

# Profile Variables and Degree of Liberalness of Senior High School Students in a Catholic University

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**Abstract**— The Filipino community is confronted by a number of social issues that may possibly be due to changing times, which may consequently affect the awareness or acceptance to such issues. This quantitative-qualitative study used survey and interview questionnaires to describe the degree of liberalness of the 209 senior high school students of a Catholic institution on social issues like environment, same-sex marriage, taxes, welfare and war on terrorism. After using non-parametric tests and topical/thematic approach, findings revealed that respondents had high degree of liberalness to the mentioned social issues. Using Kruskal-Wallis, there was no significant difference between religion, ethnicity and degree of liberalness but there was a significant difference when the respondents were grouped according to strand. Using Mann-Whitney U-Test, there was no significant differences between sex and degree of liberalness. Therefore, students from a Catholic institution had high degree of openness and acceptance on the mentioned issues.

**Keywords**— *environment, same sex marriage, taxes, war on terrorism, welfare and war on terrorism.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Due to the changes that occurred and are still happening in the society, people are becoming more and more open to modifications which make them capable of accepting and exploring new things making them more liberal not just on their attitudes but also on their culture and their level of acceptance. The transition of society is greatly influenced by the increase of young people who are open to adapt to changes that are already transpiring. With this being said, it obviously portrays that youth accepts changes more than individuals who have older ages (Janmaat and Keating, 2017). According to Cosme, Pepino and Brown (2014), liberalness is defined as the capability of a person to receive and adapt to changes. Also, liberalness gives importance to individuals' liberty. There is a freedom for individuals to voice out their opinions. It also implies the rules of law strictly, limits the power of government officials, paves way to a realm of exchange of ideas and prioritizes individuals' rights.

Environmental issues confront Filipinos but it shows that Filipinos are more open when it comes to protecting the

environment for Filipinos have evolved into Earth warriors. One evidence that Filipinos are open to sustaining and conserving the Earth is the strengthening of the environmental campaign by the Archdiocese of Manila called "Season for Creation" which helps to combat ecological issues that Philippines is facing (Esplanada, 2014). In addition, former president Joseph Estrada emphasized the ecological importance of Philippine seas through the presidential proclamation number 57 in 1999. All of these are actions done to improve and to protect the environment that would be very important in Philippines' survival (Clinches, 2015). Another issue is same-sex marriage. Since Philippines is considered to be one of the many Catholic nations, same-sex marriage therefore is prohibited in the country which only shows that conservativeness exists within the realms of the Philippine government (Javian, 2017). In contrast, the present administration in the Philippines already announced the possible way of the legalization of same-sex marriage and changes of the laws in the future would not be so far (Basa, 2017). Economic issues also press the Filipinos. To have a fresh and new start upon boosting the Philippine economy, president Rodrigo Duterte passed the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law which garnered different reactions from Filipinos. The comments are indeed conflicting because most professionals consider it a blessing knowing that their wages which are below Php 20,000 will not be given tax anymore but families living under the poverty line have already protested arguing that the TRAIN law is anti-poor considering the increase in prices of the basic goods which people consume (Jing, 2018). Moreover, to nurture and help impoverish Filipinos survive, a charity called "Children in Need" has been lending its hand to help Filipinos who are suffering from poverty by giving and providing them some of the basic needs a person needs to gratify such as education, health assistance and improvement on their standard of living. This is only one way out of the hundreds of ways on how Filipinos are willing to extend their hands to lift their fellow citizens away from the poverty line (Wirtgen, 2018). The Southern part of the Philippines has been considered by the United States as a safe haven for terrorists especially to Abu Sayyaf Group. This only indicates that the Philippine

government has been focusing more on other matters such as its economy and its “war on drugs” campaign. Since terrorism is not regulated and not given much attention, terrorists take this as a way for them to attack or to do what they intended to do, thus, posing a threat to the Philippine government (Bhattacharji, 2009). Given all these pressing issues, this current study intended to determine the degree of liberalness of students in a Catholic institution. It will determine their acceptance to environment activities, same-sex marriage, taxes, welfare and war on terrorism.

