



## **A Study on the Rate of Attrition and Reasons for Departure after the First Profession in the Dominican Province of the Philippines from 1990 to 2015**

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### **Abstract**

This research reports the preliminary findings on the rate of attrition and reasons for departure after the first profession in the Dominican Province of the Philippines from 1990 to 2015. Using a combination of archival data analysis, online survey, and qualitative inquiry, this report delves into the discernment process in terms of two dimensions: (a) the general descriptive statistics using “first profession” as an analytical dimension; and, (b) the socio-demographic indicators, life dispositions and departure decisions of a selected number of respondents who left the Dominican community.

This study finds that there is no perceptible pattern on the number of those who professed, those who became priest, and those who left the Dominican community by year of first profession. However, the mean rates of staying and completion of priesthood are relatively low indicating an observable pattern of leaving the Dominican community after finishing the first academic degree. While there seems to be no observable issues or conflict in the reported dispositions and experiences of selected respondents before and during the formation process, as most of them reported feeling a ‘sense of community’, and affirmative engagements in activities and apostolates, as well as their positive notions of being “Catholic”, and being part of the “Order of Preachers”, the themes of their “departure stories/narratives” appear to have been a function of the discernment process. This reflects on the one hand, the relative difficulties and tensions of discovering one’s vocation during the process of formation, and on the other, the relative success of formation, particularly on how one is able to make an informed decision about leaving or belonging to a religious congregation, which in this case, is the Dominican community.

## Study Context, the Research Team & the Discernment Process

In response to the request of Fr. Roberto G. Reyes, OP, Chairman, Provincial Council of Formation of the Dominican Province of the Philippines, and Fr. Ramon T. Salibay, OP, Master of Students of the Dominican Studentate, the research team of the *National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* of the University of Santo Tomas' Research Center for Social Sciences and Education under the directorship of Prof. Belinda de Castro, PhD, was commissioned to conduct this study. The primary goal is to respond to the resolution of the *Acts of the Philippine Provincial Chapter of 2016, #234*, where it was resolved that a study be made on the attrition of brothers who departed from the Dominican Province of the Philippines, after their first profession and the reason/s for their departure, covering the years from 1990 to 2015.

The *NCS 2021: PARI Project* adopts this project under its *Research-based Intervention Outcomes (RIO) Program*, aimed at helping religious organizations and/or agencies in research and documentation. Thus, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the research team was convened last June 7, 2020, composed of *NCS 2021: PARI Project* researchers namely, Prof. Clarence M. Batan, PhD, as consultant, and lead-researcher with Mr. Jaycar P. Espinosa, and Ms. Tisha Isabelle de Vergara as project assistants. From the *Dominican Studentate* counterpart, this research was co-led by Fr. Ramon T. Salibay, OP as director of the study, and volunteer researchers, namely, Br. Jerone Geronimo, OP, Br. Sandy Alerta, OP, Br. Jeff Pagaduan, OP, and Br. Rocky Manire, OP.

To operationalize an empirical understanding of the rate of attrition and reasons for departure after the first profession in the Dominican Province of the Philippines from 1990 to 2015, the study delves into the “discernment process” in terms of two dimensions: (a) the general descriptive statistics using “first profession” as an analytical dimension; and, (b) the socio-demographic indicators, life dispositions and departure decisions of a selected number of respondents who left the Dominican community. This brings into attention the notion of “discernment” (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), 2016) as a working concept in understanding the limited data presented in this study. Meaning, the attempt to measure “attrition”, which generally means a “reduction in numbers” (Online: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attrition>) combined with the departure narratives of those who left the Dominican community, maybe understood only as part of the dynamics of the entire discernment process. Correspondingly, the study argues that the relative observable expected rate of increase and decrease in the number of Dominican brothers who made their first professions leave or remain in the congregation reflect on the one hand, the relative difficulties and tensions of discovering one’s vocation during the process of formation, and on the other, the relative success of formation,

particularly on how one is able to make an informed decision about leaving or belonging to a religious congregation.

## **Note on the Limited Relevant Literatures**

Given the limited time of this study, most of relevant studies reviewed for this purpose revolve around the discernment process in the context of Catholic formation of religious men and women. Most retrieved studies are Western-based as old as 50 years ago (Lee, 1969; McClung, 1972), and as recent as ten years ago (Center for Applied Research in the, 2012; Mickens, 2015; Pietkiewicz, 2016; Sunardi, 2014; Uecker & Longest, 2017). Interestingly, two local researches (Calibo & Oracion, 2014; Manullang & De Guzman, 2008) dealt with the seminary formation in the Philippines, including Indonesia.

Conceptually, various dimensions of the discernment process have been studied such as vocation persistence (Lee, 1969), vocations (Center for Applied Research in the, 2012; Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), 2016; Stark & Finke, 2000; Sunardi, 2014), and religious commitment (Uecker & Longest, 2017). Also, in this shortlist of literatures, studies on seminary life and formation (Calibo & Oracion, 2014; Manullang & De Guzman, 2008; McClung, 1972) informed the research team the salient issues to consider, particularly in designing the survey questionnaire as well as in making sense of the archival data.

See *Appendix A: Limited Relevant Literature Tabular Map* for further reference.

## **Research Focus**

This study focuses on understanding the rate of attrition and reasons for departure after the first profession in the Dominican Province of the Philippines from 1990 to 2015 in the context of the religious discernment process. Two working questions guide this study namely:

1. What can be learned from the general descriptive statistics of Dominican brothers who made their “first profession” between 1990 and 2015?
2. What research insights can be derived from the socio-demographic indicators, life dispositions and decisions of selected number of respondents, who made their “first profession” between 1990 and 2015, and decided to leave the Dominican community?

## **Research Methods**

The general design of this study is both exploratory and descriptive (Neuman, 2011; Portus, Barrios, Conaco, & Go, 2018). This study run for three-months from June to August 2020. Given this limited time, it took a rapid appraisal approach (Beebe, 1995) focused at gaining systematic insights from any data that are readily available for analysis from the archives. Also, as physical interaction is strictly restricted during the pandemic, online-based strategies such as literature search, survey and virtual consultations and meetings were employed.

Three research strategies were employed namely, archival data analysis, online survey, and qualitative inquiry. Archival data was retrieved from the archives of the Dominican Province where permission was officially sought for the purpose of this study. On the other hand, the online survey utilized a research tool originally designed by the research team. The research tool went through the process of conceptualization, consultations, literature review, and pretesting using Google form online survey platform. While qualitative inquiry includes brainstorming and consultations sessions among research team members, and handling of qualitative data from both the archives and survey.

Two sets of archival data were coded, numerized, and analyzed using MS Excel. Likewise, the online survey data in Excel form were downloaded, coded, numerized, and analyzed using MS Excel. Tables, bar charts, and line graphs were produced to represent the findings of descriptive statistics using measures of central tendency, of frequencies, percentages, mean ratings, and average rates. While the selected qualitative responses were analyzed using MaxQDA qualitative software that generated both MS Excel frequency word counts, and word clouds.

## **Findings & Discussion**

This part reports the two-part major findings from the archival data and from the online survey, including some qualitative results. First, on the general descriptive statistics of Dominican brothers who made their “first profession” between 1990 and 2015, this study finds that there is no perceptible pattern on the number of those who professed, those who became priest, and those who left the Dominican community by year of first profession. However, the mean rates of staying and completion of priesthood are relatively low indicating an observable pattern of leaving the Dominican community after finishing the first academic degree as revealed in the results of online survey. Below are details of the descriptive statistics from the archival data.

## ARCHIVAL DATA RESULTS

### On the First Profession of Vows

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Dominican brothers who made their first profession of vows between and in 1990 and 2015 by year with the total of 235 brothers. (Also see Table 7.) It indicates that year 2004 has the highest number of brothers who made their first profession (16 out of 235 brothers), followed by years 1999 and 2000, with each having 14 brothers. On the other hand, 1997 is the year with the least number of seminarians who made their first profession, with only two brothers. **Over the years, from 1990 to 2015, the average number of the Dominican brothers who made their first profession is nine.**

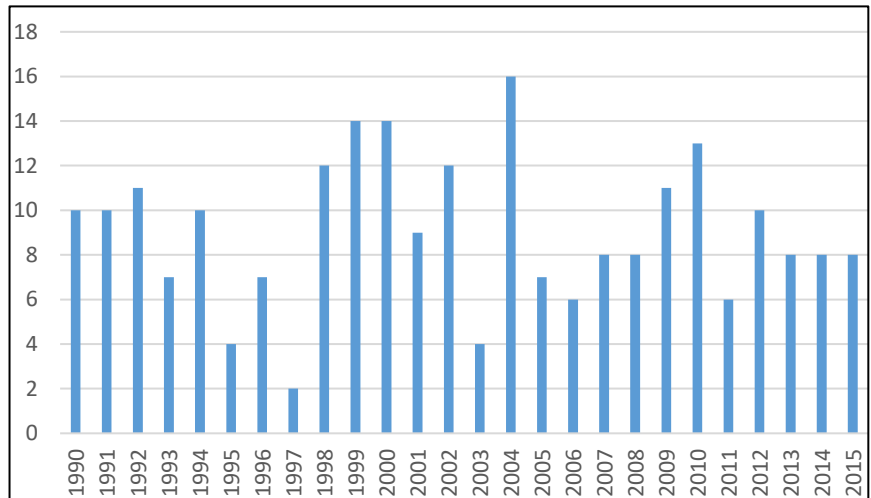
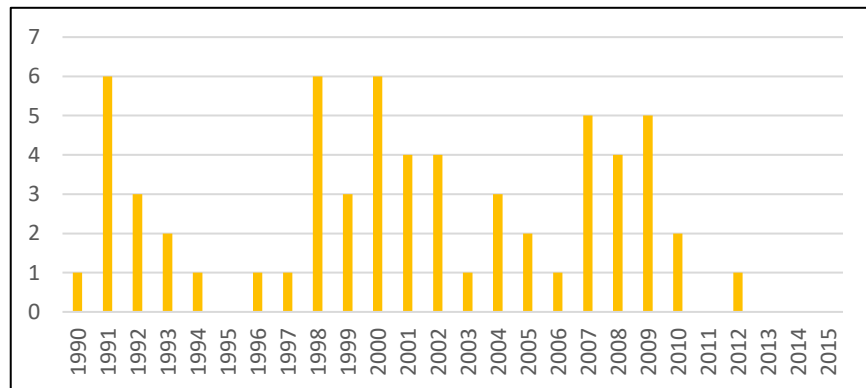


