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Bridging the Gap: Assessing and Addressing Training Needs in the Social Communication Ministry of a Religious Institution

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Abstract:- This study evaluates the training needs of the Social Communication Ministry at SNT Cathedral located I Cabanatuan City, focusing on improving the ministry's communication strategies through enhanced ICT competencies. Using a descriptive research approach, a Training Needs Assessment Form was employed to gather data on the ministry members' current skills in areas such as basic computer operations, internet usage, and data management. The respondents, consisting of Junior High School, Senior High School, and College-level participants, were surveyed to determine their proficiency levels and training gaps. The findings revealed a strong interest in multimedia skills, particularly photo and video editing, as well as a need for further training in office productivity tools and maintaining online professionalism. Key areas for development included internet troubleshooting, data security, and health and safety practices. Based on the assessment, a tailored training proposal was designed to address these gaps, aiming to enhance the ministry's overall efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling its communication and outreach objectives. This study underscores the importance of targeted training programs in community-based organizations to optimize ICT capabilities and advance organizational goals.

Keywords:- *TNA, ICT Competency, Social Communication Ministry, Multimedia Skills, Data Management*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the effective use of technology and communication tools is essential for organizations striving to enhance their outreach and engagement efforts (Duffet & Thomas, 2024). This is particularly significant for religious and community-based organizations, where communication plays a critical role in building connections and promoting activities (Ghafran & Yazmin, 2024). At St. Nicholas Tolentine (SNT) Cathedral, the Social Communication Ministry is tasked with overseeing and enhancing the church's communication strategies, both within the parish and in the broader community.

To ensure that the members of this ministry are well-equipped to perform their roles effectively. Similarly, McGrath and Yamada (2023) said that it is crucial to understand their current skill levels and identify areas where further training is needed. Addressing this need, the partnership between SNT Cathedral and the researchers has led to a focused assessment aimed at evaluating the specific training requirements of the ministry members.

This study employs a descriptive research method to offer a detailed examination of the competencies present among the Social Communication Ministry members and to pinpoint their training needs. The research involves the use of a Training Needs Assessment Form, which is designed to gather comprehensive data on various ICT skills, including basic computer operations, internet usage, data management, and other relevant areas. By manually distributing and collecting these forms, the study ensures that the data reflects the respondents' current capabilities and identifies specific areas where improvement is needed.

The primary output of this research is a training proposal tailored for the Social Communication Ministry of SNT Cathedral. This proposal will be developed based on the insights gained from the assessment, aiming to address the identified skill gaps and enhance the overall effectiveness of the ministry members. As technology continues to evolve and play a central role in communication, understanding and addressing these training needs will not only improve the ministry members' proficiency but also strengthen their ability to contribute to the church's mission and outreach objectives.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Importance of Training Needs Assessment

Training needs assessment (TNA) is a critical process for identifying gaps in employee skills and knowledge, and it is pivotal for designing effective training programs (Ashraf et al.,2023)

According to Patel (2023), a well-conducted TNA helps organizations align their training initiatives with their strategic goals by pinpointing specific areas where employees need improvement. This alignment ensures that training resources are allocated effectively, addressing the most pressing needs and enhancing overall organizational performance.

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B. ICT Competency in Community-Based Organizations

Community-based organizations, including religious institutions, increasingly rely on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to manage and communicate their activities. Research by Kruskopf, et al (2024) highlights the importance of ICT competencies for enhancing the operational efficiency and outreach capabilities of such organizations. Competency in ICT tools – such as word processing, data management, and internet navigation—is essential for members of community-based organizations to effectively engage with their communities and manage their communication tasks.

C. Training Programs for ICT Skills

Effective training programs are crucial for improving ICT skills among members of community-based organizations. Studies by Ashraf et al. (2020) emphasize the need for targeted training programs that address specific skill gaps identified through needs assessments. Such programs not only enhance the proficiency of participants but also contribute to their confidence and ability to use ICT tools effectively (Alieto et al, 2024). Training in areas like basic computer operations, data security, and internet usage is particularly beneficial in equipping members with the skills needed to navigate and leverage digital tools in their roles (Bampasidou et al, 2024).

