



SAN BEDA UNIVERSITY

# BEDAN RESEARCH JOURNAL

THE OFFICIAL RESEARCH PUBLICATION  
OF SAN BEDA UNIVERSITY



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# From the Editor

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This volume is a collection of research articles focusing on the San Beda University Academic Year 2018-2019 theme: “Stewardship towards God’s Creation.” The ten featured articles tackled from various experiences and lenses how the Church as an institution, other organizations, and the people from various sectors, respond and manifest their concern and love for God’s creation like all the living things around us and our Mother Earth.

The first paper by **James Loreto C. Piscos** on “**Stewardship Towards God’s Creation Among Early Filipinos: Implications to Inculturated Faith**” examined an integral inculturated faith that is anchored to the Filipino cultural heritage and identity. He asserted that primal cosmic beliefs and practices carried the holistic customs of stewardships towards God’s creation where it embodied the union and mutuality of the natives to nature rather than control and subordination. The research utilized primary materials written by Spanish ethnographers in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century. Although their observations were from the colonizers’ perspectives, it still revealed beliefs and practices at that time common among early Filipinos. Piscos asserted that one needs to filter and decipher those accounts to unearth early Filipinos experiences of *oikenomous*. Although the study was limited to the Tagalogs, still the dynamics of power-relations between the inhabitants and nature were demonstrated using the lenses of Foucault’s discourse on power. His findings implications to inculturated faith given the open atmosphere of the Church for its renewed evangelization that includes stewardship towards God’s creation where harmony and communion with Mother Earth strengthens our bonds with God and find each other in a place we truly call a home.

The second paper by **Divina M. Edralin and Ronald M. Pastrana** on “**Sustainability Reporting of Leading Global Universities in Asia, Europe, and USA**” determined the sustainability reporting of selected leading global universities in Asia, Europe, and the USA. Using the descriptive and comparative research designs, fifteen higher educational institutions from leading global universities with business schools and institutional sustainability development programs were used as sample cases. Their results revealed that all the sampled universities in Asia,

Europe, and USA publish their Stand-Alone Sustainability Reports annually, as well as publish parts of their sustainability performance in their Annual Reports at the end of every academic year. These reports are made available in their websites year-round. Their findings also showed that in terms of reporting framework, the universally recognized Global Reporting Initiative is predominantly used by universities in Asia and Europe, followed by the Environmental Management System certifiable under ISO 14001 standards. USA universities, however, use a combination of standards, some not formal, but patterned it after the models such as the UN Global Standards, Corporate Knights, International Sustainability Campus Network/GULF Framework, and People and Planet Green League. Among the four priority concerns on sustainability reporting, environmental indicators obtained the highest average frequency; followed by governance, social, and economic indicators among the three regions, led by Europe and US universities.

The paper on “**The Impact on Life of Estero de San Miguel**” by **Noel D. Santander, Josephine C. Dango, and Ma. Emperatriz C. Gabatbat** provided a better understanding of how different creatures relate to one another in the ecosystem. Through semiotic analysis applied on the life sharing of the local people and some images, their research yielded a deeper appreciation of the impact on life of Estero de San Miguel. They viewed that the estero is an abiotic component of the local ecosystem within the district of San Miguel, Manila. It had freely offered greater provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services before to local communities and other life forms within its immediate ecosystem than today, when it had been relegated only to serve as a tributary of Pasig River and sewer of human waste. They further observed that the present status of the estero shows lesser impact on life within its local ecosystem. While there is still time to finally halt this local ecological catastrophe, people must actively contribute in creating a serious awareness of, respect, and love for the estero and the environment at large. A serious awareness that focuses more on their intrinsic value, apart from their services being offered.

The next paper argued that religious conviction is contributory to the making of the culture of Capitalism in the West. This paper by **Jesster B. Fonseca** “**Capitalism vs. Creation Spirituality Resolve (C.S.R.): A Tete-a-tete of Two Cultural Consciousness**” presented his argument by annotating Max Weber’s Sociology of Religion where Capitalism’s cultural values influencing the behavior and attitude of the

modern man. He established how the values of Capitalism, in the global extent, became the main culprit in the destruction of the ecological system. To see both sides of the story, he examined how capitalists respond to this environmental crisis created mainly by them and why the 'method' of most economic experts, including those of the philanthrocapitalists, fails in resolving the problem of sustainability vis-à-vis environmental wellbeing. Opting to take the position of Creation spirituality, the author showed how to counteract the "colonizing" position of Capitalism is for religion to take charge. In the end, the author argued that only in paradigm-shift where the position of Creation spirituality is taken, that genuine solution can be achieved in this pressing environmental crisis. Fonseca recommended to utilize the principles and values of Creation spirituality via incorporation of it in religious academic curricula. Likewise, it was proposed that the same in the wider sphere of interreligious relations and communications that religious leaders, preachers and teachers should consider as a course of action to take.