Figure 1: Bar Chart of Frequency Distribution of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015

Figure 2. Bar Chart of Frequency Distribution of First Professed Dominican Brothers Between 1990 to 2015 Ordained as Priests

### From First Profession to Priesthood

The archival data also accounted for the total number of first professed Dominican brothers between 1990 and 2015 ordained as priests is 62 (out of 235). **This means that from 1990 to 2015, one of every four (26%) Dominican brothers who made their first profession became priests** (see Figure 2) (even with subtracting the number of first professed Dominican brothers from 2013 to 2015, who hypothetically, are still in formation). Also, the years 1991, 1998, and 1999 garnered the highest production of priests, with six per each identified years.



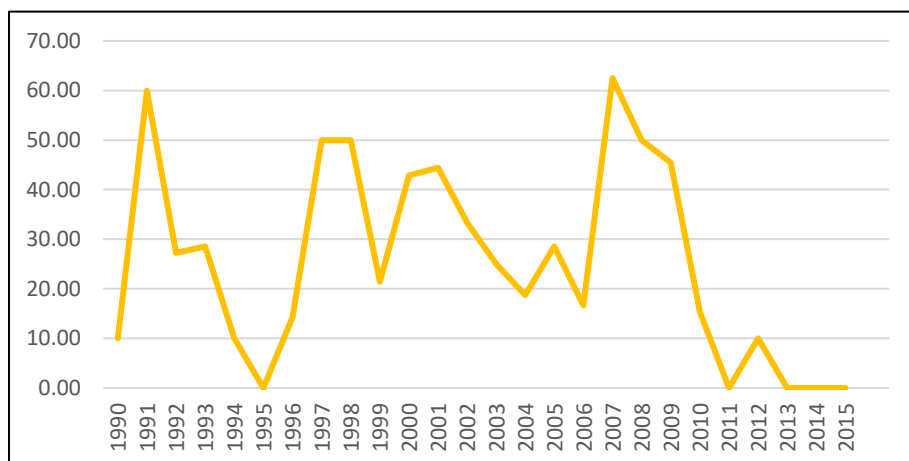


Figure 3. Line Graph of Priesthood Completion Rate of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015

Figure 3 tells a more revealing finding.

**This line graph illustrates that the rate of completion into priesthood**

**among these first professed Dominican brothers between 1990 and 2015 is relatively high in 2007, with five out of eight brothers (62.50 %), and in 1991 with six out of ten brothers (60.00 percent) ordained as priests. (See Table 8 for details.)**

### ***Those Who Remained in the Congregation***

On the other hand, archival data in *Figure 4* also provides information about the frequencies among the first professed brothers between 1990 and 2015, who remained in the Dominican congregation. Again, year 1991 registered the highest number of stayers followed by the years 1998, 2000, 2009, and 2014. **On the average, from 1990 to 2015, three of every ten first professed Dominican brothers remain in the congregation.**

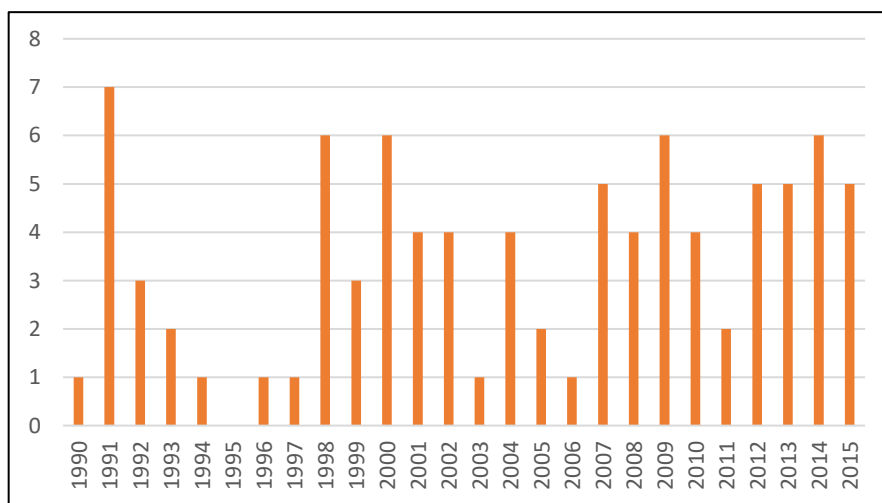
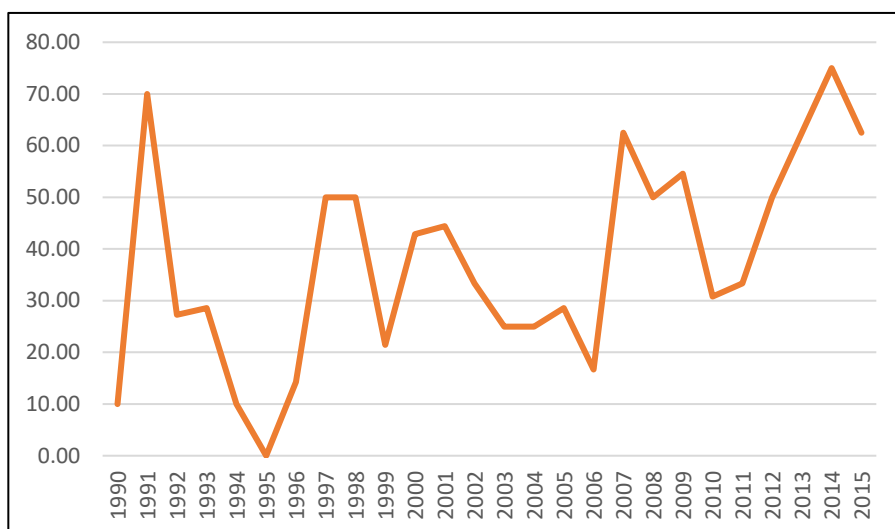


Figure 4. Bar Chart of Frequency Distribution of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015 Who Remained in the Congregation

Correspondingly, *Figure 5* demonstrates the **mean rate of stay of first professed Dominican brothers covering the period 1990 until 2015 is 37.64 %**. The upward trend in this line graph is expected as first professed Dominican brothers in recent years are

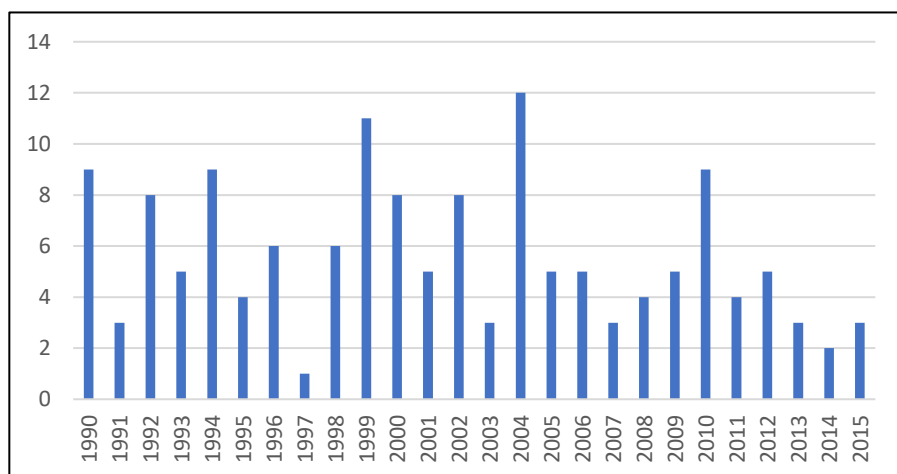


still in the early stages of their formation (See *Table 9* for more details.)

*Figure 5. Line Graph on the Annual Rate of Stay of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015*

### ***From First Profession to Leaving the Congregation***

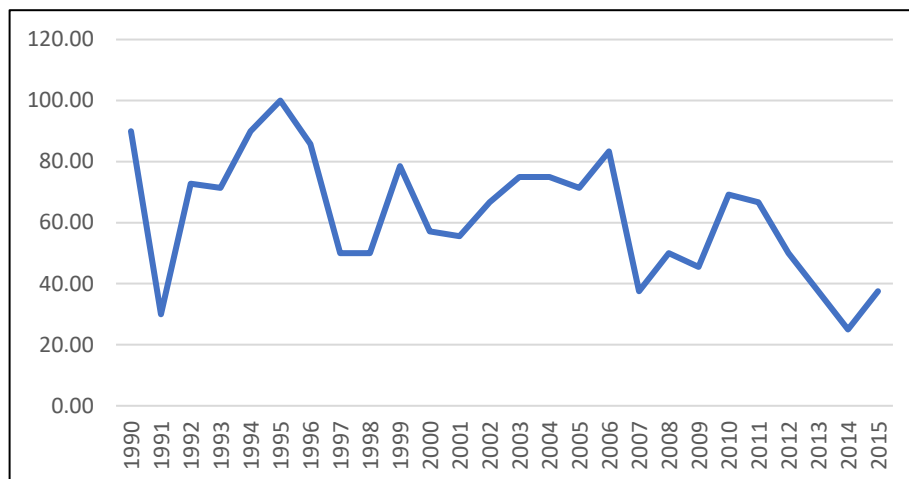
As illustrated in *Figure 6*, the archival data reveals the frequency distribution of first professed Dominican brothers from 1990 to 2015 who decided to leave the congregation. Overall, there is total of 146 leavers out of 235 first professed Dominican brothers. **This means on the average, 62% or six of every ten first professed Dominican brothers covering the 26 years (from 1990 to 2015) left the congregation.** Year 2004 indicates the highest number of leavers, followed by year 1999.



