



## SEKOLAH TINGGI FILSAFAT DRIYARKARA

Jl. Cempaka Putih Indah 100A, Jembatan Serong, Rawasari, Jakarta 10520  
Telp. (021) 4247 129 ♦ Fax. (021) 4224 866 ♦ Website: www.driyarkara.ac.id

### SURAT KETERANGAN

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Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Thomas Hidya Tjaya, Ph. D.  
NIP : 0408010029  
Jabatan : Ketua  
Instansi/Perguruan Tinggi : Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara

menerangkan bahwa staf pengajar Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara:

Nama : Dr. Simon P. Lili Tjahjadi  
NIDN : 0313066302  
Status : Dosen Tetap  
Program Studi : Ilmu Filsafat - S3  
Instansi/ Perguruan Tinggi: Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara

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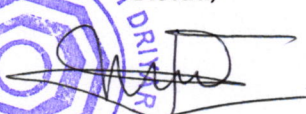
**"Measurement of the Effectiveness of Catholic Priests' Pastoral Services: A Psychometric Approach"**

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Thomas Hidya Tjaya, Ph.D.





# Measurement of the Effectiveness of Catholic Priests' Pastoral Services: A Psychometric Approach

Andy Gunardi<sup>1,2</sup> · Bernadette N. Setiadi<sup>1</sup> · Lidia Laksana Hidajat<sup>1</sup> · Simon Petrus Lili Tjahjadi<sup>3</sup>

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## Abstract

Catholic priests are called to follow God by preaching the good news as well as sanctifying and leading God's people. The work of a priest is evaluated by the people he serves and by the bishop. The assessment is rather informal and is based on two references: people's experiences and their reports to the bishop. As a result, the evaluations are subjective in nature. The aim of this study is to formulate an objective scale that is a qualitative and quantitative instrument based on six key dimensions for use in evaluating the pastoral effectiveness of parish priests. This self-report scale contains 36 valid and reliable items that ask for 4-point Likert responses.

**Keywords** Catholic diocesan priest · Evaluation · Pastoral effectiveness · Pastoral ministry

In the Catholic tradition, Jesus had disciples who followed and helped him continue his mission, i.e., preaching the good news to all people. The disciples are called apostles because they experienced the living Jesus and then willingly received the mission directly from him. After the apostles passed away, bishops became their successors. Therefore, bishops—assisted by a number of priests—carry on the tasks of preaching the good news, sanctifying, and leading the Catholic Church (Paul & Second Vatican Council, 1964).

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✉ Andy Gunardi  
andy.201700130007@student.atmajaya.ac.id

Bernadette N. Setiadi  
bsetiadi@atmajaya.ac.id

Lidia Laksana Hidajat  
Lidia.hidajat@atmajaya.ac.id

Simon Petrus Lili Tjahjadi  
simon.tjahjadi@driyarkara.ac.id

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia, Jl Jend. Sudirman No 51, Jakarta Selatan 12930, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Bina Nusantara University, Jl. Kemanggisian Ilir III No.45, Jakarta Barat 11480, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Driyarkara School of Philosophy, Jl Komp. Cempaka Putih Indah No 100A, Jakarta Pusat 10520, Indonesia

According to the Code of Canon Law, priests are required to have maturity in spirituality and humanity (John Paul, 1983, no. 276). To ensure priests have the maturity and capacity to undertake their tasks satisfactorily, candidates for priesthood go through a long period of education that includes the subjects of philosophy, theology, pastoral training, and the Christian praxis of exercises such as prayer and devotion (John Paul, 1983). However, each diocese has the discretion to set the length of priesthood preparation between eight to ten years after graduation from high school or minor seminary. A longer period of education and training is assumed to enable priests to perform their tasks successfully.

A priest receives his assignment from the bishop to act as a spiritual person, a teacher, a leader, a preacher, a friend, a motivator, and a spiritual director (Isacco et al., 2014) for all parishioners in the parish he is assigned to. In Indonesia, parishioners assume that priests have answers for all their needs (Setiadi, 2008). In general, the parishioners also see priests as honorable and respectable persons (Stewart-Sicking, 2012).

