

# Perspectives of Morality among Faculty-members of a Philippine University

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**Abstract:** Today, the concept of morality still holds true to almost every individual human person. A person seeks the presence of a Supreme Deity to govern him and for him to adore. People who have connections to Leyte Normal University, perceived to be a pillar of truth and goodness, expect to hear good things from it and about it and only the good mainly because the university caters to students as primary clientele. This paper determined the level of morality of the faculty members, extent of their morality and how they view these concepts in their lives. The respondents are male and female 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. Despite the varying views among the respondents, it was found out that there is a significant relationship among the two variables specifically on factors such as family, social spectrum and the perceived moral effects of the chosen media.

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

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of technological development and advancement, the Filipino society and the world as a whole is continuously changing. Every minute, new ideas, new mode of production, new way of life, new lifestyles and even new views sprout. The government for example, is constantly beset by ethical problems due to the scandalous acts orchestrated by no less than the elected leaders of the land. For instance, some politicians are accused and charged in court with plunder and graft for allegedly embezzling their Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) in collusion with a certain businesswoman. Most of these local government officials are also accused of accumulating wealth using their vested powers. This is characterized by malpractices such as bribery, nepotism and misappropriation of public resources for private use which are not in accord with established rules. This phenomena is commonly called graft and corruption which is considered as the deviation or impairment of integrity, virtue or moral principle of government officials, either elected or selected, from the norm prevalent or what prevails at a given time (Salcedo, 2002).

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 religiosity and 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 faculty 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 and teachers 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 faculty promote morality because they exist as models to the students. The LNU faculty 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.

## 2. 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 remain 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.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

A 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. Another source was "The Morality Test" retrieved from [www.outofservice.com/Morality](http://www.outofservice.com/Morality), that assess individual moral attitudes particularly as they relate to religious and cultural background were utilized as references. The above-mentioned scholars offered an updated and complete instrument for understanding and analyzing the contemporary moral phenomena.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts: Part I solicited the demographic profile of the faculty of LNU such as age, educational attainment, family and educational background, and religious affiliation. Part II was made of questions that identified the levels of morality of the respondents. The said questionnaire also contained the five religious components found in part I of the said questionnaire, such as knowledge, beliefs, behavior, practice and consequence. Part III was made of questions that identified the personal perceptions or views of the respondents about morality.

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. 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. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with grounded theory approach, an inductive way of analyzing data 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 faculty, of LNU, Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines. The faculty of the university is composed of 126 instructors and professors. However, only 116 out of the 126 faculty members answered the questionnaire.

#### **4. 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 faculty are no longer new in the field of teaching. 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. The data reveals further that, Born Again Christians come next. 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.

The respondents apparently showed high sense of morality and only few were uncertain. Majority of them strongly agree on the statements given. In the views regarding expressing their love of God by loving His creations, expecting something in return every time they help others, carrying one's religion over into all their dealing in life, claiming that artificial birth control method should not be available to everyone, and that the practice of homosexuality as always wrong, majority chose to say that they moderately agree. Other views like that of one's willingness to do whatever God wants them to do, forgiving others who committed something wrong to them, that making fun of others is always wrong and telling a lie is always wrong, some respondents were uncertain.

Majority of the respondents love God with all their heart and can clearly distinguish good from bad. However, putting into practice what they know and believe depends on one's judgement, since religion and morality is not synonymous. Morality does not depend upon religion although this is an almost automatic assumption. Morality is an active process which, at the very least, guides one's conduct by reason, that is putting into action using the best reasons for doing, while giving equal consideration to the interests of all those affected by what one does (Rachel, 2011).

The LNU faculty, are considered highly moral people, as manifested by the result. According to Jaime Bulataos', Split Level Christianity, Filipinos tend to join religious organizations and activities yet commit to cultural practices which are sometimes viewed as unethical (Bulatao, 1966). The result likewise confirm that many respondents are not that firm in putting into practice what they believe. Many preferred to moderately agree which means sometimes their actions are influenced by other ideas that are contrary to what their church preaches. In general, said response can still be considered good and not alarming. They might need further religious training and orientation, since it shows that most of their actions are still inclined to what God wants them to do.