*Figure 6. Bar Chart of Frequency Distribution of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015 Who Left the Congregation*

Figure 7. Line Graph of the Rate of Leaving the Dominican Congregation by First Professed Brothers from 1990 to 2015

Correspondingly, Figure 7 depicts the line graph of the relative rate of leaving the Dominican congregation by the first



professed brothers covering the period from 1990 and 2015. (See Table 10 for details.)

**No obvious pattern is perceptible in this line graph except indicating years with highest percentage of leavers such as in 1995, four out of four brothers (100%), followed by year 1990 with nine out of ten leavers (90 %).**

## ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

This section reports the findings from the online survey in terms of the following: (a) the survey respondents' socio-demographic profile; (2) reasons for entering the seminary; (3) discernment life journey; and (4) reasons for leaving the congregation.

Generally, there seems to be no observable issues or conflict in the reported dispositions and experiences of online survey respondents before and during the formation process, as most of them reported feeling a 'sense of community', and affirmative engagements in activities and apostolates, as well as their positive notions of being "Catholic", and being part of the "Order of Preachers". The themes of their "departure stories/narratives" appear to have been a function of the discernment process.

### Online Survey Respondents' Socio-Demographic Profile

The target population of this online survey are the first professed Dominican brothers from 1990 to 2015 who left the congregation. Archival data indicates that the expected total respondents is 146 leavers. After one month of online survey employment using social media in re-establishing communication with the leavers from July 25 to August 25, 2020, a total of **32 valid respondents**, or 22% of the expected respondents participated in the online survey. This response rate representing a relatively small sample is documented as adequate in both online and paper surveys (Duncan, 2008).

The socio-demographic indicators of online survey respondents reveal that they are sparsely distributed across the coverage years of this study from 1990 to 2015 when they made their first profession vows (see *Figure 8* and *Table 11*.) Almost 60% reported being single, and 39% are married (see *Figure 9*) while educationally, online survey respondents have relatively highly educated college, master's level, and master's degree equally distributed at 26% each category, and 22% having doctoral level attainments.

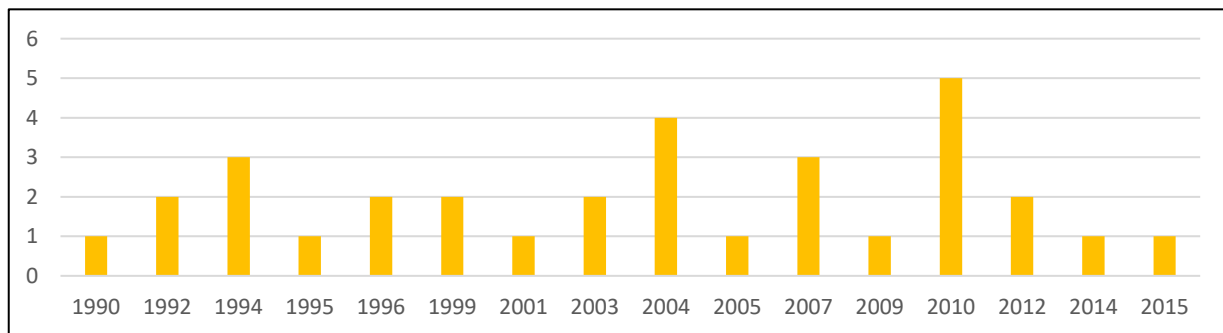


Figure 8. Bar Chart of Frequency Distribution of Online Survey Respondents by Year of First Profession

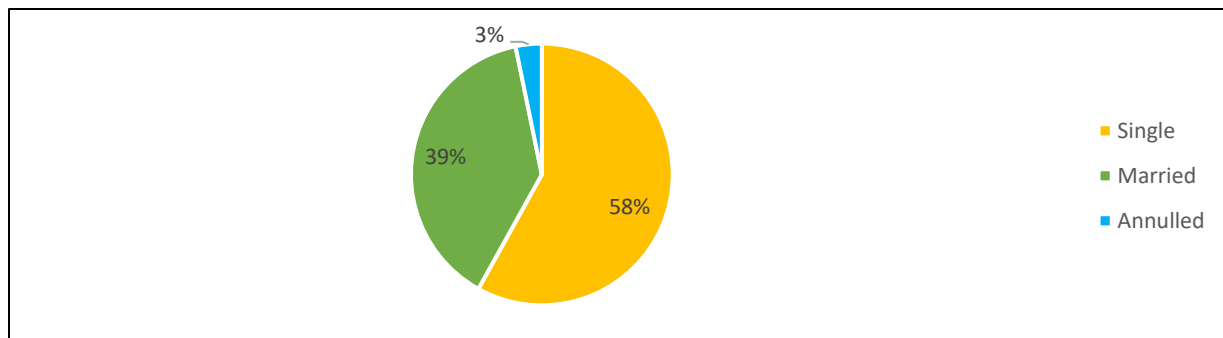


Figure 9. Pie Chart of Percentage Distribution of Online Survey Respondents by Civil Status

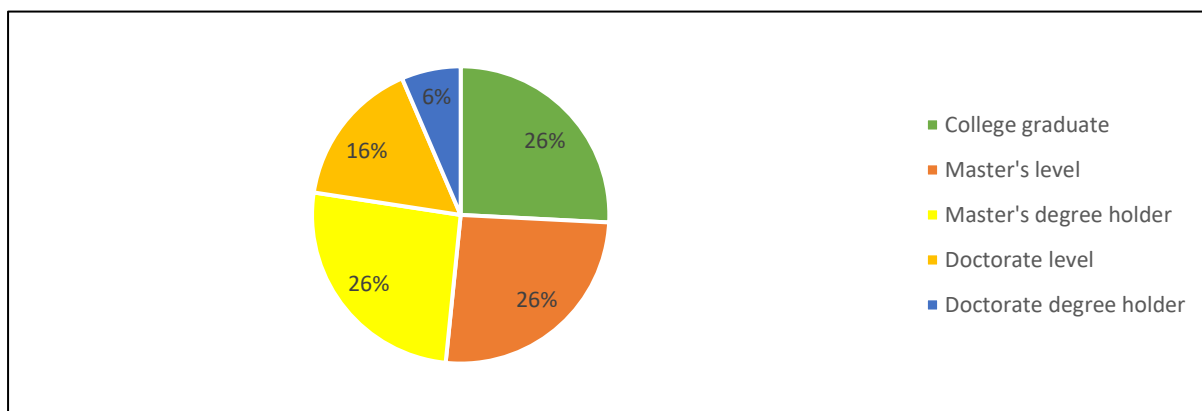
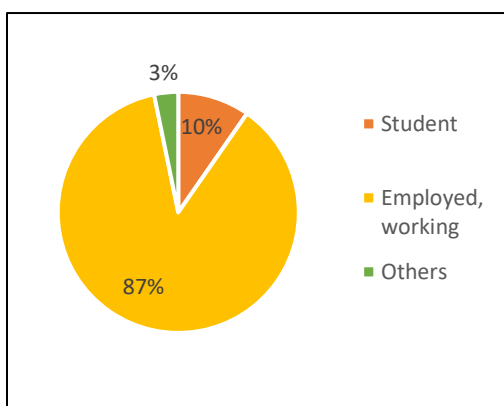


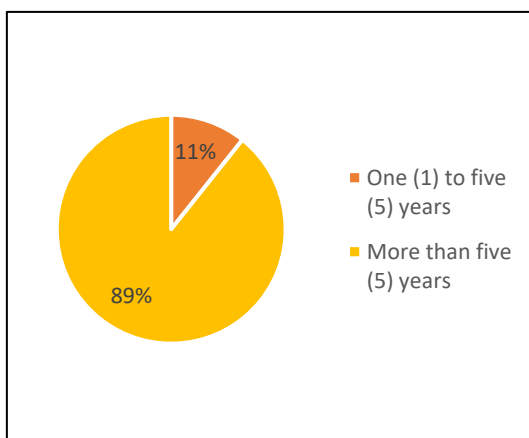
Figure 10. Pie Chart of Percentage Distribution of Online Survey Respondents by Highest Educational Attainment

Regarding work-related indicators majority of the online survey respondents are currently employed, working (87%) in the last six months as indicated in *Figure 11*(see also *Table 13*). Nine of every ten online survey respondents indicate working for more than five years (see