In the past several decades, priests have experienced many challenges. Since 2004, there have been reports of sexual abuse by priests (Gautier et al., 2012; Kane & Jacobs, 2017; Maher et al., 2006). Moreover, some priests have also experienced stress and depression due to the administrative tasks required by their position yet have received insufficient social support (Gautier et al., 2012; Kane & Jacobs, 2017; Raj & Dean, 2005).

In 2009, the Social Communication Department in the Archdiocese of Jakarta-Indonesia conducted qualitative research by interviewing Catholics. Informants were grouped into older adults (60 to 74 years old), adults (34 to 60), and young adults (24 to 34). The research question was, “*What expectations do parishioners have of priests, based on their evaluation of Catholic priests?*” The majority of the participants responded with positive answers, but some felt that the priests did not care enough for the poor and the parishioners and seemed too busy with their own affairs. Informants also stated that the priests were not very capable in church administration (Komunikasi Sosial Keuskupan Agung Jakarta, 2009).

Another study was conducted in 2017, in which 199 parishioners from 43 of the 65 parishes in the Archdiocese of Jakarta were surveyed. Findings revealed that 169 parishioners (85%) were satisfied with the work of their priests, while the remaining 30 (15%) were unsatisfied. According to half of the unsatisfied parishioners (15 people), the priests did not have a firm opinion or were capricious; 40% or 12 unsatisfied parishioners said they had a problem with priests’ personalities; and the remaining 10% or three parishioners said the priests could not communicate effectively (Penelitian dan pengembangan Seminari Wacana Bhakti, 2017).

In 2018, the Archdiocese of Jakarta again conducted a survey on how parishioners evaluated their priests. This larger survey had 11,217 participants from 65 parishes. The results were as follows: 65% satisfied, 30% unsatisfied, and 5% totally unsatisfied. The six dimensions of the survey were sacramental service, level of intelligence, being an example of holiness and spirituality, firmness in the decision-making process, social responsibility, and time availability to attend to parishioners’ needs (Tim Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pusat Pastoral Keuskupan Agung Jakarta, 2018). Despite the lack of objective measurements and of a supervision mechanism to ensure improvement would take place, results of the surveys were used to develop the archdiocese work program.

Ideally, priests should serve effectively, but in reality there are priests who serve ineffectively (sexual abuse, stress, and depression). The gap between the two raises this question: How can we make sure that a priest delivers his services effectively? Criteria of effectiveness need to be defined. Rather than standing on subjective judgments, an objective measurement should identify the particular dimension(s) that a priest is strong or weak in. Accordingly, room for improvement for each priest can be identified. Therefore, a

significant role of an objective evaluation is to help priests assess and improve their services. This way, the bishop is better equipped due to knowing each priest's capacities. The bishop's understanding of his assisting priests makes a solid base for assigning them to the right places or sending them to the next phase of ongoing formation. The archdiocese is seeking an objective way to evaluate Catholic priests. Hence, the purpose of this study is to utilize a psychometric approach in developing an objective instrument to measure how effectively priests deliver their pastoral services.

## Literature review

Studies on the effectiveness of Catholic priests' pastoral services are limited. However, the effectiveness of religious services have been studied in other denominations, including Protestant (Kling, 1958), Lutheran (Nauss, 1983), and United Methodist (Lichtman & Malony, 1990) as well as Presbyterian, nondenominational, Southern Baptist, and Free Methodist (McKenna & Eckard, 2009).

Hoge et al. (1989) observed that in the Catholic Church in the United States the number of Catholics was rising while the number of priests was shrinking. The researchers argued that the number of ministers determined the ministry's effectiveness. They proposed four recommendations to deal with this inconsistency: first, lowering the expectations regarding services provided by priests; second, increasing the number of priests by assigning the religious to work in the parish or by assigning priests from other nations and recruiting seminarians; third, increasing the number of priests by loosening the eligibility criteria, i.e., by accepting women as priests, ordaining married men as well as celibate men, instituting a term of service for the priesthood, and having retired priests act as sacramental ministers; and fourth, expanding the roles of the diaconate and lay ministers.

