

**MORALITY AS VIEWED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF AN ACADEMIC
INSTITUTION**

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Abstract

This paper determined the level of morality of the administrative staff of the university, extent of their morality and how they view these concepts in their lives. This study recognizes the possibility of the utilization of the different values that would influence ethical practices which are dependent on the organizational vision and mission of both the state and the school. The study used the descriptive survey design that utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative aspect of this study refers to the holistic view of the respondents regarding morality and religiosity through statistical inquiry, while the qualitative aspect of this study pertains to the expository descriptive analysis of the concept of morality and religiosity. Library research, more particularly on the different principles and ideas about morality was employed. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with grounded theory approach, an inductive way of analyzing data was employed. The respondents are males and females belonging to different age brackets. Most of the respondents are Roman Catholics which means that Catholicism is still the religion in the Philippines that has the most number of believers. The result reveals that the power of media, side by side with one's educational attainment, can be influential to a person's morality.

Keywords: Morality, Perspective, Society, Grounded theory approach, Descriptive-survey design.

Introduction

In the midst of technological development and advancement, the Filipino society and the world as a whole is continuously changing. Every day new ideas, mode of production, way of life, lifestyles and even views sprout. These new things sometimes confront the existing ideas and traditions and question the validity of the existing standards. This leads to a confusion whether the old system and standards be regarded as obsolete and adopt the new one being propagated by the secular world.

In the name of respecting individual rights, the traditions, values, religious beliefs and morals are prone to being violated. Television shows today are sometimes conceived as mind

conditioning tool to help people accept new ideas, such as being normal for a girl to be a solo parent, or be impregnated, or choose whether or not to continue the conception of the child in her womb or accept divorce. Other ideas are accepting as normal for a man to have a number of wives, impregnate their girlfriends, become a solo parent too and apply for legal separation, divorce or annulment when marriage goes sour. Another idea that is also being peddled by mass media, is that it is just normal and ordinary to be unfaithful to one's spouse, especially when there is a new one who is much better than the first wife. A more controversial idea being introduced to the Filipino society today is the acceptance of the same sex couples. The old ideas contrary to these new ones are considered double standard and need to be changed.

People now tend to believe that as long as it is acceptable by society, it is good. What is happening to the Filipino society? Is there a breakdown of its social moral fiber?

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), has offered a plan for a Moral Recovery Program for the building of a people and of a nation sometimes in 1994 (Panopio, 2002). It is grounded on the rational understanding that the Filipino people are human beings who are both moral and religious. The individual Filipino plays an important role in shaping his society. As a moral being, he or she is endowed with the faculty of freely choosing and loving, therefore, they must go out to others and express genuine love. As a spiritual being, he or she is capable of higher concerns and of raising above the material. They must cultivate therefore, a higher sense of religiosity and spirituality in consonance with his or her nature and respond to God in faith.

Why is it necessary to have a moral recovery program? Indeed, the breakdown of its social moral fiber has been in existence early on. Programs that were set by the government in improving the social moral awareness of its people simply did not materialize. How important then is the so called moral recovery? How important is morality that it needs to be reinforced and recovered? How do morality affect man's performance in society?

Morality is that quality of human acts whereby it either measures up to what it should be as a step towards the objective of human action (Babor, 1999). It is playing an important role in regulating human behavior. When a person does something good he does something called moral, but when he does something evil it is not moral. It is immoral. However, one's action alone is not the sole basis of telling whether one is good or evil. One's goodness is subjective and dependent on the doer. This does not mean that there is a written rule or specific code of conduct established by society as it is defined by descriptive theory of

morality but it is more on a universal code of conduct that all rational beings would put forward in governing the behaviour of all moral agents. These codes of conduct are not written by society but are based on the natural law as defined by the normative theory of morality (Abun, 2012). Morality is both experienced and practiced. Moral experience arises out of the practice of morality wherein man witnesses himself as the authentic cause of moral good and evil (Mondras, 2000). Man's action should not only be good, in so far as he is concerned, but it should conform proximately with his right reason, because if such is the case it conforms ultimately with the Divine Reason.