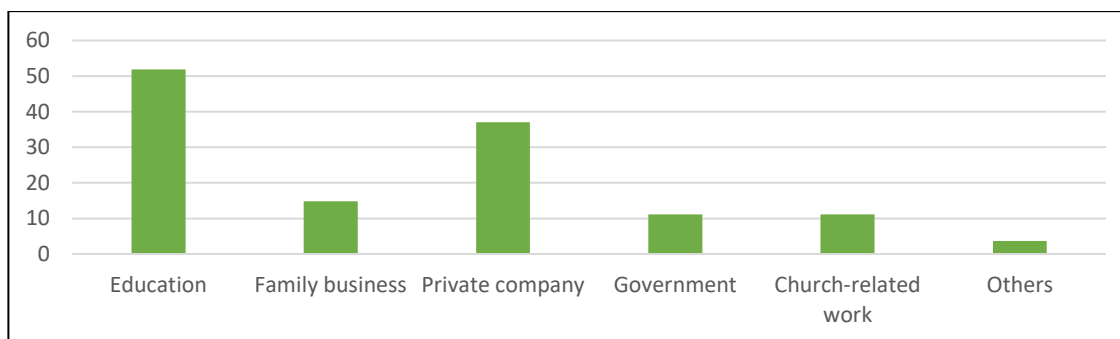
*Figure 12*) in various sectors such as education (50%), private companies (37 %), family-owned business (15%), government (11%), and Church-related work (11%). **These socio-demographic indicators indicate that online survey respondents generally are educationally, and economically well-place and are secured.**



*Figure 11. Pie Chart of Percentage Distribution of Online Survey Respondents by Main Activity in the Last Six Months*



*Figure 12. Pie Chart of Percentage Distribution of Working Online Survey Respondents by Number of Years Employed*



*Figure 13. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of the Working Online Survey Respondents by Type of Work (Multiple Response)*

## Reasons for Entering the Dominican Order

In retrospect, online respondents were asked to describe in one word or phrase their experience when they first enter the Dominican community. *Figure 14* expectedly described relatively positive experiences using word descriptors such as “exciting”, “inspiring”, “meaningful”, “discernment”, and the notion of “community”. **This word cloud exhibits ideal expectations of online survey respondents in the early stage of their formation.**

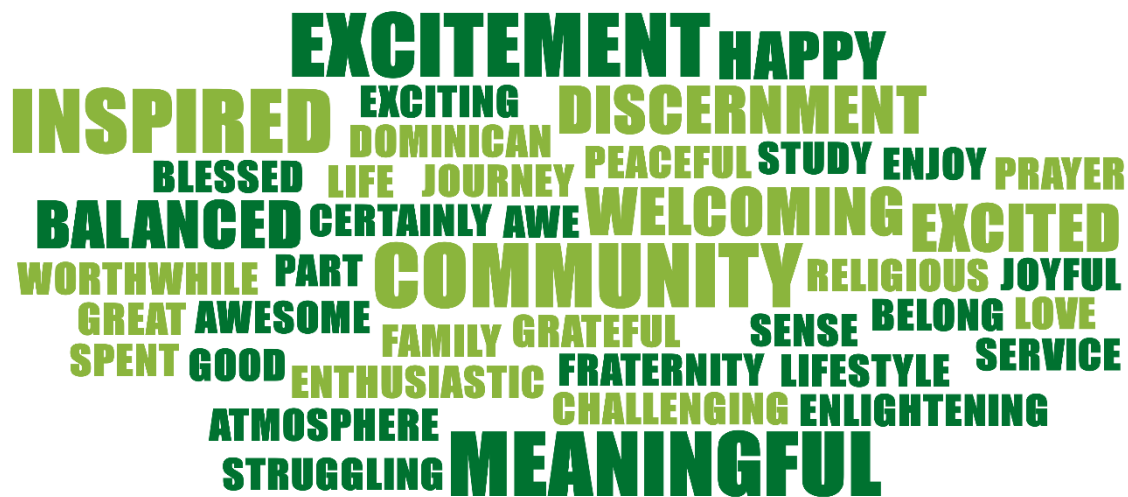
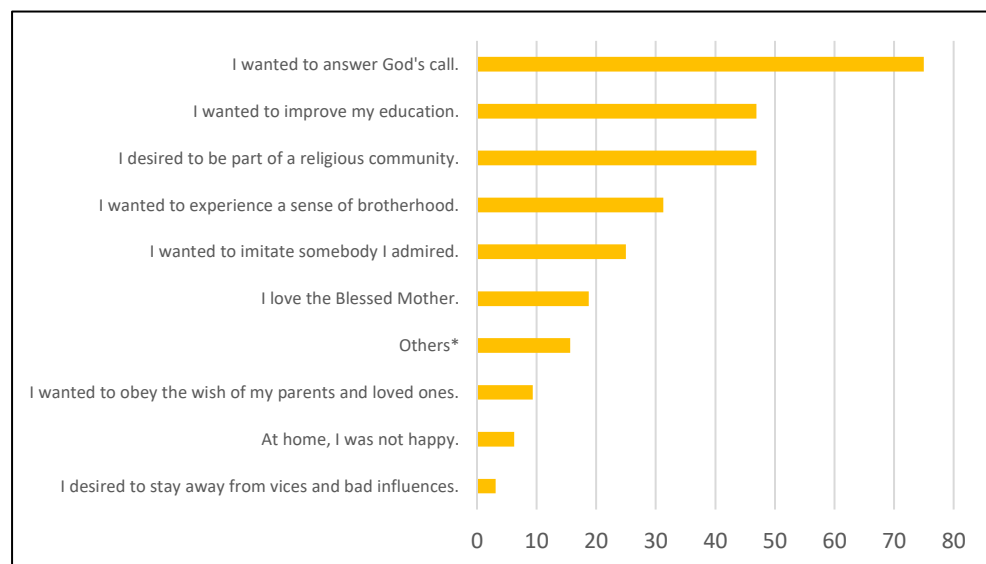


Figure 14. Word Cloud of Online Survey Respondents' Description of Their Experience Entering the Dominican Community

Figure 15. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of Selected Multiple Response Indicators That Influenced Decisions in Entering the Dominican Community



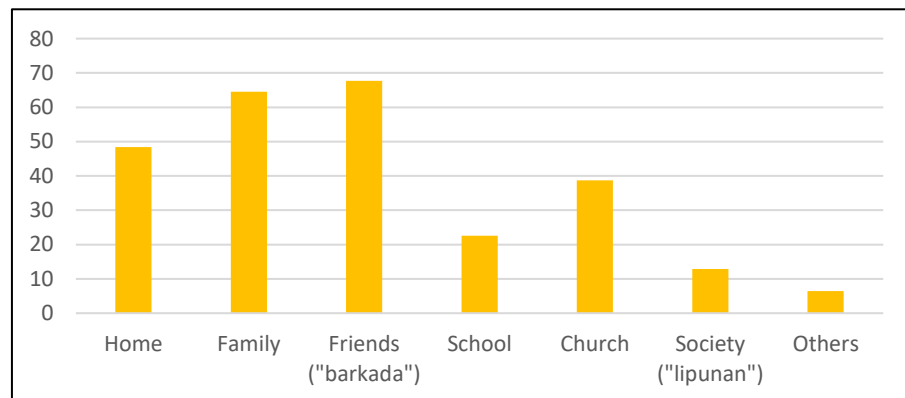
\* Others include peer influence, curiosity, and desire to live a simple life of a priest.

Figure 15 above reveals the multiple responses of online survey respondents on selected indicators that influenced their decisions to enter the Dominican community. (Also see Table 15.) Seven of every ten online survey respondents indicate, “I wanted to answer God’s call” while four of every ten of these respondents answered, “I wanted to improve my education”; and “I desired to be part of a religious community.” **These responses clearly demonstrate the salience of the notions of “vocation”, “discernment”, and “educative formation” shaping the decisions of these online survey respondents.**

### ***Discernment Life Journey***

This section unravels selected discernment process indicators in the lives of online survey respondents. It delves into their opinions and actual experiences while being part of the Dominican community. Also, this reflects the respondents’ preferences and life dispositions, which give an overview of “what is like to be a Dominican brother” in 1990 until 2015.

Figure 16. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of the “Sense of Community” Indicators by Online Survey Respondents



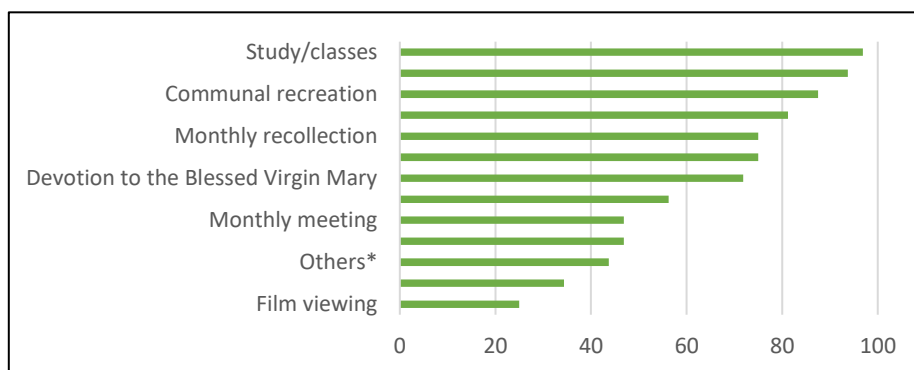
Interestingly, all online survey respondents expressed that they felt a “**sense of community**” while being with the Dominican community (see Table 16) in the context of having friends (barkada) and being part of a family (both indicated by more than 60%) followed by sense of being “home” (see

**Figure 16).**

The online survey respondents were also asked about their life experiences while living with the Dominican community. Two multiple response indicators, on activities and apostolates, reveal the varied types of involvements the online survey respondents engaged into during their stay in the congregation.