For a ministry to be effective, the number of ministers is a key factor. While it is difficult to meet parishioners' expectations when there is a shortage in the number of ministers, the essence of the issue lies in the quality and credibility of the Catholic priests who perform the services. To understand these phenomena, researchers interviewed candidates for priesthood using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF). They found anger and hostility in the candidates (Plante & Boccaccini, 1997; Plante et al., 2005). Other researchers mentioned that the never-ending administrative tasks, especially when many people sought help from priests, resulted in stress and burnout among priests (Raj & Dean, 2005).

Sasmito and Lopez (2019) tried to identify a dimension that would be helpful for a priest working in the ministry. They found that the quality of a Catholic priest's ministry is influenced by the level of compassionate love the priest has. Compassionate love is defined as self-giving, i.e., one person gives themselves to others through positive behavior and attitude. This is subject to factors such as well-being, social support, spirituality, and priestly commitment. If a priest has a good level of compassionate love, he will bring a compassionate ministry to people.

These findings are important for training and educating candidates for priesthood as the formators (the term used in the Catholic tradition for a person who is in charge of the training of priesthood candidates) can identify the problems facing a candidate and find appropriate ways for him to develop effective service when he eventually becomes

a priest. This framework is in line with the church's magisterium; that is, good training and education will help priests provide good-quality service. What is lacking is an assessment method that will enable the priest to perform a self-evaluation and at the same time will help the bishop evaluate the effectiveness of priests' services.

### Effectiveness of priests' services

A bishop, or vicar of clergy as assigned by the bishop, is in charge of the evaluation of the Catholic priests who work in the parishes. The bishop can discuss the work of priests with the diocesan curia, which consists of persons or institutions appointed by the bishop (John Paul, 1983, nos. 375 and 469).

A bishop has the authority to assign a priest to work in the parish or to perform a particular type of work, e.g., working in the diocese's department, a seminary, a retreat house, or leading a Catholic Group, e.g., Marriage Encounter, Divine Mercy Group of Prayer, and Charismatic Group of Prayer, etc. The bishop receives a report from the vicar of clergy about the diocesan priests and listens to the other members of the curia, which helps him decide what he thinks is best for the ongoing formation of each priest in order to enhance his service to the people of God, e.g., asking the priest to continue his studies, to go on a retreat, to take courses, or move to another parish. The bishop also may receive a report from other priests or laypeople about a particular priest's service. In the parish, the associate priest is supervised by the parish priest. The parish priest can report about the associate priest to the vicar of clergy or the bishop (John Paul, 1983, nos. 515, 517, 519, 521, 523, 545).

Parish priests are given authority and trust by the bishop based on his discretion of who is suitable to lead the parish (John Paul, 1983, no. 542). However, there is no objective evaluation or tool that can be used to determine whether the priest is doing well or otherwise.

McKenna and Eckard (2009) suggested some dimensions that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the ministry of pastors. Their effectiveness depends on the church's direction and the criteria of effectiveness set by the pastors and in-charge congregation members. Since McKenna and Eckard (2009) conducted research on non-Catholic denominations, some adjustments need to be made for the Catholic Church.

In the pastoral context, the term "effectiveness" refers to all those services done by a priest through which he is satisfied and the people he serves and the surrounding society experience his positive contributions (Cornelio, 2012; Purwatma, 2002).

Indonesia is a large country, with a population of 230 million and more than 300 ethnic groups. The majority of Indonesians (87.18%) are Muslim. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the rest are Protestants (6.96%), Catholics (2.91%), Hindus (1.69%), Buddhists (0.72%), Confucians (0.05%), and undetermined (0.51%; BPS, 2010). Making a positive contribution to society is important in the Indonesian context because of the country's ethnicities and religious diversity. The country's motto is "unity in diversity," which is expressed very well by the term *gotong royong* (helping each other in society). Being a minority, it is important for the Catholic Church in Indonesia to have good relationships with other religions and to live in a brotherhood. In other words, acceptance by others is very important.