LNU as the center of excellence in teacher education in the region with other courses in the arts and sciences and management and entrepreneurship, must not only provide quality and relevant academic training but moral training as well. Like other educational institutions, it aims to produce competitive students who answer to both local and global development needs. One of the problems that beset the university though is on the aspect of ethical realm during the years of formation of the students whereby through their learning experiences students can imbibe and likewise manifest both the ethical and the unethical practices of their mentors. It is worse when only the unethical practices come out to be readily recognizable in the mentors' practices thereby totally and negatively affecting the welfare of the teaching profession and eventually stains the quality of the graduates of the university.

The problems confronting our present society can be attributed to the morality of individuals. This problem is not purely organizational but societal in nature (Jocano, 1997). The school as one of the important agency of socialization, plays a vital role. The educational institution form, transform and enhance the character of people. They engaged in the formation of persons towards becoming a good citizen and a professional worker of the state. They likewise look forward to producing the best product as it could possibly do. The morality therefore, of those who are tasked to train these individuals is of primary importance. Since the personal notion of values of the individuals dictates its effects on their personal life and actuation towards their personal action. Thus, there is a need to determine the personal conception of the university's administrative staff with regard to morality and analyze if their ideas are in conformity with the well-founded notions as written and explained in the different schools of thought or religious denominations. This step would create a unified notion that would propel the university to a strong promotion of morality in the university. This would naturally be the right step in preventing negative societal traits from striking the mission of the university, thereby enhancing the moral and ethical traits of

its employees in answer to the expectations of its stakeholders, its clients and the society at large. Seeing the urgency of shedding light on this problem, the researcher was prompted to conduct this study for the benefit of the university, the students and the stakeholders.

This study is anchored on the following theories: the Psychological Foundation of Education of Jean Piaget (McLeod, 2009 & Dasen, 1994), Social Influences in Cognitive Development of Vygotsky (McLeod, 2007 & Shaffer, 1996), the Social Learning theory of Bandura (McLeod, 2011) and the concept of Cognitive Dissonance as coined by Leon Festinger (McLeod, 2008).

Piaget believed that learners discover their individual talents and abilities according to the stimuli that stir their curiosity and interest. The teacher guides the learners' own discovery and knowledge (McLeod, 2009). Every teacher should aim to bring about changes for the better in the light of the principle involved in the learning experiences of the individual student inside and outside the classroom. This is also known as learning by doing, where teachers guide the students in what they do. Thus, as guides, the moral turpitude of the teachers play a vital role. Learners' behavior changes as a result of observing other behaviors and consequences. Learners usually follow and imbibe the things they observe. Through observation, learners create ideas or concepts on how behavior is limited and performed to serve as guides of any action.

Vygotsky, like Piaget, believed that young children are curious and actively involved in their own learning and the discovery and development of new understandings/schema (McLeod, 2007). He believed in social transmission as an important factor for cognitive development of the child learner. Much important learning by the individual occurs through social interaction with a skillful tutor. The tutor may model behaviors and/or provide verbal instructions for the learner. Vygotsky referred to this as co-operative or collaborative dialogue (Shaffer, 1996). In it, the learner seeks to understand the actions or instruction provided by the tutor often, the parent or teacher, and then internalizes the information, using it to guide or regulate his own performance. This theory is utilized to know how the faculty members were able to come up with those ideas about morality. Were they influenced and shaped by the people and social environment around them? Was it the organizational culture that sanctioned them?

Bandura's theory comparably stated that behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Learner observe the people around them behaving in various ways (McLeod, 2011). In this theory, learners observe people around

them, who they call models. These models who surround them include parents within the family, television characters, friends within their peer group, teachers and the non-teaching personnel at school. These models provide examples of behaviors that are observed and can be imitated. Learners most of the time pay attention to these models and copy their behaviors. At the later time they may imitate those behaviors they observed regardless of whether these behaviors are appropriate or not.

Some models existing around the learners do sometimes respond to the behavior that is being imitated with either reinforcement or punishment. If the learner imitates a model's behavior and its consequence is rewarding, then most likely the same will continue to perform the said behavior repeatedly. In this manner the said behavior is said to have been reinforced. Reinforcement can either be positive or negative that will usually lead to a change in a person's behavior.