Figure 17 enumerates the list of identified most important community activities by online survey respondents while with the Dominican community (also see Table 18.) Nine of every ten respondents indicated “study/classes” as most important activity, followed by communal recreation, monthly recollection, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. **This indicates that the nature of salient activities while in the congregation revolve around studying, recreation, and engaging in religious activities.**

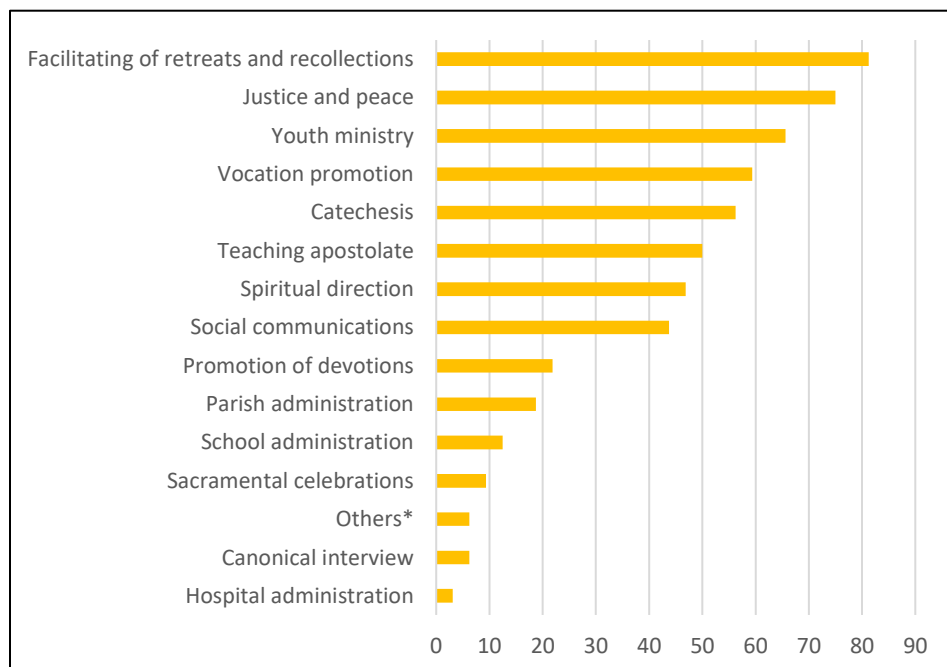
Figure 17. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of Identified Most Important Dominican Community Activities by Online Survey Respondents (Multiple Response)



\* Others include sports activities (for example, basketball), batch integration, exposure to other Dominican communities, group sharing and annual retreat, and corporate social responsibility.

Online survey respondents also reveal what apostolates were important to them while living with the Dominican community. Figure 18 shows that nine of every ten respondents considered “facilitating retreats and recollections” as an important and “very meaningful”.

Figure 18. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of Identified Most important Dominican Apostolates by Online Survey Respondent (Multiple Response)

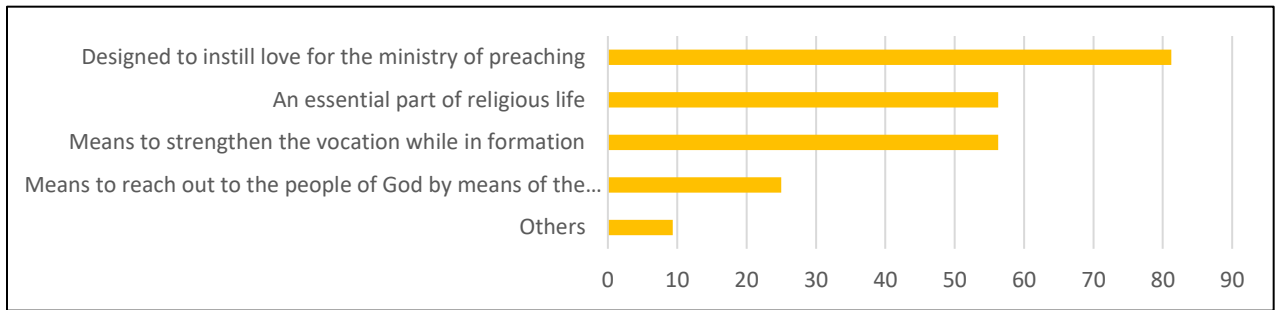


\* Others include block rosary and care for the creation.

This is closely followed by apostolates along the promotion of justice and peace, youth ministry, vocation promotion, and catechesis, which the respondents considered as important (and meaningful). Interestingly, apostolate along school administration, sacramental celebration, canonical interview, and hospital administration were identified as least important and least meaningful by online survey respondents. Correspondingly, when asked about what best described the respondents' apostolate experiences, majority of respondents overwhelmingly considered these apostolates as "designed to instill love for the ministry of preaching" reflecting clearly the spirituality of the Order the Preachers (see *Table 20*). **This finding gives a bird's eye view for the formators in identifying what types of apostolate engagements should be given more attention to aligned to the expected future works of Dominican brothers.**

*Table 1: Mean Rating of the Level of Meaningfulness of Identified Apostolates*

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Facilitating of retreats and recollections	4.387	0.955	Very meaningful
Teaching apostolate	4.200	0.847	Meaningful
Vocation promotion	4.194	1.046	Meaningful
Catechesis	4.194	0.873	Meaningful
Youth ministry	4.156	1.139	Meaningful
Spiritual direction	4.065	0.998	Meaningful
Social communications	4.031	0.933	Meaningful
Sacramental celebrations	3.967	1.189	Meaningful
Justice and peace	3.938	1.162	Meaningful
Promotion of devotions	3.867	1.196	Meaningful
Parish administration	3.690	1.168	Meaningful
School administration	3.433	1.251	Meaningful
Canonical interview	3.276	0.996	Moderately meaningful
Hospital administration	3.200	1.064	Moderately meaningful
<i>Interpretation: 1.00-1.80 = Not at all meaningful; 1.81-2.60 = Not very meaningful.  2.61-3.40 = Moderately meaningful; 3.41-4.20 = Meaningful; and  4.21-5.00 = Very meaningful</i>			



\* Others include social work.

Figure 19. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of Apostolate Descriptors by Online Survey Respondents

Regarding the academic-intellectual life indicators, the online survey respondents reveal that 80% of them completed their Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy degree, and only few of them completed a degree in Sacred Theology, and certificates in Philosophy and Teaching Program (see Figure 20 & Table 21).

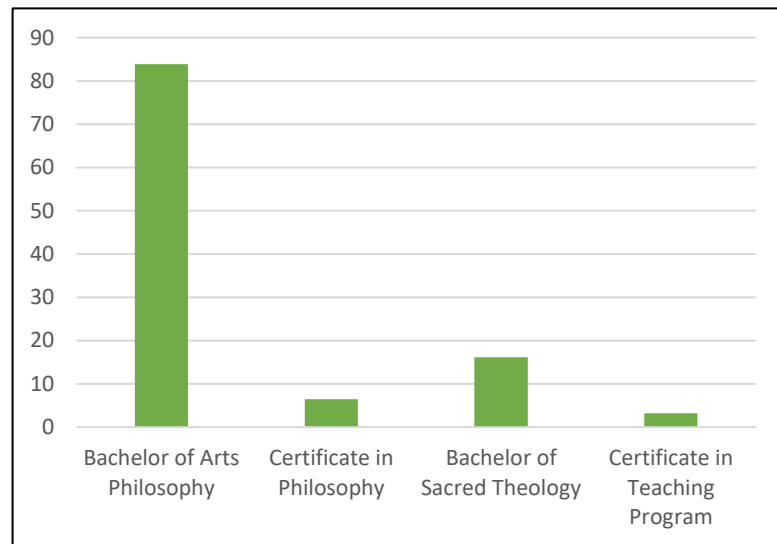


Figure 20. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of Completed Academic Degree by Online Survey Respondents

While living with the Dominican community, the online survey respondents identified three topmost academic dispositions namely "intellectual cultivation", "essential to preaching"; and "search for truth". **This vividly reflects the Dominican spirituality imbibed by the respondents during their stay in the congregation (See Figure 21& Table 22.)**

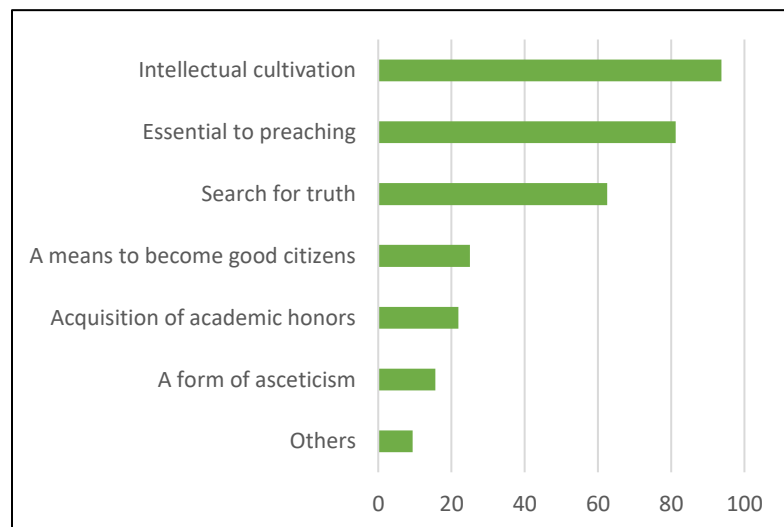


Figure 21. Bar Chart of Percentage Distribution of Academic Dispositions of Online Survey Respondents (Multiple Response)

Table 2 below indicates the mean rating of the level of engagement in selected religious practices by online survey respondents. Here, the finding is consistent with the observed respondents' disposition of being studious and prayerful. Online survey respondents often "reviewed their personal notes from the professor's discussion"; "engage with activities related to devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints"; "consult other resources from different sciences in print or electronic forms"; "study the Bible"; and "read the works of St. Thomas Aquinas" while they were with the Dominican community. They reported to less likely engage in "studying the works of the Church fathers"; and "reading Church documents" while in the congregation.