## Research question and hypotheses

The literature search showed that the effectiveness of priests' services has not been evaluated in an objective manner. This study aims to address the need for a psychometric instrument that will enable parishioners and bishops to objectively assess the effectiveness of priests' services. In doing so, some evaluation scales from other denominations have been carefully reviewed and refined for the unique Indonesian context.

## Method

The development of the measurement scale involved two studies. [Study 1](#) used a qualitative method in which participants engaged in a focus group discussion. The objective of [study 1](#) was to develop items based on the dimensions suggested by McKenna and Eckard (2009) and the experiences of local priests. [Study 2](#), which employed a quantitative method, was conducted to select items that were developed based on [study 1](#). The second study produced a measurement scale consisting of items that meet the psychometric criteria and are suitable for Indonesian priests.

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines recommended by the American Psychological Association and obtained ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia. Participants joined this study voluntarily by filling out an anonymous informed consent form that explained the goal of the research and stated that the results will be published in an academic journal.

### Study 1: Participants

The six participants in the focus group discussion session were selected using stratified purposeful sampling. They were categorized according to the number of years of service since they were ordained: 1–10 years, 11–20 years, and more than 21 years. [Table 1](#) below describes the participants in terms of age and years of service.

Based on convenience sampling, 25 Catholic priests who worked in the Archdiocese of Jakarta then checked the wording of each item and gave comments on the questionnaires. The details can be seen in [Table 2](#), which shows the number of priests who performed the checking and their respective years of service.

**Table 1** Demographics of Participants in the Focus Group Discussion ([Study 1](#))

Category	Participant	Age	Years of Service
1	1	36	8
	2	38	9
2	3	44	17
	4	43	16
3	5	59	30
	6	59	30

**Table 2** Participants who checked the questionnaires (Study 1)

Years Served as a Priest	Participants
1–10	7
11–20	8
≥ 21	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

## Study 1: Materials and procedures

The materials consisted of the 16 dimensions of a pastoral effectiveness audit from McKenna and Eckard (2009). These are intentional leadership, trust in God, weekly attendance, financial and/or budget goals, number of new believers, specific church/denominational targets, number of church plans, spiritual development of congregation, congregational and staff health, congregational sense of belonging, congregational morale, feedback from the congregation, meaningful worship opportunities, developing leaders, caring for youth, and community/ministry outreach.

Participants were asked to comment on the relevance of the dimensions developed by McKenna and Eckard (2009) to the Indonesian Catholic Church. When participants needed further explanation or disagreed with an item, the authors provided clarification and led a discussion until an agreement was reached. The priests were also asked to give examples relevant to a dimension based on their experience.

When the adaptation of the dimensions was completed, the authors facilitated another discussion to specify dimensions according to the Indonesian context of Catholic priests. These dimensions were not found in the original 16 dimensions previously discussed.

## Study 2: Participants

The participants in study 2 were 150 priests from the Archdiocese of Semarang and the Dioceses of Malang, Bogor, and Surabaya. Responses from four participants were omitted because they did not answer six items of the questionnaire. Priests who were eligible to participate had at least one year of experience as a priest; they also had to be less than 70 years of age. Using these eligibility criteria, the selected participants included participants who had served 1–10 years (38%), 11–20 years (30%), and more than 20 years (32%). Table 3 shows the details of the participants.

**Table 3** Demographics of Participants (Study 2)

Participant Location	Length of Ordination		
	1–10 years	11–20 years	≥ 21
Archdiocese of Semarang	10	11	19
Diocese of Malang	12	9	13
Diocese of Bogor	21	11	4
Diocese of Surabaya	13	13	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>

## Study 2: Materials and procedures

Based on the comments and feedback from the 31 participants in [study 1](#), all items were revised. Employing purposive sampling, questionnaires were distributed during meetings of the diocesan priests in every diocese. The authors obtained permission to join the meetings, where they explained the research and received informed consent. While the participants filled out the questionnaires, the authors stayed to clarify concerns and answer any questions.

Collected and valid responses were analyzed for reliability and item total correlation. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were used to identify the dimensions relevant to the local context.