D. Best Practices in Developing Training Proposals

Developing a training proposal based on a needs assessment involves several best practices. According to Cash et al. (2023), effective training proposals should be grounded in the results of a thorough needs assessment and include clear objectives, relevant content, and practical delivery methods. The proposal should also consider the unique context and needs of the target audience, ensuring that the training is tailored to address their specific challenges and goals. Additionally, incorporating feedback from participants and stakeholders can enhance the relevance and impact of the training program (Elneel et al., 2023).

E. Application in Religious and Community-Based Settings

In religious and community-based settings, training programs must consider the unique context and demands of these environments. Research by Chaudhary et al. (2023) indicates that training programs in such settings should not only focus on technical skills but also on the specific mission and goals of the organization. For example, training programs for the Social Communication Ministry should integrate aspects of effective communication, community engagement, and the use of technology to support the organization's outreach efforts (Eden et al, 2024).

The literature underscores the significance of conducting a thorough training needs assessment to identify skill gaps and develop targeted training programs. For community-based organizations, including religious institutions like SNT Cathedral, this process is essential for ensuring that members of the Social Communication Ministry are equipped with the necessary ICT competencies. By leveraging best practices in training proposal development and addressing the specific needs of the ministry, the proposed training program aims to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the ministry's communication efforts.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to assess the training needs of the members of the Social Communication Ministry at St. Nicholas Tolentine (SNT) Cathedral, utilizing the researchers' active partnership with the parish through various extension activities. To achieve this, a detailed Training Needs Assessment Form was distributed to the respondents, who are all engaged in the ministry's communication and outreach efforts.

It employed a descriptive research method to assess the training needs of the members of the Social Communication Ministry at St. Nicholas Tolentine (SNT) Cathedral. It was utilized through the use of a Training Needs Assessment Form, which was designed to capture a comprehensive snapshot of the respondents' existing skills and the areas where they feel additional training is necessary. By focusing on their current levels of proficiency in various ICT-related skills—such as basic computer operations, internet usage, and data management—the form gathered data that reflects the respondents' present abilities and needs.

The data collection process involved manually distributing the paper forms during ministry meetings and collecting completed forms for entry into a database. This approach allowed for the gathering of detailed information directly from the respondents.

The descriptive analysis included calculating the weighted means (Wm) for each competency area to determine the overall level of proficiency and the training needs of the respondents. This quantitative approach provided a clear understanding of the frequency and significance of specific training needs. Additionally, qualitative analysis of open-ended responses offered deeper insights into particular concerns and areas of interest that were not fully captured by the structured questions.

In general, the descriptive research method used in this study provided a thorough examination of the current skills and training needs of the Social Communication Ministry members, enabling the development of targeted training programs to address identified gaps and enhance their effectiveness in fulfilling the ministry's communication objectives.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents, as detailed below, provides a comprehensive overview of the diverse backgrounds and competencies of members of the Social Communication Ministry of St. Nicholas Tolentine (SNT) Cathedral. This demographic information is crucial for understanding the varying levels of skills and educational attainment within the ministry, and it offers insight into their specific training needs and areas of development.

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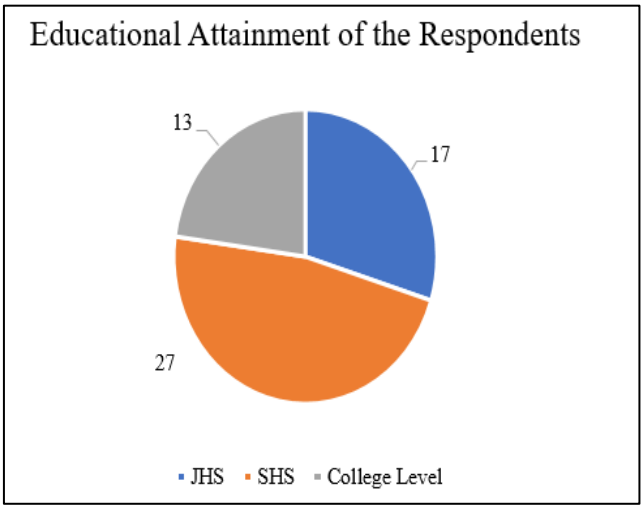

Fig 1: Educational Attainment of the Respondents

The data on Figure 1 above elucidates the distribution of respondents across three educational attainment levels within the Social Communication Ministry of SNT Cathedral: Junior High School (JHS), Senior High School (SHS), and College Level. Specifically, the respondents are categorized as follows: 17 from JHS, 27 from SHS, and 13 from the College Level. This distribution provides valuable insights into the engagement and representation of these educational groups within the ministry.