The paper by **Gil P. Soriano, Febes Catalina T. Aranas, and Rebecca Salud O. Tejada**, on "**Caring Behaviors, Spiritual, and Cultural Competencies: A Holistic Approach to Nursing Care**" determined the extent of influence of cultural and spiritual competencies to the caring behaviors of nurses who were employed in Level 3 hospitals. They collected the data by survey using three questionnaires on caring behaviors, cultural and spiritual competencies. The extent of influence was determine using a univariate linear regression analysis. Their findings revealed that nurses rated themselves very good in terms of caring behaviors and good in terms of spiritual and cultural competencies. Spiritual competencies showed a significant influence in the caring behaviors of nurses; however, no significant influence was noted between the cultural competencies and caring behaviors of nurses.

Another paper is on "**Restoring the Sanctity and Dignity of Life among Low Risk Drug User Surrenderers** by **Neilia Balanon-Ramirez, Noel Santander, and Kim Guia**" investigated every good points a community-based relapse prevention program being implemented by a particular local community among low-risk drug-users surrenderers. This included appreciating the design of the program and how it impacted the participants and the community of Barangay Salapan, San Juan City. All these being viewed from the underlying principles of restorative justice, in the pursuit of describing how the

sanctity and dignity of human life is being restored using the five stages of appreciative inquiry as method of analysis. They found out that the rehabilitation program being implemented by the local community and supported by the local government provided a silver lining for the victims of the prohibited drugs. Initially, it helped redeem their lost personal sense of dignity, social respect and acceptance, and become a productive and significant individual members of their particular families and their beloved community. They emphasized that the restoration of the sanctity and dignity of life demands greater openness, volunteerism, respect sincerity and discipline from each of the persons involved in the rehabilitation program. They also believed that all the sectors of the local community should be united and unselfishly support the program regardless of political color or affiliation, religious background, economic interests and social biases, so that the sacredness and dignity of life which is very primal as a value will be constructively attained.

The paper on **“The Athletes After Retirement: How are they Doing?”** by **Bayani C. Matitu, Rosalinda B. Santiago, and Michael B. Pasco** examined the influence of the years of retirement and physical self-inventory on human sufferings experienced by the retired athletes. Using mixed research methods, they studied the conditions of retired athletes in Metro Manila. Their study confirmed that physical self-inventory influenced post-retirement human suffering. Post-retirement athletic identity, financial status and decisions to voluntary retire were observed to be the most prevalent experiences related to human suffering. However, they noted that retired athletes enjoy experiences with their educational status, other career benefits, health condition, control of lives, management of changes, and the warm support of their families and colleagues.

The succeeding paper on **“Correlation of Spiritual Care and Quality of Life among Institutionalized Older People”** by **Walter Jerome S. Cabale and Margarete C. Cayetano** assumed that ensuring that Older People have good quality of life is one of the major goals of any caregiver. Caregivers, which includes nurses, must be holistic in their provision of care to meet such a goal. Since one of the dimensions of quality of life is spirituality, the study described if any relationship exists between the caregivers’ spiritual care practices and the quality of life of the older people in their care. They surveyed institutionalized older

people using the Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutics scale and WHO Quality of Life for Filipino Older People to measure the spiritual care practices of caregivers and the quality of life of Older People, respectively. Their results showed that no significant relationship between the two variables, which may be due to the fact that quality of life is composed of several dimensions, in which spirituality is only one, and is multi-factorial in nature; suggesting that quality of life is influenced by several factors and how these factors interplay ultimately determine the quality of life of Older People. They recommended that a mixed-method approach be used to further understand the lack of direct relationship between the two variables.

The paper by **Melanio S. Leal** on “**Contextualizing Laudato si in the Philippines: Environmental Problem in Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal**”. Leal believed that the environmental pollution is a global issue and is causing widespread problems around the world. In this regard, he investigated the care for the environment, particularly the water system (creek, river and falls) in Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. This called for a reassessment of the peoples’ perceptions on how they care for the environment in the Philippine context. He conducted a case study was conducted in a rural area near Metro Manila in the Province of Rizal with 47 respondents from Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, aged from 18 to 60 years old. The descriptive results of statistics and thematic analyses of respondents’ responses were based on the Care for the Environment Scale (CES) developed by the researcher in this study. The CES revealed significant differences in the perceptions of the respondents about how they care for their environment. This case study illustrated how the findings from the people’s responses can be used to inform all the people to initiate programs based on the ethics of care and the encyclical Laudato si.