## Results

### Study 1

According to McKenna and Eckard (2009), 16 dimensions can be selected based on the desires of the congregation and the pastor. These same 16 dimensions were discussed during the focus group discussion in [study 1](#). Six of the dimensions are applicable to the Catholic Church in Indonesia: leadership, trust in God, attendance, community service, spirituality, and developing leaders. Two dimensions are specific to the Catholic Church—sacramental services and relationship with the bishop—plus 1 dimension from Indonesian culture—involvement in society. Sacramental services are unique in the Catholic Church because Catholicism has seven sacraments, which is more than other denominations have. In the Catholic Church, priests officially vow before their congregation to obey their leader, i.e., the bishop. Involvement in society is a reflection of the local wisdom of the Indonesian people.

Six items were developed for each of the nine dimensions. All items were written in a self-report format with a 4-point Likert response scale (*very often*, *often*, *sometimes*, and *never*). Twenty-five priests working in the archdiocese of Jakarta were asked to review and edit the items. Most corrections concerned sentence structure. One item was added for the involvement in the society dimension, and one item under the dimension of developing leaders was removed. As a result, 54 items went through expert judgment before they were finalized. The items and their corresponding dimensions and items are presented in [Table 4](#).

### Study 2

The instrument for measuring the effectiveness of Catholic diocesan priest services was sent to 150 diocesan priests in Semarang Archdiocese, Surabaya, Malang, and Bogor Dioceses. All of these dioceses are in Java Island, Indonesia.

Responses collected from 146 priests were analyzed and produced a Cronbach's alpha of .952 over 54 items. Item-total statistics were performed and resulted in 13 items with the corrected item-total correlation lower than .3 (Cristobal et al., 2007). After removing those items, analysis of the remaining 41 items generated a Cronbach's alpha of .961. Further analysis using the product-moment correlation test ( $r > .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ) found



**Table 4** First Draft of the Instrument of Self-Report on the Effectiveness of Diocesan Priest Services in Java, Indonesia

Dimension	Item
Spirituality	<p>I cultivate my relationship with God through personal prayer.</p> <p>I have empathy for parishioners.</p> <p>I take a retreat at least once a year.</p> <p>What I do is inspired by the life of Jesus.</p> <p>I take care of my vocation as a priest.</p> <p>I make an effort to follow archdiocese or diocese direction.</p>
Faith in God	<p>I relate my mission as a priest to the needs of the Church and diocese.</p> <p>I accept assignments from the bishop wholeheartedly.</p> <p>I believe in God's providence and help in all my assignments.</p> <p>I experience ups and downs in my vocation and faith in God.</p> <p>The effectiveness of my service depends on how deep my faith in God is.</p> <p>I am responsive and sensitive in my faith and my personal struggles.</p>
Leadership	<p>I am capable of identifying problems and finding the right solutions.</p> <p>I relate my work to the diocese's vision and missions.</p> <p>I am capable of directing, motivating, and serving people.</p> <p>I have creative and innovative ideas that match the situation and condition of my mission.</p> <p>I communicate the diocese's visions and missions to parishioners.</p> <p>I take full responsibility for all decisions I make.</p>
Attendance	<p>I attend meetings held by the diocese.</p> <p>I join the ongoing formation programs for priests.</p> <p>I make an effort to attend community meetings that I am assigned to.</p> <p>I only attend meetings that might be beneficial for me.</p> <p>I attend community activities that I am assigned to.</p> <p>I need to be selective in deciding which meetings I will attend</p>
Sacrament services	<p>I make sure that all information about baptism, eucharist, and confirmation courses are delivered well to parishioners.</p> <p>I am always available to people who ask for the sacrament of reconciliation.</p> <p>I am available to people who ask for the sacrament for the sick.</p> <p>I feel exhausted after doing a canonical interview.</p> <p>When I am busy, I am less concerned about preparing for baptism and confirmation.</p> <p>Demands from parishioners have caused me to experience emotional and spiritual exhaustion.</p>
Community service	<p>My presence as a priest brings joy to the Church's communities.</p> <p>As a priest, I am open to suggestions from my fellow priests and parishioners.</p> <p>As a priest, I am assisted (or supported) by parishioners voluntarily.</p> <p>My presence among parishioners brings them happiness.</p> <p>Sometimes, I do not feel accepted by the parishioners I serve.</p> <p>As a priest, I pay attention to external relationships with the surrounding community and society.</p>

