identifying and developing future leaders, ranking first with the highest total frequency. The need for further development in leadership succession planning is the second most prevalent concern. Leadership skills development for current leaders ranks third, indicating a consistent area for attention. Variable leadership engagement in chapter activities is the fourth most frequent issue. Motivation and delegation of tasks presenting certain complexities ranks fifth, and leadership burnout is the least frequently cited factor across these provinces.

An overarching implication is that the primary focus for these chapters should be on establishing strong programs for identifying, nurturing, and mentoring potential future leaders, coupled with strengthening succession planning processes to ensure organizational continuity. While developing the skills of current leaders and improving their engagement are also important, addressing the pipeline of future leadership appears to be the most critical and widespread need across the region. Issues related to delegation and burnout are less pronounced but should still be monitored.

Like Cortés Jr. (2024) note that insufficient resources, including training and financial support, can lead to leader burnout. Green (2024) highlights that perceived inconsistencies between preaching and practice can decrease community trust and involvement, weakening support for lay leaders. Jahani and Parayandeh (2024) point out that limited financial resources hinder the effectiveness of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in providing social services.

c. Membership

Maintaining active and engaged membership in Lay Dominican Chapters is challenged by factors like a sense of community, which can be affected by

members' psychological well-being and the perceived relevance of the chapter's mission within their daily lives in Bicol.

Table 7
Membership

Indicators	f	Rank
Membership numbers show a trend of decrease.	108	1
New member acquisition presents challenges.	69	2
Member engagement in chapter activities is variable.	48	3
Member retention is an area requiring attention.	38	4
Membership diversity (age, skills, etc.) is an area for assessment.	24	5
New member integration presents certain complexities.	16	6

Overall, the most significant concern is the decreasing trend in membership numbers, which has the highest total frequency and thus ranks as the primary challenge. Following this, difficulties in new member acquisition represent the second most prevalent issue. Variable member engagement in chapter activities ranks third, indicating a consistent area needing improvement. Member retention is the fourth most frequent challenge, suggesting that retaining existing members is a notable concern across the region. Membership diversity being an area for assessment ranks fifth, implying it's a recognized issue but less frequent than the others. Lastly, new member integration presenting certain complexities is the least frequent of the identified challenges across these provinces.

The collective efforts of these chapters should prioritize strategies to reverse the decline in membership and to attract new members effectively. Enhancing member engagement and retention efforts are also crucial for the overall health and sustainability of the organization within these provinces. Addressing membership diversity and streamlining new member integration, while less frequent concerns, should also be considered for a comprehensive approach to membership growth and vitality.

Owens (2024) notes that isolation and lack of connection in struggling churches lead to disengaged congregations and emphasizes the success of initiatives like tutoring, social events, and collaborative outreach in fostering engagement and retention. Maintaining member participation, crucial for organizational vitality (Wahyuni et al., 2024), requires understanding diverse congregational needs and employing inclusive management practices to cultivate belonging.

d. Community support

Lay Dominican Chapters may struggle with inconsistent community support due to factors like a perceived disconnect between the chapter's activities and local needs, or a lack of awareness within the broader Bicolano community regarding the chapter's mission and contributions. Building strong, reciprocal relationships through active engagement in local issues, collaborative initiatives with other organizations, and transparent communication of their work is vital for garnering sustained community support and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Table 8

Community support

Indicators	f	Rank
Community awareness of the chapter's activities is observed to be limited.	107	1
The level of support from the local community is being evaluated.	61	2
Establishing partnerships with other community organizations presents certain challenges.	44	3
Access to community resources is observed to be limited.	28	4
Community perceptions of the chapter are varied.	19	5
Resource and membership competition with other community groups is a factor.	12	6

The most significant challenge in terms of community support is the limited community awareness of the chapters' activities, ranking first with the highest total frequency. The level of support from the local community being evaluated is the second most prevalent concern. Establishing partnerships with other community organizations presents the third most frequent challenge. Limited access to community resources ranks fourth. Varied community perceptions of the chapters are the fifth most cited issue, and resource and membership competition with other community groups is the least frequent challenge across these provinces.