This present study focused on the profile variables of the respondents, their degree of liberalness on social issues such as environment, same-sex marriage, taxes, welfare and war on terrorism and the significant difference between the respondents’ profile and degree of liberalness.

## II. METHODS

This study used descriptive-comparative research design. The descriptive design was used to determine the profile and degree of liberalness while comparative design was used to describe the significant difference between the respondents’ profile and degree of liberalness on selected variables. Survey questionnaire was used as well as open-ended interview questions to further describe the degree of liberalness of the respondents. This study was conducted at Saint Mary’s University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya with 209 senior high school student-respondents. The respondents will come from the strands of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), Science and Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Accountancy and Business Management (ABM), General Academic Strand (GAS) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for both grades 11 and 12. The respondents were chosen through random sampling. The survey-questionnaire was made by the researchers. It was pilot-tested with a total reliability coefficient of .937; the reliability coefficients of environment, same-sex marriage, taxes, welfare and war on terrorism are .750, .871, .821, .856 and .869 respectively. The first part of the instrument pertained to the profile of the respondents. The second part pertained to the degree of liberalness of the respondents along the five issues. The last of the questionnaire contained open-ended questions.

The respondents’ degree of liberalness was measured by computing the means, medians and standard deviation of the quantitative data and qualitative descriptions was based on the following indicators:

Table 1. *Qualitative Description Scale.*

Scale	Response	Qualitative Description
1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree	Very low level of liberalness
1.50-2.49	Disagree	Low level of liberalness
2.50-3.49	Agree	High level of liberalness
3.50-4.00	Strongly Agree	Very high level of liberalness

Non-parametric test was used to test the significant differences between and across domains and the significance level was set at 0.05; and the qualitative data were analyzed in a topical or thematic manner. All answers were classified and clustered along the variables of environment, same-sex marriage, taxes, welfare and war on terrorism. Answers that diverged from these variables were grouped according to their respective themes.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The Environment*

Table 2. *Mean percentage of Degree of Liberalness in terms of the environment.*

	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. I believe that the government is taking littering seriously.	2.5407	HD
2. I believe that cars are strongly regulated in densely populated areas.	2.5837	HD
3. I believe that controlled mining is beneficial to the people.	2.8708	HD
4. I believe that recycling is a very important aspect in reducing waste.	3.5072	VHD
5. I believe that gas and cigarettes should be more expensive to mitigate air pollution.	3.1531	HD
6. I believe that there should be more E-car stations available to promote the purchase of E-cars as opposed to the purchase of traditional cars that emit toxic gases.	3.1627	HD
7. I believe that nuclear power should be used here in the Philippines.	2.6986	HD
8. I believe that the Philippines is taking its part upon helping the country’s aspect on the environment.	2.8134	HD
9. I believe that overpopulation is not a significant factor of pollution.	2.1675	LD
10. I believe that the standard of living should be increased at the expense of wildlife.	2.7847	HD
Overall Mean	2.8282	HD

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Very Low Degree (VLD);1.50-2.49=Low Degree (LD);2.50-3.49= High Degree (HD);3.50-4.00=Very High Degree (VHD).

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation and qualitative description results for each question under the variable environment. It shows that the respondents strongly agreed that recycling is a very important aspect in reducing waste

which indicates that the respondents had a very high level of liberalness. However, the respondents were not convinced that overpopulation is not a significant factor of pollution which manifested that the respondents had a low level of liberalness. Recycling is not only defined as the usage of waste products for another purpose but also, recycling has the capacity to lighten environmental loading twice which is known as environmental impact reducing (Cabalova, Kacik, Geffert and Kacikova, 2011). However, to contradict the result that overpopulation is not a significant factor in pollution, a study conducted by Sherbinin, Carr, Cassels and Jiang (2009) with the title “Population and Environment” shows that overpopulation is just one among the many significant variables that affect the environment as it worsens the existing bad governance, civil conflicts, wars, polluting technologies and distortionary policies. In addition, due to the rapid growth of population, there is an increase in levels of consumptions causing depletion on natural resources, soil degradation, habitat and forest destructions, loss of biodiversity, increasing demand for energy, air pollution including climate change and global warming as well as water scarcity and water pollution (Guria, 2015). Human actions are the cause of environmental depletion and destruction but human actions could also be the reason for environmental metamorphosis as people could make immediate actions to aid the depreciating environment which they live in. Regardless of the contradictions that were presented, it is evident that people have the capacity to destroy the environment as well as to protect it and make it better by proper execution of actions such as recycling, reducing and re-using wastes.