**Table 4** (continued)

Dimension	Item
Relationship with the bishop	Meetings with the bishop strengthen me as a priest. Being trusted by the bishop is very important to me. Having a positive attitude toward the bishop influences my service effectiveness as a priest. Unjust decisions by the bishop make me less effective in my service as a priest. In my life, I feel that I have a problem with authority figures. I feel uncomfortable when meeting with the bishop.
Developing leaders	In my service as a priest, many youth are involved in the church activities. As a priest, I facilitate people to have a retreat, recollection, and other spiritual activities intended to grow their faith. I conduct training programs to develop potential leaders in the Church. I have to work by myself since the parishioners are not actively involved. I feel that the parishioners depend too much on me as a priest.
Involvement in society	I know neighbors near my church well. As a priest, I am invited to attend activities by non-Catholic neighbors. Visiting prisoners or the poor or alienated people is one of my priorities as a priest. I pay attention to the poor in all my services. I am willing to be involved in interreligious activities. When I serve as a priest, many people from various ethnicities are involved in the church's activities. I know leaders from other religions close by my church.

that all items in all dimensions were valid and significant, i.e.,  $r \geq .465$  and  $p = .000$  (Chee, 2015).

Principal component analysis was used for factor analysis. Three items were removed because they had values lower than .5 and therefore did not fit the criterion of communalities (Field, 2009). The pattern matrix component used was  $\geq .4$  factor loading. There were two items whose factor loading was below .4, i.e., .364 and .371. These items were also removed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test and the Bartlett's test pointed to the adequacy of the current practice scale (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .910; Bartlett's test of sphericity = 3,536.105,  $p = .000$ ). This left a total of 36 items. The scree plot and the interpretation of the factor loading pointed to a six-factorial solution. Promax rotation was used. The total variance explained was 64.920%.

The six identified dimensions were named as follows: Leadership (11 items), Involvement in society (eight items), Faith in God (six items), Loyalty (four items), Attendance (four items), and Relationship with the bishop (three items). The final step of the analysis generated a total of 36 items (see Table 5).

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to validate the instrument. Identification and maximum likelihood estimation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019) were performed, which concluded that the measurement scale was unidimensional with an adequate fit (see Table 5).

**Table 5** Loading Factors for Effectiveness of Diocesan Priest Services

Factor	Estimate	CR (t-value)
Leadership	1.000	
Involvement in society	1.033***	11.724
Faith in God	.855***	11.831
Loyalty	.770***	9.576
Attendance	.785***	9.954
Relationship with the bishop	.838***	9.233

CR > 1.96 (Arbuckle, 2017)

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 5 shows that all factors were valid and significant. The goodness model was an adequate fit, i.e., chi-square fit statistics/degree of freedom = .630;  $p = .772$ ; comparative fit index = 1.000; goodness of fit index = .987; adjusted goodness of fit index = .970; Tucker–Lewis index = 1.013; root mean square error of approximation = .000 (Jackson et al., 2009).

Results of the exploratory factor analysis revealed that some items had high loadings in more than one dimension. For example, the item “I conduct training programs to develop potential leaders in the Church” had high loading in two dimensions: Leadership (.491) and Involvement in society (.464). This item was put under the leadership dimension because developing potential leaders is part of being a leader. The item “What I do is inspired by the life of Jesus” had high loading in the dimensions of Leadership (.437) and Faith in God (.454). As the leadership of a Catholic priest is based on his faith in Jesus and Jesus’ example, this item fits better into the dimension of Faith in God. Furthermore, the item “Having a positive attitude towards the bishop influences my service effectiveness as a priest” has high loading in the dimensions of Loyalty (.482) and Relationship with the bishop (.490). Since the item specifically mentions attitude towards the bishop, it is more suitable as part of the Relationship with the bishop dimension. Table 6 below shows the final version of all dimensions and items.