Table 2: Mean Rating of the Level of Engagement in Selected Religious Activities by Online Survey Respondents

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Review personal notes from the discussions of the professors	2.813	0.471	Always
Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints	2.750	0.440	Always
Consult other resources from different sciences in print or electronic	2.688	0.471	Always
Study the scriptures	2.548	0.506	Always
Read the works of Thomas Aquinas	2.406	0.560	Always
Study the works of the Church fathers	2.219	0.491	Sometimes
Read Church documents	2.156	0.448	Sometimes
Interpretation: 1.00 - 1.667 = Rarely; 1.668 - 2.334 = Sometimes; 2.335 - 3.00 = Always			

Correspondingly, Table 3, generally indicates their active high engagements with selected religious practices while they were part of the Dominican community. The three topmost highly rated practices are (1) attend the Holy Eucharist; (2) join the morning and evening liturgies; and (3) engage in personal prayers. **This indicates active religious engagements of online survey respondents during their formation years.**

*Table 3: Mean Rating of the Frequency of Engagement with Selected Religious Practices by Online Survey Respondents*

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Attend the Holy Eucharist	2.938	0.246	Always
Join the Morning and Evening Liturgies	2.938	0.246	Always
Engage in personal prayers	2.938	0.246	Always
Attend retreats and recollection	2.844	0.369	Always
Meditate on the mysteries of the Holy Rosary	2.813	0.397	Always
Novena/Pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary	2.781	0.420	Always
Venerate St. Dominic and other saints of the Order	2.750	0.440	Always
Adore the Blessed Sacrament	2.656	0.483	Always
Pray the Liturgy of the Hours in secret	2.188	0.693	Sometimes
Interpretation: 1.00 - 1.667 = Rarely; 1.668 - 2.334 = Sometimes; 2.335 - 3.00 = Always			

When the online survey respondents were asked to recall and assess their general experience living with the Dominican community given a set of situational indicators, the research finding in **Table 4 directs attention to the academic, missionary, and communal nature of Dominican formation.** The online survey respondents posted strong agreements with the indicators, “Dominican community cultivates good study habits” and “The demands of studying in the Dominican Order is challenging.” While the online survey respondents agree with the following indicators, that “Dominican community teaches the best techniques to become good preachers” and in “Developing good relations with fellow Dominican brothers is easy while with fellow Dominican brothers.”

*Table 4: Mean Rating of the Level of Agreement with Selected Situational Indicators While Living with the Dominican Community by Online Survey Respondents*

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Dominican community cultivates good study habits.	4.594	0.665	Strongly Agree
The demands of studying in the Dominican Order is challenging.	4.500	0.672	Strongly Agree
Dominican community teaches the best techniques to become good preachers.	4.000	0.880	Agree
Developing good relations with fellow Dominican brothers is easy while with fellow Dominican brothers.	3.875	0.976	Agree
High level of stress is expected while living under the Dominican Order.	3.250	1.136	Neither Agree nor Disagree

The likelihood to fail in academic courses is high while living with the Dominican community.	2.406	1.241	Disagree
Interpretation: 1.00-1.80 = Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 = Agree. 2.61-3.40 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 3.41-4.20 = Agree; and 4.21-5.00 = Strongly agree			

Interestingly, the following *Word Cloud* representations illustrate word/phrase descriptors reflecting the online survey respondents' perceptions of challenges while with the Dominican community in *Figure 22*; and how they see the Order of Preachers as a religious congregation in *Figure 23*. The former relatively depicts concerns on "spiritual challenges", "academics" and "formators". **This appears to indicate the online survey respondents struggle on balancing academic requirements with spiritual development. Also, the emerging theme in this Word Cloud indicate relational concerns with formators, personal identity issues, and dynamics of communal life.**



*Figure 22. Word Cloud of Word/Phrase Descriptors of Challenges Faced by Online Survey Respondents While in the Congregation*

The latter, on the online survey respondents' perception of the *Order of Preachers (OP)* **generally captures a good, favorable characterization of the Dominican Community from the perspective of leavers.** Some salient descriptors are being "intellectuals", "religious", and "competitive". Other descriptors pertain to the communal nature of religious life such as "family", "fraternity", and "community", and other identified concepts reflect OP's influence on the respondents' worldview.



Figure 24. Bar Chart of Distribution of Online Survey Respondents by Year When They Left the Dominican Order

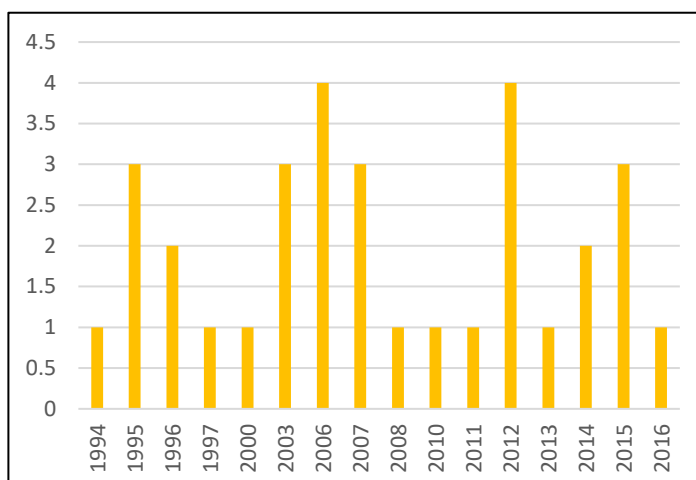
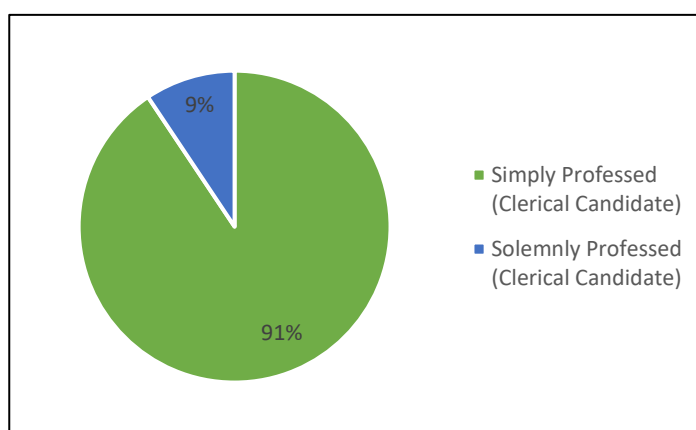


Figure 25. Pie Chart of Percentage Distribution of Online Survey Respondents Religious Status When They Left the Dominican Order



Regarding the online survey respondents' general condition when they left the Dominican Order, *Table 5* reveals that most of them left with "very good" state of "physical health", "academic standing", and "relationship with fellow Dominican brothers" Moreover, they reported that their "mental health", "relationship with O.P. administrators", and "family's financial situation" are relatively "good". Only "romantic relationship", was reported as "fair" in status when they left the congregation. **This finding appears to indicate that decisions to leave the Dominican community were informed and grounded on sound decisions and contexts. Also, this may be attributed to sensible formation program that allows meaningful discernment process.**

Table 5: Mean Rating of Online Survey Respondents' Condition by Selected Indicators

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Your physical health	3.59	0.98	Very Good
Your academic standing	3.56	0.80	Very Good
Your relations with fellow Dominican brothers	3.56	1.11	Very Good
Your mental health (for example, depression, anxiety)	3.16	1.25	Good

Your relations with O.P. administrators	3.00	1.05	Good
The financial situation of your family	2.66	1.18	Good
Your romantic love relations	2.19	0.91	Fair
Interpretation: 1.00-1.80 = poor; 1.81-2.60 = fair; 2.61-3.40 = good; 3.41-4.20 = very good; and 4.21-5.00 = excellent			

*Table 6: Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Reasons for Leaving the Dominican Order by the Online Survey Respondents*

Reasons	Frequency	%
I wanted to feel a sense of freedom and to make my own life choices.	14	43.75
Others	13	40.63
I need to work to improve my family's financial situation.	12	37.50
I wished to become a better person.	9	28.13
I realized that my vocation is to get married.	7	21.88
I felt bored while with the Dominican community.	5	15.63
The demands (study, community activity, etc.) were stressful.	5	15.63
My experiences with the Dominican community were depressing, which affected my mental health.	5	15.63
I desired to be employed in my dream profession.	3	9.38
I find no meaning in staying with the Dominican community.	3	9.38
I sought to become part of other religious communities.	2	6.25
I need to personally take care of my sick family members.	2	6.25
While with the Dominican community, I suffered from physical illness.	1	3.13
I wanted to pursue my dream course.	1	3.13
I felt that my homosexual orientation did not fit the religious life.	1	3.13

\*Others include disagreement with seminary administrators; requested to leave the seminary; weak prayer life; feeling unworthy and forgotten; and due to the scandals involving Church authorities

Table 6 offers an array of reasons why online survey respondents left the congregation. Topmost responses were about “feeling a sense of freedom and making own life decisions”, “other responses” (including “disagreement with seminary administrators”; “requested to leave the seminary”; “weak prayer life”; “feeling unworthy and forgotten”; and “due to the scandals involving Church authorities”), and intention to “work to improve their family’s financial situation”. **These responses generally indicate concerns about one’s own vocation and career, which seems to be a function of a contextualized discernment process.**

The online survey ends by asking the respondents, “Are you generally happy with the Catholic Church? Why or why not?” Majority (88 %) of online survey respondents

reported being generally happy (See Table 14.). The reasons, as shown in Figure 26, reveal the respondents significant valuation of the concepts of “church”, “faith” “Catholic” and “God”. It indicates that these online survey respondents, even if they left the congregation, remain seeing the Catholic Church in the positive, hopeful, and meaningful light.