Table 3. Responses on the Environmental Involvement of the Respondents.

INVOLVEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS INVOLVED	PERCENTAGE	RANK
Practice CHSF	16	14	4
Participate on Environmental Activities	10	9	5
Practice 3Rs	28	25	1
Be Disciplined	18	16	3
Plant Trees	16	14	4
Proper Waste Disposal	24	22	2

Table 3 shows the qualitative responses of the respondents on the open-ended question about their extent of environmental involvement on the research instrument. The results show that most of the respondents’ extent of environmental involvement was practicing the 3Rs or the reduce, reuse and recycle while the least practiced activity by the respondents was by participating on other environmental activities. The above results support the finding in table 2 that recycling is a very important aspect on reducing waste.

### Same-sex Marriage

Table 4. Mean percentage of Degree of Liberalness in terms of same-sex marriage.

	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. I believe that affirming love and commitment to each other regardless of sex right.	2.8373	HD
2. I believe that there is no discrimination even though same-sex marriage is not yet legal in our country.	2.5742	HD
3. I believe that same-sex marriage does not lead to polygamy.	2.6651	HD
4. I believe that same-sex couples have the right to adopt children.	3.0766	HD
5. I believe that same-sex marriage strengthens marriages as an institution.	2.6986	HD
6. I believe that same-sex relationships are better than civil partnerships.	2.4641	LD
7. I believe that same-sex marriages do not weaken the value of monogamy.	2.8038	HD
8. I believe that heterosexual marriages are the same with same-sex marriage.	2.6507	HD
9. I believe that there is a distinction between lust and love for gay people.	2.8900	HD
10. I believe that same-sex couples’ love is enough to let two individuals of the same-sex get marry.	2.7416	HD
Overall Mean	2.7402	HD

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Very Low Degree (VLD);1.50-2.49=Low Degree (LD);2.50-3.49= High Degree (HD);3.50-4.00=Very High Degree (VHD).

Table 4 shows the mean, standard deviation and qualitative description results for each question under the variable same-sex marriage. The table also displays that respondents agreed mostly when asked if same-sex couples should have the right to adopt children which implied their high level of liberalness. On the other hand, the lowest mean was obtained when respondents showed their unconformity towards the belief that same-sex marriage are better than civil partnerships.

In support to the degree of liberalness of the respondents when it comes to the adoption of children of same-sex couples, a study by Perrin and Siegel (2013) with the title “Promoting the Well-Being of Children Whose Parents Are Gay or Lesbian” shows that children—whose parents are of same-sex—evidently execute positive attitudes such as resilience with regard to social, psychological and sexual health regardless of the existing economic and legal disparities and social stigma. The results from the study of Perrin and Siegel (2013) also provides the fact that the well-being of the children being raised is not affected by the sexual orientation or the gender of the parents rather positive behaviors of the children depend on their relationship with their parents, the sense of security and competence of their parents and the existence of social and economic support of the parents to their children. On the other hand, Schumm’s (2016) “A Review and Critique of Research on Same-Sex Parenting and Adoption” provides that same-sex relationships are more prone to relationship instability that could affect the upbringing of children. The low level degree

of liberalness of the respondents towards the comparison of same-sex relationship and heterosexual relationships could be supported by a study with the title “Gender and the Stability of Same-Sex and Different-Sex Relationships Among Young Adults” conducted by Joyner, Manning and Bogle (2017) as it shows on the result of the inquiry that same-sex relationships have higher risks of dissolution than civil relationships as they experience more interpersonal and institutional discrimination that could serve as their relationship’s stressors resulting to the derogation of their romantic relationship. People’s degree of acceptance towards same-sex marriage could differ especially when upbringing, family background, culture, religion, beliefs, etc. are given consideration. But despite the differences and the variations of people’s thinking, respect and understanding should not be disregarded. The acceptance and awareness on the diversity that exists in humanity’s world should not just stay as mere acceptance and awareness rather, these emotions that showed liberalness could also be expressed through actions such as embracing the uniqueness of humanity by means of inculcating values that protect the rights of each person.