Indonesia has a very diverse population in terms of religion and ethnicity. In general, people are tolerant and practice the custom of helping each other. Because of Catholics are a minority in the country, a participant in study 1 suggested that involvement in society as a priest was very important and therefore should be added to reflect the unique Indonesian context (those who want to adapt the present measurement scale need to consider this dimension from the perspective of their own culture).

## Discussion

In addressing the demand for a psychometric instrument to evaluate Catholic priests’ services, two studies were conducted. Study 1 aimed at identifying the dimensions to be used, while study 2 focused on obtaining responses to the survey questionnaires and conducting statistical analyses. Nine dimensions were identified in study 1; six of these were derived from McKenna and Eckard (2009) and the other three dimensions were proposed by local priests. Based on reliability and validity tests conducted in study 2, three dimensions were omitted, resulting in six dimensions. The Dimensions of Leadership, Faith in God, and

**Table 6** Final Items for the Instrument of Self-Report on the Effectiveness of Diocesan Priest Services in Java, Indonesia

Dimension	Item	Factor Loading
Leadership	I work as a priest based on archdiocese or diocese direction.	.453
	I relate my mission as a priest to the needs of the Church and diocese.	.477
	I am responsive and sensitive in my faith and my personal struggles.	.748
	I am capable of identifying problems and finding the right solutions.	.677
	I relate my work to the diocese's vision and missions.	.634
	I am capable of directing, motivating, and serving people.	.770
	I have creative and innovative ideas that match the situation and condition of my mission.	.926
	I communicate the diocese's visions and missions to parishioners.	.467
	I take full responsibility for all decisions I make.	.717
	As a priest, I pay attention to external relationships with the surrounding community and society.	.611
Involvement in society	I conduct training programs to develop potential leaders in the Church.	.491
	In my service as a priest, many youth are involved in church activities.	.466
	As a priest, I facilitate people to have a retreat, recollection, and other spiritual activities intended to grow their faith.	.424
	I know neighbors near my church well.	.775
	As a priest, I am invited to attend activities by non-Catholic neighbors.	.912
	I pay attention to the poor in all my services.	.589
	I am willing to be involved in interreligious activities.	.639
	When I work as a priest, there are many people from various ethnicities who get involved in the church's activities.	.625
	I know leaders from other religions near my church.	.839
	I cultivate my relationship with God through personal prayer.	.493
Faith in God	I have empathy for parishioners.	.431
	What I do is inspired by the life of Jesus.	.454
	The effectiveness of my service depends on how deep my faith in God is.	.649
	As a priest, I am open to suggestions from my fellow priests and parishioners.	.808
	As a priest, I am helped by parishioners voluntarily.	.706
	I accept assignments from the bishop wholeheartedly.	.503
Loyalty	I make sure that all information about baptism, eucharist, and confirmation courses are delivered well to parishioners.	.595
	I am always available to people who ask for the sacrament of reconciliation.	.790
	I am available to people who ask for the sacrament for the sick.	.781
	I attend meetings held by the diocese.	.839
Attendance	I join ongoing formation programs for priests.	.834
	I make an effort to attend community meeting that I am assigned to.	.563
	I attend community activities that I am assigned to.	.665
	Meeting with the bishop strengthens me as a priest.	.792
Relationship with the bishop	Being trusted by the bishop is very important to me.	.709
	Having a positive attitude towards the bishop influences my service effectiveness as a priest.	.490

Attendance were retained from McKenna and Eckard (2009), and the other three dimensions of Involvement in society, Loyalty, and Relationship with bishop originated from local priests' suggestions.

## **Leadership**

In the Church magisterium, leadership is one of the tasks of a priest ( Paul, 1965). This is reflected in knowing the parishioners, motivating them, serving them, and leading them to faithfulness and safety. As leaders, Catholic priests are expected to have the solutions to their parishioners' problems. A priest is the bishop's assistant, so he should carry out the diocese's vision and mission in his work as a leader.