The Junior High School (JHS) group, consisting of 17 respondents, represents the smallest segment of the population surveyed. This modest number could suggest several underlying factors affecting their involvement in the Social Communication Ministry. Given that JHS students are generally younger and may have more constrained schedules, their lower representation might reflect challenges related to program accessibility or the relevance of the ministry's activities to their age group. It is crucial to examine whether the ministry's offerings are adequately tailored to resonate with younger students and whether there are logistical or motivational barriers that might impede their participation. Enhancing engagement strategies, such as incorporating age-appropriate content or flexible scheduling, could help increase the involvement of JHS students in the ministry (Codjoe et al.,2024).

In contrast, the Senior High School (SHS) respondents, numbering 27, constitute the largest group in the survey. This significant representation indicates a robust level of engagement among SHS students with the ministry's initiatives. The higher participation rate among SHS students may be attributed to their developmental stage, where they are more likely to explore and commit to extracurricular and community activities. The ministry's programs might align well with their current interests and educational requirements. This strong engagement provides an opportunity for the ministry to leverage this group's enthusiasm by offering more specialized or leadership-oriented opportunities that could further enhance their involvement and development within the ministry (Abbosey, 2023).

The College Level respondents, with 13 participants, fall between the JHS and SHS groups in terms of representation. This intermediate level of engagement suggests that while college students are involved, their participation is less pronounced compared to SHS students. Several factors could contribute to this trend, including the higher demands of college coursework, extracurricular commitments, or differing levels of alignment between the ministry's programs and the advanced academic and personal interests of college students (Meyer et al., 2021). To address this, the ministry might consider developing programs that cater specifically to the higher education level, offering advanced training, and opportunities for deeper engagement that align with their academic and professional goals (Sanchez-Carillo et al.,2021). Additionally, fostering a more dynamic and flexible involvement model could better accommodate the busy schedules of college students (Yang et al., 2024).

Overall, the distribution highlights a need for targeted strategies to engage each educational level effectively. For JHS students, increasing their participation might involve addressing specific barriers and adapting programs to be more engaging and relevant. For SHS students, the focus should be on maximizing their current engagement by providing opportunities for growth and leadership. For college students, offering specialized and flexible programs could enhance their involvement and integration into the ministry's activities. Understanding and addressing these dynamics will be essential for the Social Communication Ministry of SNT Cathedral to optimize its outreach and impact across different educational stages.

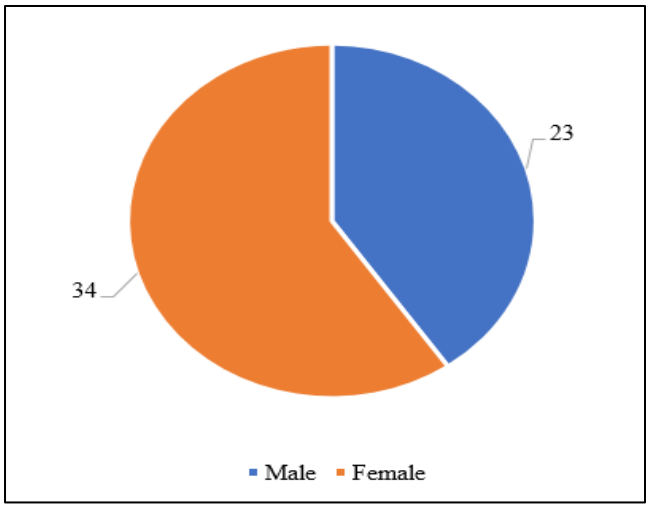

Fig 2: Distribution of the Respondents According to Sex

The data indicates a noticeable difference in gender distribution among the respondents, with **34 females** and **23 males** participating. This shows that **female respondents outnumber their male counterparts**, representing approximately 60% of the total respondents, while males make up about 40%.