The last article on “**The Church’s Response to Earth’s Healing**” by **Arnold B. Donozo, Julius B. Tutor, Kim S. Guia** assumed that the Roman Catholic Church, thru the Supreme Pontiff, prides herself of her prophetic vocation. Just like the prophets of old, the Church speaks whenever there is a social issue that threatens the people of God. Currently, all people are facing the ecological crisis as characterized by unprecedented natural weather patterns (climate change), loss of species

of both flora and fauna and desertification and the like. As a crisis, it needs an immediate response. This response is the main focus of this research. Hence, this research aimed to fulfill the following objectives: to describe the current ecological crisis; to identify the Church's traditional and scriptural basis in responding to the challenges of the ecological crisis; to examine the different Church's encyclical and teachings as responses to ecological crisis; and to propose recommendations to alleviate the present ecological crisis. The social action cycle of *Mater et Magistra* was used as framework in identifying the origins of the crisis (context), followed by identifying diachronically the response of the Church drawing from the scripture, tradition (conscience), and examining synchronically the response of the Church's encyclical with special emphasis on *Laudato Si*, concluding with concrete recommendations (consciousness) to help alleviate the present ecological crisis. Thus, the result showed that the current ecological crisis is characterized by 'excessive anthropocentrism' which is a clear misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the human and nature relationships. Moreover, a clear interpretation of the Biblical truth must be preserved. Lastly, the Catholic Social Teachings, specifically the *Laudato Si*, indicated that there is a need for a "Dialogue", among various sciences, to respond effectively to the ecological crisis.

On behalf of the Editorial Board of the Bedan Research Journal, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to all contributors for publishing their research outputs in BERJ. I also would like to thank our reviewers who have spent time and effort to provide critiques of the manuscripts to improve the quality of the papers submitted for publication in our journal. Last but not the least, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Editorial Assistant for ensuring that this volume will be published on time.

**Divina M. Edralin**  
Editor-in-Chief

# Stewardship Towards God's Creation Among Early Filipinos: Implications to Inculturated Faith

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## Abstract

An integral inculturated faith is anchored to the Filipino cultural heritage and identity. Primal cosmic beliefs and practices carried the holistic customs of stewardships towards God's creation where it embodied the union and mutuality of the natives to nature rather than control and subordination. The research utilized primary materials written by Spanish ethnographers in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century. Although their observations were from the colonizers' perspectives, it still revealed beliefs and practices at that time common among early Filipinos. One needs to filter and decipher those accounts to unearth early Filipinos experiences of *oikenomous*. Although the study was limited to the Tagalogs, still the dynamics of power-relations between the inhabitants and nature were demonstrated using the lenses of Foucault's discourse on power. The findings of the research could have implications to inculturated faith given the open atmosphere of the Church for its renewed evangelization that includes stewardship towards God's creation where harmony and communion with Mother Earth strengthens our bonds with God and find each other in a place we truly call a home.

**Keywords:** Stewardship, Early Filipinos, Power-Relations, Inculturated Faith

## Preliminary Remarks

Stewardship can be viewed as an engagement to manage a household. Literally this is what its etymology implies. The Greek word *oikonomos* which is the origin of stewardship denotes that a person only manages but not owns the household. In stewardship we have been entrusted with resources – creation, people, talents, money and even time.

The Church is challenged to re-examine its agenda on the integration of stewardship and inculturation. The Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines in 1992 and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines push for an inculturated stewardship that is an integral aspect of holistic spirituality involving how to be disciples of Christ in the modern world. Inculturation is “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.” (Pope John Paul II, 1987).

A dialogue with the cultures of early Filipinos deems important in a study of inculturated stewardship since the rich heritage of a caring community provides valuable lesson on how to integrate best practices of stewardship among our ancestors and the Christian perspective of *oikonomos*. The research explored the notion of stewardship among early Filipinos as manifested in their beliefs and practices of the cosmic gods. There is an abundance of beliefs and practices yet to be explored from our forefathers that allow us to look at our past with so much dignity and pride. A usable past which utilized the values and traditions on stewardship towards God’s creation can be integrated to form an inculturated stewardship that blends early customs and Catholic concepts.