This study used this theory to get the idea on how the Leyte Normal University staff promote morality because they are viewed as models by the students. The LNU administrative staff play a vital role in the formation of the students. They have a significant influence on the individual behavior of the students. The behavior of each LNU employee reinforces the student's idea about things. What the students will do or act sometimes depend on what they imbibed from what they have observed and believed.

In the process of learning and development, sometimes man is confronted with two or more conflicting cognitions such as ideas, values, beliefs or emotional reactions. These produce a feeling of discomfort leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs or behaviors to reduce the discomfort and restore balance. Such theory is called cognitive dissonance theory coined by Leon Festinger (McLeod, 2008). He believed that, to be able to cope up with such a feeling, man must focus on more supportive beliefs or behaviors that outweigh the dissonant one existing in him. Man must also reduce the importance of the conflicting beliefs and change the same so that it would be consistent with other beliefs and behaviors.

This theory somehow supports the study conducted by Bulatao (1966), on Split-level Christianity, wherein Filipinos tend to join religious activities yet commit cultural practices which are deemed as unethical in the context of public office. In a sense, only those who view the continuity between the religious and the secular realm manifest consistency of morality.

The theories mentioned above support the beliefs that man's nature is highly influenced by the kind of society or environment where he is in. Individuals choose the kind of life they wanted to follow with the idea that such choice would give them the goodness that they wanted to attain.

With closer observation, it may be deduced from this fact that individuals who were exposed to religious and moral education are at an advantage of understanding the philosophy, the theoretical concept, and the connection of religious education with what is moral. These place them at a higher and better chance of practicing what is known to them such as religious and moral, in society. In Latin the saying is "nemo dat quod non habet" which means, nobody gives what he/she does not have. However, what is moral can still be understood and put into practice by every learner striving to be the best in their chosen field of profession.

Related Literature

Sociologists and psychologists of religion have been looking for ways on how to measure morality and moral commitment. Wearing and Brown (1972) pointed out that the question of dimensionality remains as a persistent question in the psychological analysis of religious beliefs, attitudes and behavior. Morality is viewed differently by different people. People perceive and understand morality by using different social and cultural contexts and mindset. Even with the same religious affiliation and tradition, views and interpretations as to its meaning and relevance vary from one person to the other.

A study conducted by Pratt M.W., Golding G and Hunter W.J., (2009) revealed that as man increases in age and eventually matures, his perception changes and broadens. Moral judgement of man becomes more organized and consistent as he grows older. Consistency between moral stages produced and those preferred by man and the consistency of moral orientation usage increases markedly with age. This findings greatly support the hypothesis of increasing philosophical reflectiveness with maturity. As man grows older he becomes wiser.

Peer Scheepers, et al, (2002) of the University of Nijmegen the Netherlands, present a study to answer three research questions on moral attitudes. They found out as a result of their study that parental and individual religiosity, as well as individual educational attainment, have strong effects on moral attitudes. Effects of individual religiosity on moral attitudes appear to be stronger in more religious countries and weaker in more secularized

countries. Effects of individual education are stronger in more religious heterogeneous countries and weaker in more religiously homogeneous countries. The effects of education on moral attitudes are weaker in short-standing democracies than in long-standing ones.

Another factor that also affects the moral point of view of individuals is mass media. It is communication, whether written, broadcast or spoken, that reaches a large audience. This includes, television, radio, advertising, movies, the internet, newspapers, magazines and so forth. It is a significant force in modern culture or the present era of globalization, wherein, communities and individuals are bombarded constantly with messages from multitude of sources. The connection between the mass media and morality is almost taken for granted. Plato for example, banished all storytellers from his imagined Republic except those whose tales were in accordance with the patterns he laid down, because listeners or viewers would, think, admire and imitate characters' bad behavior. Media exposure therefore, can influence our moral development either positively or negatively. All moral behaviors are learned, and much of what are learned about the environment and the world comes from media (Johnson, 2013). Focus on the Family, as cited by Laci Post (2013), said that extensive viewing may be to blame for aggressive or violent behavior, poor academic performance, precocious sexuality, obesity and substance abuse. Aside from all these concerns, the most dangerous thing that media can do is alter our ethical, religious and moral views. Consistently consuming entertainment with false ideas will inevitably distort one's view of the world.