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This higher level of female representation suggests greater engagement or interest among females in the activity or context being studied. Various factors could account for this, such as differing roles, responsibilities, or areas of interest that align more closely with female respondents. The lower number of male respondents, though still significant, might point to potential gender-specific barriers or preferences that affect male participation. (Burbano et al., 2024)

To better understand this disparity, it may be beneficial to explore the motivations driving female involvement and examine whether the content or outreach of the initiative appeals equally to both genders. By identifying any barriers to male participation, adjustments could be made to encourage a more balanced gender representation.

B. Trainings and Seminars Attended

The data on ICT seminars and training sessions attended by respondents reveals a diverse range of experiences across various technical skills. The figure below shows the distribution of the respondents according to trainings/seminars they attended.

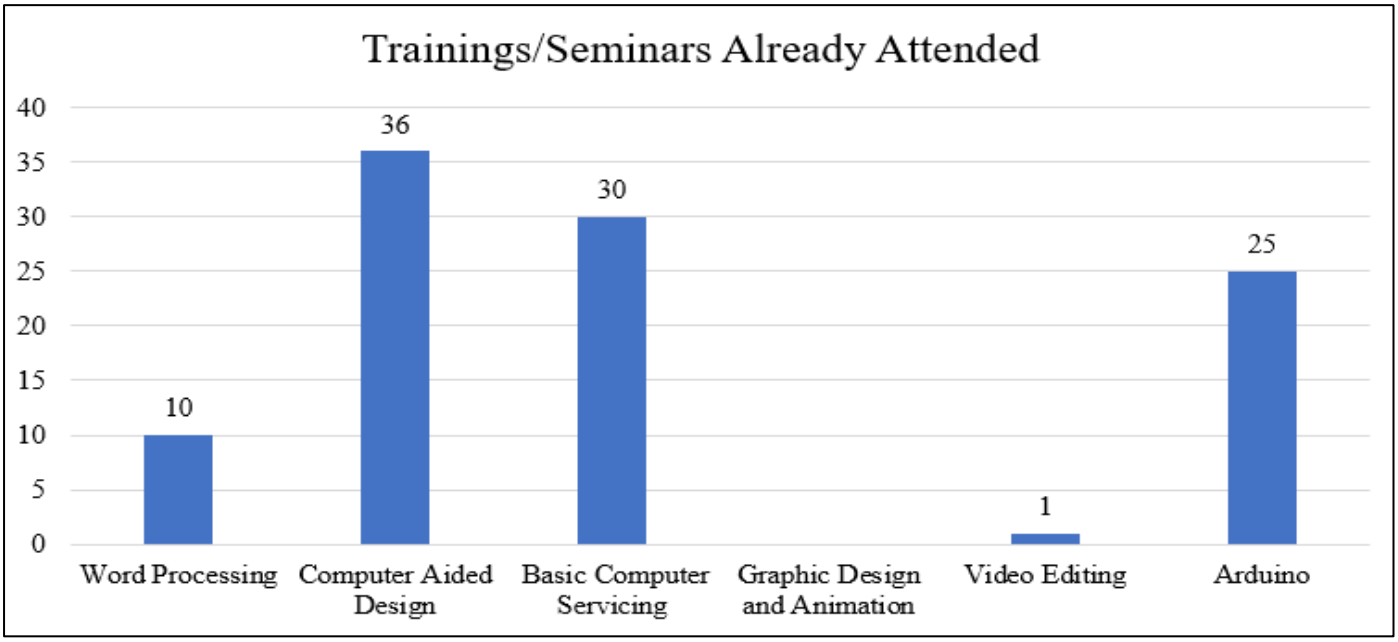

Fig 3: Distribution of the Respondents According to Trainings/Seminars They Attended

As shown in the figure above, **Computer-Aided Design (CAD)** emerges as the most attended seminar, with **36 participants**, indicating a strong interest or need for this skill, possibly due to its widespread applications in fields like architecture, engineering, and design. **Basic Computer Servicing** also attracted significant participation, with **30 attendees**, reflecting the practical importance of computer maintenance and troubleshooting in both personal and professional contexts.