Can this be a living testimony that formation in the Dominican Order has indeed, despite the phenomenon of attrition and departures, is worthwhile, and worth it?



Figure 26. Word Cloud of Online Survey Respondents' View If They Are Generally Happy with the Catholic Church

## Some Insights and Recommendations

This rapid-appraisal, three-month study, conducted amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, reflects the formation narratives of first professed brothers in the Dominican Province of the Philippines covering 26 years, from 1990 until 2015. The study dealt with two important dimensions. First is understanding the phenomenon of attrition in the context of discernment process, and second, is to know why Dominican brothers leave the community.

Archival research findings tell the story that indeed, “attrition”, that is **reduction in numbers of those in the Dominican congregation is clearly observed**. That is, over the years, six of every ten first professed Dominican brothers left the congregation, and only 62 from the total number of 235 (who were first professed) or 26% became priests (see Figure 2). **Arguably, if seen from an economic-investment point of view, there was indeed a loss of human capital resources that could have ensured the sustenance of the life of the congregation.**

However, if seen **from the sociological lens of religious discernment process, the observed attrition statistics (from both the archival and online survey), are first expected, and second, contextually situated in producing unexpected results.** Attrition is expected in any formative context, especially in religious congregations due to the systematic and rigid nature of training and education. As with the many specialized professions, it is expected that only few survive the process, in this case, involving the dynamics of religious discernment. Taking-off from this discernment view, what appears to be salient in research data was the influential and formative power of the Dominican congregation in the country to consistently produce brothers and priests over the last 25 years despite the observed declining trend in the number of men and women desiring to be religious servant/workers (Cenci & Filippim, 2017; Chandler, 1986; Ebaugh, 1993; Mickens, 2015; Stark & Finke, 2000). **Instead of looking into why majority of brothers left, it may be equally important to assess what structures and contexts worked for the few who stayed. Such shift in perspective may produce a revitalized, more inviting, and creative vocational opportunities for a deeper, meaningful discernment process to occur in the future formation of Dominican brothers in the next 50 years of the Province.**

As with the “unexpected results”, the research findings from the online survey suggest that **the entire discernment journey is shaped by ideal perceptions, rigorous study, religious activities, and practices, as well as relational issues.** What seems to be salient was that the experience of being a Dominican brother, from entering to becoming part of the congregation until reaching the decision to leave the Order, indicate that the general experience was relatively positive and fruitful. **The formation years engenders experiencing a “sense of community” nestled in an environment that highly values the intertwined active engagements to both studying and praying.** As a result, socio-demographically, the Dominican congregation, in the context of formation, produces degree holders, specifically graduates of Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, a stage point in the entire formation process where the likelihood to leave the congregation is relatively high. **It seems that this trend is a function of the discernment process where such stage collides with what we call in youth studies as points of “transition”** (Batan, 2004; Bynner & Chisholm, 1998; Chisholm & du Bois-Reymond, 1993; Galaway & Hudson, 1996; Heinz, 2009). This is one research area that in the future, may merit attention in the context of religious formation.

Thus, it is **highly recommended that exhaustive, systematic/organized & regular profiling and updating of information of all members,** especially the new ones comprising the Dominican Province be implemented. This includes, but not limited to, creating for example, a documentation template with information from pre-novitiate to making professions (first, renewal, solemn) as well as year of ordination, exit details, academic status, pastoral assignments, etc. Also, a creation of an accessible electronic archival system that organizes and compiles all relevant files, letters of approval,

departure, dispensation, may contribute to the systematic understanding of the lives of Dominicans in the country who meet for a Provincial Chapter conference every four years. In so doing, **the discernment process in knowing and discovering the vision and mission for the Dominicans remains wanting, purposive, and meaningful.**

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Limited Relevant Literature Review Tabular Map**

<b>NO .</b>	<b>IN-TEXT CITATION</b>	<b>DIMENSION</b>	<b>RESEARCH APPROACH</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODS</b>	<b>MAJOR FINDINGS</b>
1	Lee, 1969	Vocational persistence	Quantitative	Secondary data analysis	<p>There is no significant differences between seminarians who stay and those who leave in terms of aptitude and achievement variables, suggesting that leavers are not unsuitable in their ability to accomplish academic requirements.</p> <p>Persisters are significantly more submissive and have higher musical and social interests (subjective personality) that the leavers. On the other hand, leavers have higher scientific and literary interests (objective personality).</p>
2	McClung, 1972	Reasons for not entering the seminary	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>The relevant findings are: (1) the parents with no interest to cooperate and support the Church causes youth to not enter the seminary. Improving conditions under which youth attend seminary will improve seminary enrollment; (2) adoption of in-service training for parents regarding the real purposes and benefits of seminary will result in increased enrollment; (3) the priesthood leaders need assistance in providing a more constructive seminary program; and (4) very little change needs to be made in the quality of instruction or in the seminary teacher's approach to his classes.</p>
3	Stark & Finke, 2000	Decline of Catholic religious vocations	Quantitative	Secondary data analysis	<p>The decline of Catholic religious vocation in Europe and North America followed the actions taken at Vatican II, which greatly reduced the rewards of the religious life while maintaining the high costs of vocations (such as celibacy, obedience, and poverty).</p> <p>The likelihood of young Catholics to participate in Catholic religious vocation became little because they recognized that it entailed a negative cost-benefit ratio.</p>

NO .	IN-TEXT CITATION	DIMENSION	RESEARCH APPROACH	RESEARCH METHODS	MAJOR FINDINGS
4	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2008	Decline of Catholic religious vocations	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>Two-thirds of the US Catholic respondents noticed the decline in number of priests in recent decades. Half of the Catholic respondents reported that it did not personally affect them; only 15 percent say it has affected them.</p> <p>Nearly two-thirds of the Catholic respondents would support sharing a priest with one or more other parishes in the case of having no resident priest. More than half of them also support the idea of bringing in priest from outside US; increasing the use of deacons; and asking retired priest to come in and do more.</p>
5	Manullang & De Guzman, 2008	Reasons for entering the seminary	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>The main goals of main adolescents in the Philippines and Indonesia to enter seminary were (1) subjective organization goals; (2) cognitive goals; and (3) integrative social relationship goals.</p> <p>On the other hand, they recognized that God's call was not yet clear and entering the seminary would help them to discover self-identity and discern their vocation.</p>
6	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2012	Consideration of Vocation and Religious Life	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>12 percent of male US non-married Catholics considered taking up religious life at least seriously; and ten percent of female responded the same. Those interested were found to be active in Church-related activities and religious services.</p>
7	Calibo & Oracion, 2014	Reasons for entering the seminary	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>The study found out that secular reasons (such as social recognition, social involvement, social influence, and social vehicle) are as equally important as spiritual reasons in understanding the entrance of Filipino youth to seminary.</p>
8	Sunardi, 2014	Commitment to Priestly Vocation	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>Priestly commitment increases with level of agreeableness, defensiveness, and masculinity; and intrinsic religiosity, perceived sacredness of the priesthood, and relationship with bishop/superior. On the other hand, parental care and increased level of extraversion and loneliness decrease it.</p>

NO .	IN-TEXT CITATION	DIMENSION	RESEARCH APPROACH	RESEARCH METHODS	MAJOR FINDINGS
9	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2016	College experiences and vocational discernment	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>The following reasons encouraged men to pursue religious vocation: (1) their personal prayer life, (2) the example of a priest and/or religious, (3) a sense of being called by God, (4) a desire to serve God, (5) the encouragement of friends, and (5) their participation in the Mass. Among women, the main reasons are: (1) a sense of being called by God, (2) devotional practices, (3) friends and family, as well as (4) the culture and community of their college.</p> <p>On the hand, the following discouraged men to pursue religious vocation : (1) the culture and environment of their college campus, (2) other career ambitions or plans, (3) women and dating, (4) the requirement of celibacy, (5) lack of support from family and friends, and (6) the poor example of some priests, religious, and/or seminarians. Among women, the main reasons were (1) family or friends discouraging them, (2) desires for marriage and family, (3) demands of social life and being a student, and (4) their own fears or self-doubts.</p>
10	Pietkiewicz, 2016	Reasons for changing vocation	Qualitative	Interview	<p>Literatures show that clergy usually suffer from depression and burn-out.</p> <p>Priest encountered conflict between needs and aspirations and social role, and the expectations made of them.</p> <p>They found making decisions about vocational change frustrating and stressful because of concerns about breaking community norms, fear of social stigma, and disbelief in their ability to cope in lay life.</p>

NO .	IN-TEXT CITATION	DIMENSION	RESEARCH APPROACH	RESEARCH METHODS	MAJOR FINDINGS
11	Cenci & Filippim, 2017	Retention in religious life and institutional features	Qualitative	Survey questionnaire	<p>According to this study, the motivational elements to attract and retain people on a religious institution include: (1) missionary experiences, (2) charisma and inspirational life of founders and the testimony of people already consecrated; (3) humanization of community coexistence; (4) search for self-actualization and for the sacred, to be happy; (5) doing good, believe in a cause, Jesus Christ's project; and (6) clothing (habit/cassock) and the disciplined way of life.</p> <p>On the other hand, the motivational factors causing dissatisfaction and resulting in leaving a religious institution include: (1) overload of activities, emphasis on professional life and lack of participation in decision making processes; (2) difficulty of living the option for the poor, members gentrification; (3) aspects related to affection and sexuality; (4) distance from the sacred, loss of joy and sense of consecration; (5) fragile fraternal relations, coexistence and generational conflicts; and (6) deviation of the focus of the essential mission of religious inst., difficulties to adapt to the structures.</p>