Heiar, SVD, said that behavior is inherent among normal individuals. Interpretation is also common to all people. The actions of people affect others and leave consequences in their lives. What they fail to do also affects other people and leave consequences in their lives. The reason is that they fail to relate common truths to their common experience as persons.

Methodology

A three-part self-made questionnaire was utilized as an instrument in data gathering. The said questionnaire was patterned after several approaches available that were developed by credible contemporary scholars such as, Gerhard Emmanuel Lenski, who came up with his four-dimensional orientation model and Charles Y. Glock, who proposed the so called five core dimensions of religiosity.

The said questionnaire was validated and subsequently improved by conducting a dry run. To fill-in unanswered items in the questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with grounded theory approach, an inductive way of analyzing data, to selected LNU faculty to determine their individual inputs with regard to morality.

This study used the descriptive survey design that utilized both quantitative and qualitative data. Library research, more particularly on the different principles and ideas about morality was employed. The quantitative aspect of this study refers to the holistic view of the respondents regarding morality and religiosity through statistical inquiry, while the qualitative aspect of this study pertains to the expository descriptive analysis of the concept of morality and religiosity. Library research, more particularly on the different principles and ideas about religiosity and morality was employed.

In order to obtain a holistic data on of the respondents' views on morality, the study utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To determine significant relationship or association between demographic and personal factors and morality, respectively, the contingency coefficient was used. This is a chi-squared based statistics measuring the degree of relationship or association of dependence of the classifications in a frequency table.

In this study, the respondents were the administrative staff, of LNU, Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines. The administrative staff of the university is composed of 76 regular employees, 2 casual employees and 6 contractual employees. They were the non-teaching personnel and the different department heads. However, only 55 out of the 84 administrative staff answered the questionnaire.

Results and Discussions

The respondents are obviously male and female but belonging to different age brackets where age bracket 30-49 were the majority, which explains that majority of the LNU administrative staff are no longer new in the field. This also holds true to the aspect of educational qualification wherein row on Master's level/graduate has the bigger population. With regard to membership in religious and morality movement, the Roman Catholics dominated it because of the fact that the Philippines is a Catholic nation. Demographics postulated by the government clearly states that Catholicism is still the religion in the Philippines that has the most number of believers. Most of the respondents were exposed to

both the broadcast media and the print media, which in one way or the other may propel one to think that all have access to information.

Majority of the parents of the respondents were college graduate and product of public schools, government employees who belong to the middle class and working strata, who reside mostly in low cost housing residences and have strong moral conviction.

Table 1 Respondents Level of Morality

Level of Morality	Faculty Respondents	
	n	%
High	46	83.64
Moderately High	9	16.36
Moderate	0	0
Low	0	0
Undecided	0	0
TOTAL	55	100

The respondents apparently showed high sense of morality, majority of them strongly agree on all the statements given that makes them highly moral. The reason might be because somebody is influencing them that made them moral persons. Bandura's Social Learning Theory, states that behavior is learned from the environment which is referred to as the process of observational learning. People tend to follow who they believe to be models. These models provide examples of behavior that are observed and imitated by the learners (McLeod, 2008). Data shows that majority of the parents of the respondents manifests very strong moral conviction. This may explain why the respondents manifest the same. There are individuals who have deep faith in God and put into practice what they know and believe and such act is admirable because everyone is supposed to practice what he knows and believes based on the accepted norm of the society. It should not be limited however to one's action alone, because goodness will be subjective and dependent only on the doer. Actions should be viewed as good not only by the agent but it should conform proximately with right reason and ultimately with the Divine Reason (Agaton, 2010).

In the data regarding the relationship between morality and the demographic and personal factors of the administrative staff where factors such as the fathers' moral conviction, frequent access to newspaper, television and the internet have a highly significant relationship with the morality of the staff. Factors such as civil status and classification of program, movies, reading material resorted to have significant relationship.