As a qualitative research, the study employed library and archival work. It uses primary sources from the works of Spanish ethnographers Chirino, Plasencia, Loarca and Morga, Colin, and the Boxer Codex who wrote their observations about the culture of the natives in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Selected ethnographic and cultural studies about Philippine mythology on gods and goddesses among Tagalogs that are mentioned in primary sources were used to enrich on understanding of stewardship among God’s creation. The study is limited to primal beliefs and practices as narrated by early Spanish ethnographers among the Tagalog natives only.

The findings were correlated to Michel Foucault's concepts on power-relations, and interpreted how the exercise of power ensured stewardship towards God's creation in such context. The study concluded with the implications of the findings towards an inculturated faith.

The core idea of Foucault on power is its application, character of network and the manner it threads and extends everywhere as articulated in the diagram below:

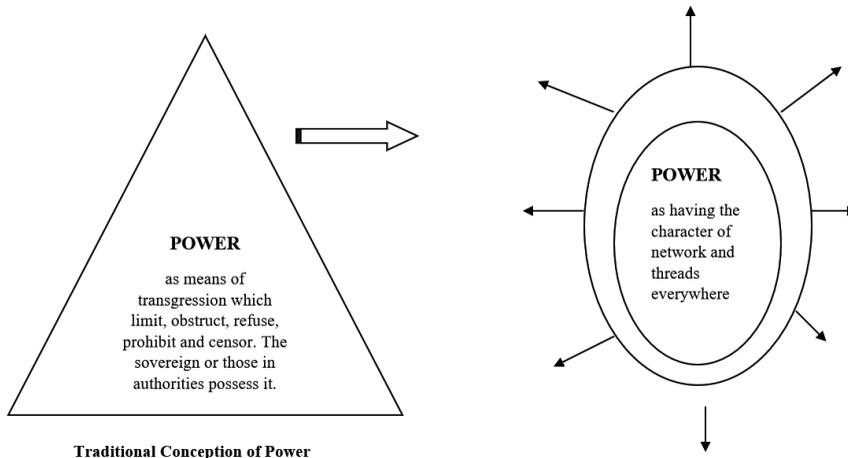
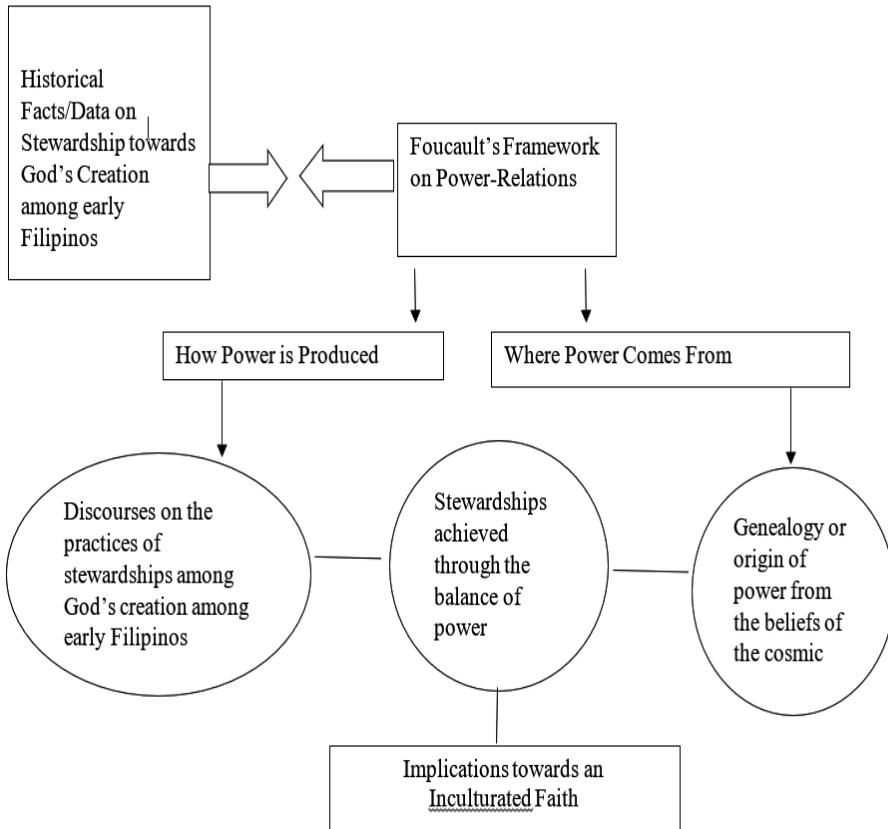