In contrast, **Word Processing**, a fundamental skill in ICT, was attended by only **10 respondents**, which might suggest that this skill is already well-established among the majority, reducing the need for additional training. **Arduino**, with **25 participants**, shows a considerable interest in this area, highlighting the growing appeal of programming and hardware integration in fields like robotics and IoT (Internet of Things).

However, there is a clear lack of participation in **Graphic Design and Animation**, as no respondents attended training in this area, which may indicate either a lack of offerings or interest in this creative field. Similarly, **Video Editing** saw minimal attendance, with only **1 respondent** participating, suggesting that this skill may not be prioritized by the group or that access to relevant seminars is limited.

Overall, the data suggests a strong emphasis on technical and hardware-related skills like CAD, computer servicing, and Arduino, while creative digital skills such as graphic design, animation, and video editing appear to be underrepresented. This could inform future training initiatives by highlighting areas that require more focus or better promotion.

C. Level of Computer Competencies

The data presented on Table 1 showed the level of competencies of the respondents across various ICT-related skills provides insight into their proficiency in basic computer operations, internet and network applications, and information and data management.

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Table 1: Level of Competencies of the Respondents

Item Statements	0 (None)	1 (Basic)	2 (Average)	3 (Proficient)	Wm	VD
Knowledge and skills in basic computer operation (use of office productivity tools such as word processing, spreadsheet, slide presentation, etc.)	3	49	5	0	1.04	Basic
Use of Internet, Network Applications, and Resources (Internet surfing, troubleshooting/fixing internet connection problems, etc.)	17	25	15	0	0.96	None
Knowledge and Skills in Information and Data Management (looking at ad analyzing data, navigating database software, data integrity, managing accounts and files; and database design and planning.	27	29	1	0	0.54	None

For **basic computer operation**, which includes the use of office productivity tools like word processing, spreadsheets, and slide presentations, the majority of respondents fall under the basic competency level. Specifically, 49 respondents demonstrated a basic understanding, while only 5 rated their skills as average, and 3 indicated no competence at all. With a weighted mean of 1.04, the overall proficiency is classified as basic, suggesting that while most participants possess fundamental knowledge, there is room for improvement, especially in moving towards more advanced usage.

In terms of **internet and network applications**, the results show a clear need for development. With a weighted mean of 0.96, this category is classified as none, indicating that most respondents have little to no competency in areas such as internet troubleshooting, network application usage, and resource management. Seventeen respondents reported no competency, and while 25 demonstrated basic skills, only 15 considered themselves to have an average level of proficiency. This suggests a critical gap in skills that are increasingly important in both professional and personal contexts.

The respondents' **knowledge and skills in information and data management** also reflect a significant area of weakness. With a weighted mean of 0.54, most respondents fall under the none category, with 27 indicating no competency and 29 at a basic level. Only one respondent reported an average understanding of tasks such as analyzing data, navigating database software, and managing information with integrity. This deficiency points to an urgent need for targeted training to improve data management competencies, a crucial skill set in today's data-driven environment.

Overall, the data reveals a **basic level of competency** in basic computer operations and a **lack of proficiency** in both internet/network applications and data management among the respondents. This suggests a pressing need for more advanced training opportunities, particularly in areas related to internet use and data management, to enhance their overall ICT skills and capabilities.

D. Training Needs

The table below shows the data on training needs of the respondents highlights a wide range of competencies in ICT-related skills, with certain areas emerging as higher priorities for development. The top three (3) identified needs were included in the attached training plan which will soon be utilized for the training and hands-on session to be provided to the members of the Social Communication ministry of the SNT Cathedral.

Table 2: Training Needs of the Respondents

Training Needs	Freq	Rank
Introduction to Computers (understanding hardware; basic operating system navigation; and introduction to software applications)	9	5
Basic Computer Operations (Turning on/off a computer; Navigating the desktop; and Managing files and folders)	5	8
Introduction to the Internet (Basics of web browsing; Safe internet practices; and setting up and managing email accounts)	3	11
Basic Troubleshooting (Common issues and quick fixes)	6	6
Health and Safety Practices (Taking breaks and stretching; Managing screen time, etc.)	6	6
Data Security Basics (Importance of strong passwords; Understanding phishing and malware threats; Safe internet browsing and secure data storage; Safe shutdown procedures in emergencies; Data backup and recovery; and Reporting incidents or breaches.	4	9
Maintaining Professionalism Online (Online meeting etiquette, i.e., video conferencing tools; Creating a professional online presence; Handling client feedback and complaints constructively; and Professional email and chat etiquette)	20	4
Technical Support for Clients (Basic troubleshooting for client issues, Guiding clients through online processes; and Remote assistance tools and techniques)	4	9