Based on the result, the fathers' moral conviction is one of the factors that have a highly significant influence with the staffs' morality. In a paternalistic society, fathers' influence plays a very significant role. Most decisions, plans, and actions depend on what a father of the house would say. It is therefore, possible that the fathers' moral conviction, primarily influenced the morality of the staff respondents. The respondents must have issues with their respective marriages that their perception of moral life may be influenced by it and must also have concerns on the choices of movies and reading materials that they choose that also affect their morality.

Practically, the three most powerful media, the newspaper, television and the internet. These could either bring good message or bad message to readers. Johnson (2014) said that culturist theorists claim that personal perspective plays a more powerful role in how the audience members interpret media messages. The moral standpoint of a person can be susceptible to these three as they are readily accessible almost anywhere. However, it must be noted that despite of the high degree of exposure to them, the morality of the person may not be affected. If he nourished more on good issues, he could still be moral and an efficient worker. If he nurtured more on the negative aspect, he could be an ineffective employee.

Table 2 Relationship between Morality and Demographic and Personal Factors of the Staff

Demographic and Personal Factors	Contingency Coefficient	Pearson chi-square value	df	Significance
Sex	.158	1.417	1	.234
Age	.248	3.605	2	.165
Civil Status	.318	6.166	2	.046*
Highest Educ'l Attainment	.182	1.884	2	.390
Religion	.402	10.608	1	.001
Parents' Education	.258	3.908	3	.272
Parents, Occupation	.199	2.262	2	.323
Family's Social Spectrum	.245	3.508	2	.173
Fathers' Moral Conviction	.434	12.768	2	.002**
Mothers' Moral Conviction	.208	2.484	2	.289
Previous School Enrolled In	.341	7.256	4	.123

Place of Residence	.167	1.569	2	.456
Frequency of Access to Newspaper	.466	15.273	3	.002**
Radio	.303	5.549	3	.136
TV	.389	9.827	2	.007**
Internet	.484	16.822	4	.002**
Classification of Program, Movies, Reading Material Resorted to	.334	6.897	2	.032*
Perceived Moral Effect of the chosen media	.179	1.813	2	.404

* $\alpha < .05$ Significant ** $\alpha < .01$ Highly Significant

Despite the varying views on morality and influences among respondents, it was found out that there is a highly significant relationship between the two variables most specifically on factors such as the fathers' moral conviction, frequency of access to newspaper, television and internet.

The above results are good revelation of the quality of LNU staff. Siddhartha Gautama said, that the ship is stable and in good condition if its crew work harmoniously with each other (Boeree, 1999). With a staff giving high regard for morality, chances are, students will tend to be equally moral.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were derived;

1. The Leyte Normal University being a center of excellence employs administrative staff with high educational attainment. It caters to the educational need of those who belong to the middle class, lower middle class and the working class strata of society.
2. Majority of the respondents believe that God exists. They are aware of His divine teachings and laws.
3. Having accepted and practiced the doctrines of the church to which they belong, majority of the respondents imbibe distinctive characters that radiate the goodness that they possess.
4. Majority of the respondents cherish their strong belief in God that they adhere to His laws and teachings.

5. Majority of the respondents put into practice what they believe, as evident on the result. In everything they do, the presence of God is always felt.
6. The administrative staff of the university are exposed to different ideas and practices.
7. Despite the varying views among respondents, it was found out that there is a highly significant relationship between the two variables most specifically on factors such such as fathers' moral conviction, frequent access to newspaper, TV and the internet have contributed to the LNU Staffs' high morality.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following are thus recommended:

1. The LNU Human Resource Development Office (HRMO) may consider conducting enrichment activities like retreats and lectures that may enhance the morality and spirituality of the administrative staff of the university. These activities can be in compliance with Republic Act No. 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards of Public Officials and Employees
2. The staff having found to be the group with high morality level should be provided the push towards sustaining or even furthering their impressive quality. The HRMO or LNU-Employees Union (LNU-EU) can create an elite circle whose members are those who have been awarded as Model Employees. This group of remarkably good government workers can be made to set accomplishment targets higher than what they have been meeting. In such manner, they will develop a continual challenge of themselves towards betterment to the benefit of their clients and the university as a whole.
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