NO .	IN-TEXT CITATION	DIMENSION	RESEARCH APPROACH	RESEARCH METHODS	MAJOR FINDINGS
12	Uecker & Longest, 2017	Young adults' perspective on science and religion and religious commitment	Quantitative	Secondary data analysis	<p>Young adults who have strong faith tend to: (1) accommodate scientific knowledge into their religious perspective, or (2) reject scientific knowledge that directly contradicts their religious beliefs about the origins of the world.</p> <p>Young adults have higher likelihood to have lower religious commitment when they view science and religion as independent institutions, lending support to secularization ideas about how social differentiation secularizes individuals. Moreover, a mere exposure to scientific knowledge, in terms of majoring in biology or acknowledging conflict between the teachings of religion and science, is usually not sufficient to undermine religious commitment.</p>

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## APPENDIX D

### ADDITIONAL TABLES OF FREQUENCIES & PERCENTAGES

*Table 7: Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Dominican Brothers Who Made Their First Profession from 1990 to 2015*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
1990	10	4.26
1991	10	4.26
1992	11	4.68
1993	7	2.98
1994	10	4.26
1995	4	1.70
1996	7	2.98
1997	2	0.85
1998	12	5.11
1999	14	5.96
2000	14	5.96
2001	9	3.83
2002	12	5.11
2003	4	1.70
2004	16	6.81
2005	7	2.98
2006	6	2.55
2007	8	3.40
2008	8	3.40
2009	11	4.68
2010	13	5.53
2011	6	2.55
2012	10	4.26
2013	8	3.40
2014	8	3.40
2015	8	3.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 8. Annual Completion Rate of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015

Year	Number of First Professed Brothers	Number of Brothers Who Became Priests	Completion Rate
1990	10	1	10.00
1991	10	6	60.00
1992	11	3	27.27
1993	7	2	28.57
1994	10	1	10.00
1995	4	0	0.00
1996	7	1	14.29
1997	2	1	50.00
1998	12	6	50.00
1999	14	3	21.43
2000	14	6	42.86
2001	9	4	44.44
2002	12	4	33.33
2003	4	1	25.00
2004	16	3	18.75
2005	7	2	28.57
2006	6	1	16.67
2007	8	5	62.50
2008	8	4	50.00
2009	11	5	45.45
2010	13	2	15.38
2011	6	0	0.00
2012	10	1	10.00
2013	8	0	0.00
2014	8	0	0.00
2015	8	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>62</b>	

*Table 9. Annual Rate of Stay of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of First Professed Brothers</b>	<b>Number of Brothers Who Stayed</b>	<b>Rate of Staying</b>
1990	10	1	10.00
1991	10	7	70.00
1992	11	3	27.27
1993	7	2	28.57
1994	10	1	10.00
1995	4	0	0.00
1996	7	1	14.29
1997	2	1	50.00
1998	12	6	50.00
1999	14	3	21.43
2000	14	6	42.86
2001	9	4	44.44
2002	12	4	33.33
2003	4	1	25.00
2004	16	4	25.00
2005	7	2	28.57
2006	6	1	16.67
2007	8	5	62.50
2008	8	4	50.00
2009	11	6	54.55
2010	13	4	30.77
2011	6	2	33.33
2012	10	5	50.00
2013	8	5	62.50
2014	8	6	75.00
2015	8	5	62.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>89</b>	

Table 10. Annual Rate of Leaving of First Professed Dominican Brothers from 1990 to 2015

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Brothers who made their First Profession</b>	<b>Number of Brothers who Left</b>	<b>Rate of Leaving</b>
1990	10	9	90.00
1991	10	3	30.00
1992	11	8	72.73
1993	7	5	71.43
1994	10	9	90.00
1995	4	4	100.00
1996	7	6	85.71
1997	2	1	50.00
1998	12	6	50.00
1999	14	11	78.57
2000	14	8	57.14
2001	9	5	55.56
2002	12	8	66.67
2003	4	3	75.00
2004	16	12	75.00
2005	7	5	71.43
2006	6	5	83.33
2007	8	3	37.50
2008	8	4	50.00
2009	11	5	45.45
2010	13	9	69.23
2011	6	4	66.67
2012	10	5	50.00
2013	8	3	37.50
2014	8	2	25.00
2015	8	3	37.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>146</b>	

*Table 11. Frequency & Percentage Distribution First Professed Brothers  
by Year of First Profession*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1990	1	3.13
1992	2	6.25
1994	3	9.38
1995	1	3.13
1996	2	6.25
1999	2	6.25
2001	1	3.13
2003	2	6.25
2004	4	12.50
2005	1	3.13
2007	3	9.38
2009	1	3.13
2010	5	15.63
2012	2	6.25
2014	1	3.13
2015	1	3.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Table 12. Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Online Survey Respondents  
By Socio-demographic Indicators*

<b>Socio-demographic Information</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	18	58.06
Married	12	38.71
Annulled	1	3.23
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>		
College graduate	8	25.81
Master's level	8	25.81
Master's degree holder	8	25.81
Doctorate level	5	16.13
Doctorate degree holder	2	6.45
<b>Main Activity for the Last Six Months</b>		
Student	3	9.68
Employed, working	27	87.10
Others	1	3.23

*Table 13. Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Working Respondent's by Selected Indicators*

<b>Employment Profile</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Number of Years Employed</b>		
One (1) to five (5) years	3	10.71
More than five (5) years	25	89.29
<b>Type of Work</b>		
Education	14	51.85
Private company	10	37.04
Family business	4	14.81
Government	3	11.11
Church-related work	3	11.11
Others	1	3.70

*Table 14. Are you generally happy with the Catholic Church?*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	28	87.50
No	4	12.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Table 15. Frequency and Percentages of Reasons for Entering the Seminary by Online Survey Respondents*

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
I wanted to answer God's call.	24	75.00
I wanted to improve my education.	15	46.88
I desired to be part of a religious community.	15	46.88
I wanted to experience a sense of brotherhood.	10	31.25
I wanted to imitate somebody I admired.	8	25.00
I love the Blessed Mother.	6	18.75
Others	5	15.63
I wanted to obey the wish of my parents and loved ones.	3	9.38
At home, I was not happy.	2	6.25
I desired to stay away from vices and bad influences.	1	3.13

Table 16. When you were with the Order of Preachers, did you feel a sense of community?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	32	100.00
No	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 17. Frequency and Percentages of "Sense of Community" Indicators by Online Survey Respondents

<b>Resemblance</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Home	15	48.39
Family	20	64.52
Friends ("barkada")	21	67.74
School	7	22.58
Church	12	38.71
Society ("lipunan")	4	12.90
Others	2	6.45

Table 18. Most Important Dominican Community Activities Identified by Online Survey Respondents

<b>Community Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Study/classes	31	96.88
Communal prayers	30	93.75
Communal recreation	28	87.50
Community outing	26	81.25
Meals	24	75.00
Monthly recollection	24	75.00
Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary	23	71.88
Monthly spree	18	56.25
Casual conversation	15	46.88
Monthly meeting	15	46.88
Others	14	43.75
Devotion/novena to the Saints	11	34.38
Film viewing	8	25.00

*Table 19. Most Important Dominican Apostolates Identified by Online Survey Respondents*

<b>Apostolate</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Facilitating of retreats and recollections	26	81.25
Justice and peace	24	75.00
Youth ministry	21	65.63
Vocation promotion	19	59.38
Catechesis	18	56.25
Teaching apostolate	16	50.00
Spiritual direction	15	46.88
Social communications	14	43.75
Promotion of devotions	7	21.88
Parish administration	6	18.75
School administration	4	12.50
Sacramental celebrations	3	9.38
Canonical interview	2	6.25
Others	2	6.25
Hospital administration	1	3.13

*Table 20. Best description of Dominican Apostolates by Online Survey Respondents*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Designed to instill love for the ministry of preaching	26	81.25
Means to strengthen the vocation while in formation	18	56.25
An essential part of religious life	18	56.25
Means to reach out to the people of God by means of the digital platforms	8	25
Others	3	9.375

*Table 21. Highest Academic Formation Completed by Online Survey Respondents*

<b>Dominican Academic Formation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bachelor of Arts Philosophy	26	83.87
Certificate in Philosophy	2	6.45
Bachelor of Sacred Theology	5	16.13
Certificate in Teaching Program	1	3.23

*Table 22. Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Academic Dispositions of Online Survey Respondents*

<b>Disposition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Intellectual cultivation	30	93.75
Essential to preaching	26	81.25
Search for truth	20	62.50
A means to become good citizens	8	25.00
Acquisition of academic honors	7	21.88
A form of asceticism	5	15.63
Others	3	9.38

*Table 23. Frequency & Percentage Distribution of Online Survey Respondents By Year When They Left the Dominican Order*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1994	1	3.13
1995	3	9.38
1996	2	6.25
1997	1	3.13
2000	1	3.13
2003	3	9.38
2006	4	12.50
2007	3	9.38
2008	1	3.13
2010	1	3.13
2011	1	3.13
2012	4	12.50
2013	1	3.13
2014	2	6.25
2015	3	9.38
2016	1	3.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Table 24. Distribution of Respondents by Religious Status Before Leaving the Order*

<b>Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Simply Professed (Clerical Candidate)	29	90.63
Solemnly Professed (Clerical Candidate)	3	9.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.00</b>