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Office Productivity Tools (Word Processor; Spreadsheet; Slide Presentation)	46	3
Photo Editing (Introduction to Photo Editing; Advanced Editing Manipulations; Exporting and Printing Photos)	47	1
Video Editing (Introduction to Video Editing; Advanced Editing Techniques; Rendering and Sharing Videos)	47	1

Photo editing and video editing ranked as the top two most needed training areas, with 47 respondents each expressing interest in gaining skills in these fields. This indicates a strong demand for creative and technical skills that are essential in multimedia content creation, likely reflecting the growing importance of digital media in both professional and personal contexts.

Office productivity tools, which include word processing, spreadsheets, and slide presentations, ranked third with 46 respondents identifying a need for further training. This suggests that while many participants have basic familiarity with these tools, they may require additional skills to enhance their efficiency and proficiency in these essential software applications.

In terms of online professionalism, maintaining professionalism online, which includes video conferencing tools, online meeting etiquette, and professional email practices, was ranked fourth, with 20 respondents indicating a need for training. This underscores the importance of cultivating professional conduct in virtual environments, a skill that has become increasingly vital in the digital age, especially with the rise of remote work and virtual collaboration (Hafferty et al., 2024).

Other notable training needs include basic troubleshooting and health and safety practices, both ranking equally with six (6) respondents each, highlighting a need for knowledge on common technical issues and maintaining personal well-being while using digital devices. Introduction to computers and basic computer operations ranked lower, with 9 and 5 respondents respectively, indicating that most respondents likely already possess fundamental computer skills and are seeking more advanced training opportunities.

On the lower end, introduction to the internet and data security basics were identified by 3 and 4 respondents, respectively, as areas needing improvement, suggesting that these topics are either not perceived as immediate priorities or that the respondents have already acquired basic skills in these areas.

In conclusion, the data reveals a strong interest in enhancing creative, technical, and professional skills, particularly in photo and video editing, office productivity tools, and maintaining online professionalism. While basic competencies in computer operations and internet use seem to be well-established, there is a need for more specialized training in troubleshooting, data security, and health and safety practices. (An et al., 2023)

To address these identified needs, the researchers developed a comprehensive project proposal and training design tailored specifically to the SNT Social Communication team. This proposal focuses on enhancing members' skills in areas such as troubleshooting, data security, and health and safety practices, which were highlighted as gaps in the study. The training design will be implemented under the researchers' leadership and guidance, ensuring that the team's evolving creative, technical, and professional skills are effectively nurtured and supported.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the respondents' competencies and training needs reveals that while they possess a basic understanding of ICT tools and skills, there is a significant demand for more advanced and specialized training. The top priority areas for development are in photo editing and video editing, highlighting a strong interest in creative and multimedia skills. Respondents also identified a need to enhance their proficiency in office productivity tools and maintaining professionalism in online environments, reflecting the importance of both technical and professional skills in today's increasingly digital landscape.

Basic computer operations and internet navigation are relatively well-established among the respondents, as evidenced by their lower ranking in terms of training needs. However, there are still notable gaps in basic troubleshooting, health and safety practices, and data security, which suggest that while respondents may be comfortable using digital tools, they require further training to address common technical issues, ensure personal well-being, and secure their data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ *Based on the Significant Findings of the Study, the Following Recommendations are Offered:*

- Given the high demand for **photo editing** and **video editing** skills, it is recommended to prioritize offering advanced workshops and seminars in these areas. These skills are essential for enhancing digital content creation, which is increasingly important in many professional and personal contexts.
- Although many respondents have a basic familiarity with office productivity tools, further training should be offered to help them advance their skills and maximize their efficiency in word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations. This will improve their overall productivity and professional competency.
- With the growing reliance on virtual communication and collaboration, training programs that address **online professionalism**, including video conferencing etiquette, managing online meetings, and professional email practices, should be expanded to meet the demand.