Figure 1. Foucault's Paradigm Shift

### Traditional Conception of Power

Foucault deconstructed the usual question of 'Who had power?' or 'What intentions or aims do power holders have?' to the processes by which subjects are constituted as effects of power. In line with Foucault's shift from the traditional conception of power as possessed to its exercise in the network of power-relations, the researcher mapped out his analysis of the data on the beliefs and practices of the cosmic gods among early Filipinos where the stewardship towards God's creation was embodied. From the findings, the researcher concluded with implications to an integral renewed evangelization of the Catholic Church.



*Figure 2.* General Paradigm: Creative Exploration of Engaging Historical Facts with Conceptual Frameworks on Power-Relations

There were minimal studies about the beliefs in and practices relating to the cosmic gods and its manifestations of stewardships towards God's creation among early Filipinos using 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish primary sources. But there are notable works that should be seen to find the existing research gap related to the topic.

William Henry Scott popularized the life of the early Filipinos in his works entitled "Cracks in the Parchment Curtain and Other Essays in Philippine History" (1981), "Pre-Hispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History" (1984), "Looking for the Pre-Hispanic Filipino: And Other Essays in Philippine History" (1993) and "*Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*" (1994).

There are works related to cosmic gods and God's creation in the form of myths and symbols. The researches of Francisco Demetrio

(1981) attempted to describe the existing myths and symbols in the Philippines. Demetrio made a follow-up study about Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs in his volume two, *Encyclopedia of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs* (1991).

Rene Villanueva and Joaquin Fernandez studied about “Maria Cacao, and *Diwata ng Cebu*” (2002) which revealed how goddesses destroyed the order of society when they were displeased by its actions. The fairy was said to live in Lantao Cave and should not be disturbed by any human being or a wrath would be given.

Seekers of documents on early Philippine history should examine sources related to the Hispanic world. Spanish and Latin American studies have increased their data on their “*Colecciones de documentos*”. Among existing documents are the 42 volume work by Martin Fernandez de Navarrete and its sequel by Cesario Fernandez Duro entitled “*Coleccion de documentos ineditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organizacion de las antiguas posesiones espanolas de America y Oceania*” and “the many compilations of *Coleccion de viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los Espanoles desde fines del siglo XV*”.

There were scholars who went to Spain and other countries to do the mission of gathering primary source materials that reveal the life of early Filipinos. Famous among them are the following: Wenceslao E. Retana published the “*Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino*” in Madrid in 1895-1898. He also authored the *Aparato bibliografico de la historia general de Filipinas* based on the sources collected by the “*Compania General de Tabacos de Filipinas*”. Jose Toribio Medina, a Chilean scholar collected contemporary source documents in his “*Bibliografia Espanola de las Islas Filipinas*”, and printed it in 1898 at Santiago de Chile. The documents catalogued all books up to 1810. Francisco Colin, S.J., and Pablo Pastells, S.J. wrote the “*Labor Evangelica de los Obreros de la Compania de Jesus en Filipinas*”, 3 Vols., Barcelona, 1906. This collection presents the missionary enterprise of the Jesuits and their struggles in the early period. It contains letters, correspondents and descriptions of missionaries' evangelical work. Fr. Pablo Pastells, S.J. authored the opus, “*Historia general de Filipinas*”. Pedro Torres y Lanzas and Francisco Navas del Valle (Editors) had the “*Catalogo de los documentos relativos a Las Islas Filipinas existents en el Arhivo de Indias de Sevilla*” (1493-1572) printed in 1925-1936, Barcelona, Spain. Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, Filipino scholar provided an excellent index of books for Philippine History in his “*Biblioteca Filipina*”, published in 1903 in Washington D.C.

The most useful ones available to students who are not well-trained in 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish documents are source documents translated in English. It proves to be very beneficial to writers and researchers on topics about early Filipino society. It reveals the ethnographic reports of Spanish chroniclers. These are shown below:

Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson edited, collected and translated primary source materials entitled, *Philippine Islands: 1493-1898*. This is otherwise known as Blair and Robertson (B and R), which is considered the largest and most popular compilation of documents in 55 volumes, published in Cleveland, Ohio from 1903 to 1909. This compendium contains important documents ranging from papal bulls, royal decrees, chronicles describing their observation on the islands, letters of the governor-general or other officials to the king, correspondence with the viceroy of Mexico, decisions of the Royal Court on certain queries and problems of the archipelago, complaints on the injustices committed against the natives, demand for salaries and other improvements in the country and other stories that would help researchers the many possibilities in analyzing the context and dynamism within the years of Spanish rule. For this research, B and R offered primary sources written by Spanish chroniclers and ethnographers which provide descriptions of early Filipino customs, traditions and social milieu.