This shows that a primary focus for these chapters should be on enhancing their visibility and outreach within their respective communities to build greater awareness of their activities. Understanding and potentially strengthening local community support is also a crucial next step. While establishing partnerships and accessing resources are challenges, and community perceptions and competition are factors, improving foundational awareness appears to be the most pressing and widespread need across the region to foster stronger community support.

Relatedly, Lundy (2024) emphasizes the significant impact of congregants' psychological well-being on their participation, suggesting that cultivating a supportive environment is crucial for both thriving and struggling chapters. Likewise, Santos (2024) notes that addressing structural and systemic issues through dialogue can foster environments conducive to church revitalization.

4. Proposed Organizational Sustainability Framework for Lay Dominican Chapters

In the heart of Bicol and echoing across the diverse landscapes of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon, the Lay Dominican Chapters stand as vital expressions of the Dominican charism within the local communities. Rooted in centuries of tradition yet striving for contemporary relevance, these chapters face a dynamic environment that necessitates a proactive and strategic approach to ensure their long-term vitality and impact. This proposed Organizational Sustainability Framework emerges from a comprehensive analysis of key indicators across these four provinces, encompassing membership trends, governance practices, leadership capacity, and community support.

The overarching objective of this Organizational Sustainability Framework is to empower Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol region, specifically in Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon, to achieve long-term viability and maximize their impact by enhancing membership vitality, strengthening governance effectiveness, developing leadership capacity, and fostering robust community support. The relevance of this framework lies in its direct response to identified challenges in these key areas, ensuring the long-term viability and maximizing the apostolic impact of the chapters within a dynamic environment. By providing a structured approach, it encourages collaboration and shared learning while empowering local leadership to address their unique needs, ultimately aiming to sustain and amplify the invaluable contributions of the Lay Dominicans to the Church and society in the Bicol region.

CONCLUSIONS

The Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region demonstrate a generally positive state regarding organizational commitment and membership retention, key areas require focused attention to bolster long-term sustainability across all chapters. Specifically, enhancing member recognition and perceived influence will strengthen organizational commitment. Improving onboarding processes and providing more avenues for spiritual growth and mission involvement are crucial for better membership retention. Furthermore, a more strategic and coordinated

approach to leadership succession is needed to secure the future vitality of the Dominican presence in the region. Finally, strengthening operational stability, particularly through the diversification of funding sources, is essential for ensuring the long-term organizational effectiveness of all Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region.

The sustainability of Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region faces key challenges across several domains. Governance is primarily hindered by the need for clearer and updated policies and procedures, alongside the importance of effective decision-making and transparent practices. Leadership struggles most with identifying and developing future leaders and the need for robust succession planning. Membership is significantly challenged by decreasing numbers and difficulties in attracting new members, followed by issues with member engagement and retention. Moreover, community support is largely hampered by limited awareness of the chapters' activities within the local community. Addressing these interconnected challenges through targeted strategies in governance, leadership development, membership engagement and recruitment, and community outreach will be fundamental for ensuring the long-term sustainability and vitality of Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region.

A proposed Organizational Sustainability Framework for Lay Dominican Chapters in the Bicol Region offers a vital and adaptable roadmap for these chapters to thrive. Stemming from a thorough analysis of membership, governance, leadership, and community support across the provinces, this framework aims to empower local chapters to overcome identified challenges and build upon their unique strengths. Eventually, this structured approach promotes collaboration and empowers local leadership to sustain and amplify the invaluable contributions of Lay Dominicans to the Church and society in the region.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of this study offer significant insights for translational research, aiming to bridge the gap between academic conclusions and practical application. Specifically, the identified strengths and weaknesses within Lay Dominican chapters can be directly translated into a comprehensive Organizational Sustainability Framework. This framework is designed to empower local chapters to achieve long-term viability and maximize their impact by strategically enhancing key areas: bolstering membership vitality through targeted engagement and retention strategies; strengthening governance effectiveness by optimizing operational policies and financial stewardship; developing leadership capacity

through training and mentorship programs; and fostering vigorous community support by deepening relationships and expanding outreach initiatives. This translational approach ensures that the research findings are not merely academic observations but actionable strategies for real-world organizational development and sustainable growth within the Bicol Region.

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