Table 1: Respondents Level of Morality

Level of Morality	Faculty Respondents	
	n	%
High	36	31.03
Moderately High	76	65.52
Moderate	0	0
Low	0	0
Undecided	4	3.45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>

As to the level of their morality, the data in table 1 shows that 36 or 31.03% of the faculty respondents have a high level of morality, 76 or 65.52% have a moderately high level and 4 or 3.45% were uncertain. However, they still have a relatively high sense of morality having shown a collective response described as moderately high. Majority of the faculty respondents, chose the moderately agree level on the following items: expressing the love of God by respecting fellowmen, expecting something in return every time they help others, carrying religion in all their dealings in life, to make available the use of artificial birth control methods to everyone, and the practice of homosexuality as a sin. They chose the highly agree level on the rest of the items. In the views of Leon Festinger, when man is confronted with two or more conflicting cognitions, such as values, beliefs or emotional reactions, he will alter one of the attitudes, beliefs or behavior because it brought forth a feeling of discomfort (McLeod, 2008). This is what he coined as the cognitive dissonance. Thus, as a result man is forced to alter his previous belief, attitudes or behavior. In order to cope up with such feeling, man must focus on more supportive beliefs and behavior that outweighs the dissonance existing in him.

Table 2: Relationship between Morality and Demographic and Personal Factors of the Faculty

Demographic and Personal Factors	Contingency Coefficient	Pearson chi-square value	df	Significance
Sex	.266	8.847	2	.012*
Age	.227	6.298	6	.391
Civil Status	.198	4.755	4	.313
Highest Educational Attainment	.202	4.912	4	.296
Religion	.174	3.628	2	.163
Parents' Education	.316	12.869	8	.116
Parents' Occupation	.138	2.237	4	.692
Family's Social Spectrum	.307	12.079	4	.017*
Fathers' Moral Conviction	.168	3.360	6	.762
Mothers' Moral Conviction	.417	24.467	8	.002**
Previous School Enrolled in	.428	25.981	14	.026*
Place of Residence	.072	.612	4	.962
Frequency of Access to				
Newspaper	.499	38.083	8	.000**
Radio	.382	19.803	8	.011*
TV	.410	23.449	8	.003**
Internet	.213	5.534	6	.477
Classification of Program, Movies, Reading Material Resorted to	.204	5.024	8	.755
Perceived Moral Effect of the chosen media	.132	2.037	6	.916

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

The data in table 2 shows the relationship between morality and the demographic and personal factors of faculty and it is revealed that factors such as the mothers' moral conviction, frequent access to newspaper and television have a highly significant relationship with the respondents' morality. Other factors such as sex, family's social spectrum, previous school enrolled, and radio have significant relationship with the respondents' morality.

The data further reveals that the exposure of the faculty respondents to media is highly significant. Media is one of the sources of ideas from which teachers or classroom instructors get instructional ideas to be imparted to students. It is however, undeniable that secular ideas are also very much active. Exposure to such ideas may affect man's judgement and eventually influence his views. In order to develop his religious and moral conviction, man must improve his religious awareness and put into practice what he knows and believes based on what his faith dictates.

Ideas like tacit approval among peers and the values of the former school must be either good or bad for a person. A person may want to be good but because of peer pressure, he might choose to be otherwise. The intensity of inculcation of values education from the prior school attended might have been effective or defective which may lead to a person's values wanting.

The power of newspaper and TV are undeniably tempting that a person's morality will greatly be affected. Various opinions from authors coming from newspapers and magazines as well as from TV shows can alter a person's perception of certain issues involving morality. Teachers being the primary instructional materials of the classroom must live by example. It is hard for the students to accept that his teacher discusses good things but practices the other way around. In other words, the teacher's words are his deeds. Hence, if results from the data say that there is a highly significant relationship between the frequent exposure to newspaper and the faculty then the latter must always choose the kind of media to use.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

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

1. The Leyte Normal University being a center of excellence employs faculty 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 faculty of the university are exposed to different ideas and practices. That sometimes it is difficult for them to discern which of these ideas are acceptable and which are contrary to their faith. The diversity of ideas is manifested in their different views of morality.
7. Despite the varying views among respondents, it was found out that there is a significant relationship between the two variables most specifically on factors such family, social spectrum and the perceived moral effects of the chosen media.
8. Factors such as mothers' moral conviction, and frequent access to newspaper and TV have contributed to the LNU faculty high morality.

## 6. 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 both the faculty and 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 university may consider enhancing its curriculum program. Values Education can be integrated as a subject on certain disciplines.
3. The faculty must integrate values in every subject taught, as it is imperative in promoting desirable qualities of learners alongside their technological and conceptual life skills.
4. 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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