Table 5. Ideas about Same-sex Marriage of the Respondents.

IDEAS ABOUT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	RANK
Same-sex marriage should not be legalized	23	27	2
Same-sex marriage should be legalized	30	35	1
Immoral	13	15	4
Morally right	5	5	5
Same-sex marriage should be respected	16	18	3

Table 5 shows the ideas of the respondents on the open-ended question about same-sex marriage. It also displays that most of the respondents have answered that same-sex marriage should be legalized. There were few respondents who said that same-sex marriage is morally right. Although the majority of the respondents (n=30) who said that same-sex marriage should be legalized, there is approximately closer number of 23 who believed that is should not be legalized. However, as far as same-sex marriage is concerned, Felter and Renwick (2019) made a thorough analysis entitled “Same-Sex Marriage: Global Comparisons” to determine the number of the supporters as well as people who oppose same-sex marriage. It was found out on their inquiry that although there is an increasing number of countries already legalizing same-sex marriage, the opposition side in other countries has stood firm into what they believe in. Also, international activists focus more not in the campaign for the legalization of same-sex marriage rather, for anti-violence and anti-discrimination campaigns.

The division among individuals when it comes to their acceptance to same-sex marriage differs in level due to their

varying degree of liberalness. However, acceptance to the LGBT community and in same-sex marriage is a result of people’s awareness to these existing entities thus, people’s high degree of awareness could lead to high degree of acceptance (Dimock, 2013).

**Taxes**

Table 6. Mean percentage of Degree of Liberalness in terms of taxes.

	Mean	Qualitative Description
1.I believe that the church should be exempted from taxes.	2.8086	HD
2.I believe that the TRAIN law will boost the Philippine economy to fund the government’s Build, Build, Build Program.	2.7799	HD
3.I believe that the government should lower taxes for teachers.	3.1005	HD
4.I believe that the government should collect equal amount of taxes regardless of a person’s status in life.	2.6890	HD
5.I believe that taxes are taken seriously by the government.	2.9378	HD
6.I believe that the country could survive the next 6 months without taxes.	2.3445	LD
7.I believe that the TRAIN law will be a significant factor in the Philippine economy.	2.9091	HD
8.I believe that the government should cut taxes of dual citizen.	2.6077	HD
9.I believe that taxes collected from microbusinesses and macro businesses should be that of equal amount.	2.5120	HD
10.I believe that the government should not tax employees earning 20,000 PHP a month or less.	3.2440	HD
Overall Mean	2.7933	HD

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Very Low Degree (VLD);1.50-2.49=Low Degree (LD);2.50-3.49= High Degree (HD);3.50-4.00=Very High Degree (VHD).

Table 6 shows the mean, standard deviation and qualitative description results for each question under the variable taxes. The table also shows that most respondents believed that the government should not tax employees who were earning Php 20,000.00 monthly or even less which indicated their high level of liberalness. With a mean of 2.3445 (Disagree), this means that the respondents believed that the country could not survive without taxes. In support to the high degree of liberalness of the respondents when it comes to the prohibition of income taxes to employees earning Php 20,000.00 or below monthly, a study conducted by Khan (2017) with the title “The Impact of Income Tax and Inflation on Salary: A Case Study of Government Gazetted Teachers in Peshawar, Pakistan” concluded that decrease on income taxes results to the increase of disposable income resulting further to economic development of the employee. Also, the higher the income tax so is the increase of possible wage erosion. In addition, eradicating income taxes to employees earning Php 20,000.00 or below monthly could help workers be able to take home larger amount of salary for them to afford basic commodities, save for future purposes, support families’ needs