## **Involvement in society**

In Indonesia, there is a strong tradition of helping one another. To be involved means to care for others. In a country where collectivism still prevails, communities are easily established, especially those involving families in a neighborhood that represents diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. Therefore, Indonesian priests are required to get involved in the community where they live and to care for members of the community, both parishioners and non-Catholics.

## **Faith in God**

Having a relationship with God is the essence of the vocation of a priest. Priests want to love God and serve God by serving their neighbors (Congregation for the Clergy, 2001). The relationship is sustained through prayer as well as by maintaining good relationships with others, which involves openness, empathy, love, and being loved.

## **Loyalty**

Diocesan priests vow to obey the bishop as a reflection of their obedience to God. In the context of effectiveness of service, loyalty refers to accepting assignments from the bishop and undertaking all assignments, especially serving the sacraments for parishioners.

## **Attendance**

A priest's attendance at the meetings he is assigned to shows how responsible he is. By paying attention to meetings scheduled by the diocese and also the community, he expresses his willingness to get involved with the diocese and the people.

## **Relationship with the bishop**

As an assistant, Catholic priests may serve under the bishop's authority. A good relationship with the bishop will increase the effectiveness of a priest's service because he is undertaking the work assigned by the bishop.

## Implications of measuring pastoral effectiveness

McKenna and Eckard (2009) gave their article an intriguing title: “Evaluating Pastoral Effectiveness: To Measure or Not to Measure.” This title sparks questions such as “Is it difficult, or is it possible?” McKenna and Eckard (2009) mentioned that effective measurement is challenging and is even resisted. The same challenges may be present in the Catholic Church as well. As the 2,000-year-old Catholic Church matures, it still lacks an objective measurement scale to assess the work of its frontliners. Today, such a scale is highly needed if the Church wishes to purify the essence of its priests’ vocation. The urgency lies in issues brought up by the media, such as sexual abuse, stress, depression, etc. This measurement scale may generate a fair evaluation that will help priests know the effectiveness of their service and determine what they need to do to improve and, at the same time, protect them from subjective and unfair judgment. However, this newly developed instrument may be resisted before it is fully utilized.

In essence, the vocation of a Catholic priest is a close relationship with Jesus Christ. According to the Church magisterium, the priest is recognized by his actions, which include saving humankind according to God’s will (Congregation for the Clergy, 2001). If the identity of Catholic priests lies in their actions to serve the Lord and save humankind, this means that they need to make sure that the way they carry themselves—including their daily attitude and behavior—is in harmony with their vocation. Obviously, they need a measurement scale to check how effective they are in various dimensions of their service.

## Limitation

This research focused on Catholic priests in Indonesia. Although the psychometric approach confirms the reliability and validity of the instrument, some limitations need to be discussed. First, data collection was mostly obtained from priests in Java Island based on convenience sampling. Since Indonesia consists of many ethnicities and cultures, this may limit the use of the instrument. Second, this measurement scale uses a self-report instrument, so the results could be biased by social desirability. Third, using the survey method, this scale cannot explain low or high scores in one or more dimensions.

## Future research

Items of this instrument focus on actions and reflect the present situation in several dioceses in Java. Thus, future research could adapt the present instrument to assess priests serving in other dioceses with different contexts within Indonesia or other countries.

Using this scale, priests reflect on what they are doing in the ministry and how well they are doing so. When a priest scores low in one or more dimensions, what factors might explain such scores? Future research could focus on identifying factors that influence the effectiveness of priests’ service. While this newly developed instrument may indicate the effectiveness of a Catholic priest’s service at the individual level, future research may provide useful recommendations by first recognizing the factors behind effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

## Conclusion

There is an urgent need for the Catholic Church to have an objective instrument to measure the effectiveness of a priest. The authors developed a self-report instrument in compliance with psychometric requirements based on responses from priests in several dioceses in Java. The instrument consists of six dimensions, including several representing the unique Indonesian context. The newly developed objective measurement can be used by Catholic priests to evaluate their services and to serve their parishioners and dioceses better. Contextual biases need to be taken into consideration when using this instrument for dioceses with different cultures.

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