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- Training on **basic troubleshooting**, **data security**, and **health and safety practices** should be incorporated into ICT training programs. These skills are critical for ensuring that respondents can handle technical issues independently, protect their personal and professional data, and maintain their health while using digital tools for extended periods.
- Since the data indicates that many respondents already have basic computer and internet skills, training programs should be tailored to their current competency levels, offering more intermediate and advanced courses that build on their existing knowledge. This approach will ensure that training is relevant and meets the evolving needs of the respondents.
- Implement the training design prepared by the researchers and conduct follow-up study/ies to evaluate the effectiveness of this training program. The sample training design was attached as Appendix A on page 12.

By addressing these key areas, the respondents can improve their ICT skills, enhancing their overall productivity, creativity, and professionalism in both their personal and professional lives.

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APPENDIX A

TRAINING DESIGN

Republic of the Philippines
Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology
General Tinio Street, Cabanatuan City
ISO 9001:2015

PROJECT PROPOSAL

I. BASIC INFORMATION

Project Title:	**Mastering Digital Tools: A Comprehensive 9-Day Course on Computer Applications, Word, PowerPoint, and Multimedia Editing**
Proponents:	NEUST-CICT
Project Leader:	Mr. Marcelino S. Cerin III
Component Leader(s):	Dr. Ruth G. Luciano
Implementing Unit:	NEUST-CICT
Collaborating Units/Agencies:	St. Nicholas Tolentine Parish, del Pilar St., Cabanatuan City
Project Site(s):	CICT Building, NEUST Sumacab Campus
Duration:	July 8 – July 18, 2024 (9 days)
Proposed Budget:	₱ 38,250.00 (80-100 participants)

II. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

A. Rationale

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed the way we work, communicate, and create. Recognizing the need for proficient digital skills in today's world, St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish has requested this training to equip participants with essential computer application skills. The rationale behind this comprehensive 9-day course is to provide participants with the knowledge and hands-on experience necessary to navigate and utilize various digital tools effectively.

B. Statement of the Problem

In an era where digital proficiency is crucial for effective communication and productivity, many members of the St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish community lack essential skills in computer applications, word processing, presentation software, and multimedia editing. This skills gap hinders their ability to create, share, and present information effectively, both in personal and professional contexts.

Consequently, there is a pressing need for a structured training program that addresses these deficiencies, equipping parish members with the necessary digital competencies. The proposed 9-day seminar workshop, "Mastering Digital Tools: A Comprehensive 9-Day Course on Computer Applications, Word, PowerPoint, and Multimedia Editing," aims to bridge this gap by providing comprehensive, hands-on training.

This program seeks to enhance digital literacy, boost confidence in using technology, and develop practical skills that participants can immediately apply in various aspects of their lives, thereby fostering personal growth and community development within the parish.

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II. Rationale

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly transformed the way we work, communicate, and create. Recognizing the need for proficient digital skills in today's world, St. Nicholas of Tolentino Parish has requested this training to equip participants with essential computer application skills. The rationale behind this comprehensive 9-day course is to provide participants with the knowledge and hands-on experience necessary to navigate and utilize various digital tools effectively.

III. Participants

The members of the Social Communication Ministry (SOCOMM) are the participants of this 9-day literacy training.

Course Content

1. Word Processing
2. Slide Presentation
3. Photo Editing
4. Video Editing

IV. Methodology

COURSE CONTENT	STRATEGIES
1. Word Processing	Hands-On Activity
2. Slide Presentation	Hands-On Activity
3. Photo Editing	Hands-On Activity
4. Video Editing	Hands-On Activity

V. Evaluation Scheme

1. ESD F011 Training Evaluation Questionnaire
2. ESD F020 Training Evaluation Summary

VI. Resource Requirements

1. Manpower Requirements

Name	Position/Designation
Proponent	
Mr. Marcelino S. Cerin III Dr. Ruth G. Luciano	CICT Faculty Members
Resource Speaker	
Ms. Vanessa C. Pascual	CICT Faculty Member
Ms. Joana Marie Tolentino	CICT Faculty Member
Mr. Angelito I. Cunanan, Jr.	CICT Faculty Member
Mr. Andrew Caezar A. Villegas	CICT Faculty Member

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