and afford tuition fees and other school expenses for their children (Abrea, 2017). The country could not survive without taxes as its relevance and necessity is undeniably needed as governments require their citizens to pay certain amount to finance social projects in order to meet the demands of their societies. Other than that, taxes are also needed to fund crucial sectors that could help in promoting the well-being of the citizens such as security, scientific research, environmental protection, etc. Taxes could also aid on the economic growth of a particular country as it contributes to the gross domestic product (GDP) that could raise standard of living and could create jobs (Klein, 2014). Taxes are the backbone of the government and in order for a state or country to thrive, citizens should cooperate by paying the right amount of tax that could support the government in improving the current situation of its country. But, in order for a particular nation to fully prosper, paying taxes is not enough.

Table 7. Responses of the respondents about the relevance and necessity of taxes.

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	RANK
YES	130	78	1
NO	28	17	2
MAYBE	8	5	3

Table 7 shows the qualitative answers of the respondents as it displays that most students have agreed that taxes are still relevant and necessary. These are a few among the respondents that have shown uncertainty towards the question. Though there is a big disparity in the number of respondents, taxation is still important and believes to boost the economy. The utilization of taxes by governments could help in improving their country's economy but alterations on the tax system could also cause a certain economy to fail. As stated, cooperation of the citizens in paying the right and equitable amount of tax could help make the state of their country to thrive and prosper.

**Welfare**

Table 8. Mean percentage of Degree of Liberalness in terms of welfare.

	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. I believe that outreach programs have a significant impact in the lives of those in poverty.	3.3254	HD
2. I believe that the government should provide a basic housing program for the homeless and provide blue collar jobs.	3.3493	HD
3. I believe that the government should increase allotted funds for outreach programs.	3.2440	HD
4. I believe that the government should have free weekly checkups at the weekends.	3.2967	HD
5. I believe that the community should form organization to reach out to the less fortunate in order to mitigate their circumstances.	3.2440	HD
6. I believe that every NGO should increase allotted funds to help the poor.	3.2632	HD

7. I believe that vigilant killings are helping the police mitigate drugs.	2.5311	HD
8. I believe that extra judicial killings are on efficient way of ridding the streets of thugs.	2.3828	LD
9. I believe that the Philippines should prioritize life over standard of living.	3.1244	HD
10. I believe that the government should increase the pension of SSS members.	3.1483	HD
Overall Mean	3.0909	HD

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Very Low Degree (VLD);1.50-2.49=Low Degree (LD);2.50-3.49= High Degree (HD);3.50-4.00=Very High Degree (VHD).

Table 8 shows the mean, standard deviation and qualitative description results for each question under the variable welfare. It also shows that most students agreed that the government should provide a basic housing program for the homeless and provide blue collar jobs which manifested their high level of liberalness. The respondents had shown great disagreement towards the belief that extra judicial killings are on efficient way of ridding the streets of thugs which only signified the respondents' low level of liberalness. The need for shelter is undeniable as it is one of the basic needs of humans to survive. But one problem each poor country continuously faces is the need and demand for basic housing programs for those citizens who cannot afford to rent an apartment or even have the capacity to build their own houses. Due to the fluctuating economy, it is not only the poor families who are suffering from these dilemmas but so are some of the families who are living in urban places as urbanization takes at a faster pace resulting to higher demands on shelter. Thus, governments could no longer support basic housing programs thus making their intentions for a better standard of living for their citizens living in slums obsolete (Rosebud, 2016). In the providence of blue-collar jobs, it is important for unemployed citizens to be able to have stable jobs as occupations could be a strategy for less fortunate individuals to help them build structured lives, establish a connection to a broader society and could even help them in their well-being as individuals. Children could also be beneficiaries as growing in a household with a stable income could provide them their basic needs to survive (Bloom, 2016). The "War on Drugs" campaign by President Rodrigo Duterte has been one of the most trending programs he had ever since he seated as the 16th president of the Republic of the Philippines. Though there are different opinions coming from the Filipino citizens regarding this program of the present administration, the positive effects of extra-judicial killings are not hidden as they were presented even by the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO). From the 9,183 crimes focused on homicide, murder, physical injuries and rape before the establishment of the said campaign, the Duterte administration was able to reduce the number of crimes committed into 6,881 crimes. With this statistics, the effect of the "War on Drugs" campaign could be observed (Cruz, 2018). However, regardless of the positive impact of extra-judicial killings, religious and civil society groups have shown their disagreement towards the bloody way of ridding

illegal drug users and pusher. The international criminal court even expressed their condemnation towards the killings as they consider it as a “crime against humanity” (Muggah, 2017).

Table 9. Responses of the respondents about the prioritization of public welfare.

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	RANK
YES	150	80	1
NO	12	18	2
MAYBE	4	2	3

Table 9 displays the answers of the respondents about the prioritization of public welfare. Most respondents showed great support in making public welfare a priority while few among the respondents were still indeterminate. Hence, in support of the results in table 8, public welfare is considered as a priority.

### War on Terrorism

Table 10. Mean percentage of Degree of Liberalness in terms of war on terrorism.

	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. I believe that the government's mentality of evacuate and obliterate is an effective way of beating the terrorists.	2.9139	HD
2. I believe that the president's decision to implement martial law on Mindanao last year was a wise military decision.	2.9952	HD
3. I believe that inhumane tortures should not be allowed to extract information from terrorists.	2.8565	HD
4. I believe that the government should strategize more and take time in taking an action against terrorism.	3.1675	HD
5. I believe that the government should not be merciless towards terrorists.	2.8230	HD
6. I believe that development of weapons to be used against terrorists, rebels, and invaders should be one of the government's top priorities.	3.0144	HD
7. I believe that terrorists' wishes should be granted if hostages are involved.	2.5167	HD
8. I believe that terrorists should be negotiated with in order to prevent casualties on both sides.	2.9665	HD
9. I believe that once a person is found guilty of any form of terrorism he or she should be trained under the government and be used as a spy.	2.5789	HD
10. I believe that bio weapons should be used to win the war.	2.7177	HD
Overall Mean	2.8550	HD

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Very Low Degree (VLD);1.50-2.49=Low Degree (LD);2.50-3.49= High Degree (HD);3.50-4.00=Very High Degree (VHD).

Table 10 shows the mean, standard deviation, median and qualitative description results for each question under the variable war on terrorism. The results show that the respondents displayed great approval in allowing the government in strategizing more upon combatting terrorism which only manifested their high level of liberalness. Though similar in degree of liberalness, the respondents still showed the lowest interest when asked about granting terrorists' wishes when hostages were involved.

In defeating terrorism, it is important for governments to have strategies. Several models of strategy could be used as well as steps in combatting terrorism. One step governments could do is to detect first the root cause of terrorism as well as the social movements that underlie. Another is that, governments should be aware about the culture their country has for it to be protected against external forces that could desecrate their belief and eventually result to rebellion or terrorism. Developmental programs could also be established by governments to reform the state of their countries and equal opportunities should also be given to citizens to avoid any rebellious act (Loayza, 2016).

Terrorism could be avoided if people can foster tolerance and understanding. If people could also respect the diversity that is existing, peace could be attained as differences among cultures, beliefs, tradition, appearances, etc. make the world whole and complete.

Table 11. Responses of the respondents about combatting terrorism with war.

RESPONSES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	RANK
YES	97	63	1
NO	40	27	2
MAYBE	15	10	3

Table 11 shows that out of the 152 respondents who answered the open-ended question, majority of them agreed on the use of war to combat terrorism. Few respondents had also shown their uncertainty regarding the social issue. The table above also strengthens the high level of liberalness of the respondents.

### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the findings of this study, it is concluded that senior high school students have high degree of liberalness due to their ability to adapt to changes as they were raised in an era of modernization thus, they look at the world in a state of continuous evolution making it easier for them to be open to different changes that may occur. Also, senior high school students had shown high degree of liberalness even if they are enrolled in a Catholic university.

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