Starting in the 1960's efforts have been made to expose the primary documents to the public since the B and R copy has become too costly for students in history and such compilation is hard to find. In this connection, the Filipiniana Book Guild selected documents from the B & R, added some data not found in this B & R, and reprinted it for easy access to the public. At the end of 1969, they produced 14 volumes. The most notable among these that is directly related to the research is the "First Voyage Around the World" originally written by Antonio Pigafetta in 1522, which reveals early Filipino cultural practices and beliefs.

Gregorio F. Zaide in his *Documentary Sources of Philippine History*, which consists of 14 volumes, compiled, edited and annotated primary source documents mostly taken from B & R, and added data not seen in B & R, from *Archivo General de Indias*, *Archivo Historico Nacional* and other archives abroad. It was published by National Book Store in 1990. This contains primary source materials that speak about early Filipino society.

Recently, the dissertation of Karl Geverza entitled “*Philippine Mythology*” (Geverza, 2014) provided a deconstruction of cosmogony, cosmology, conceptualization of the soul and the deities associated with Philippine mythology and gave the creatures new classifications and meanings.

### **Stewardship towards God's Creation Manifested Among Early Filipinos in their Beliefs and Practices on the Cosmic Gods**

#### **Settlement Patterns and Socio-Economic Life Among Early Filipinos.**

Settlement patterns among early Filipinos were clustered villages lined along sheltered bays, coastal areas and mouths of big river systems. The near coastal embraced the lowland areas of most islands (Fox, 1966). In the interior, settlements were usually located at the headwaters of big water systems of their tributaries. The inhabitants ranged from 50 to 2,000 people ((Loarca, 1582).

The villages were lineally constructed. It was rare to see a compact nucleated type similar to the present day towns and big barangays. The lineal community arrangements predominated along the coast in Cebu, Leyte, and Bohol. Some of those encountered by the Spaniards spanned the length of about a league and a half along the beach (Jocano, 1975).

In the highlands, there were few houses on top promontories and steep ridges. The distribution of settlement was influenced by the way they used the land, economic activities, protection from enemies and the degree of political development. This was exemplified by the *Sulod*, a mountain people in Central Panay where the community had watchtowers for foraging animals that haunted the field. (Fox, 1966).

Economic factor was the major reason in residential preferences. Coastal villages favored settlement where they had easy access for food and transportation. River system was important in trading system since the movement of people and goods was up and down through the course of the water. (Fox, 1966)

Early Filipino society was fragmented. In his anthropological studies, Jocano attributed it to the way they used the land. This unnucleated pattern of settlement was due to the “*slash and burn*” agricultural practices throughout the islands. Socially, it resulted to the mobility of farmers where they looked for places where trees grew abundantly and the soil was free of grass. This mobility attributed to

land use caused the impermanence of settlements and communities. The development of unified large tribes was hampered by such population dispersal. Social units were based on kinship comprised of a number of extended families. The lack of permanent residence and huge aggregate of people to support a strong political figure did not develop as the way it had in Indonesia or in the Middle East. There were no megalithic structures and temples like those in Cambodia, India or China. Jocano argued that to speak of temples and kings in the early Philippines is to exaggerate the sociological contexts of historical records or to refuse to consider the implications of the ecological setting on which early Filipino society was anchored. (Jocano, 1975).

Another major factor that affected residential mobility among pre-Spanish communities was the belief in the active participation of the spirits in the lives of people. If there was sickness or death, they believed that the spirits of the field had been offended and therefore the residents should move out. They left their dwellings or burnt these before departure (Jocano, 1975). This is an important part of the stewardships of God's creation since nature and environment acquired power for people to take care and be careful with their actions to it.

In the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century rapid changes happened in the archipelago. A homogenous society emerged when Chinese merchants and Muslim traders set the motion drawing people from the mountains to coastal areas. Natives from the highland left their homes and established residences in the trade centers. A good example was Manila where nucleated settlements began to develop along the banks of Pasig River. Some of these communities were surrounded by palisades and protective devices to shield them from enemies. Fox (1966) reveals in his studies that the same kind of adjustment occurred in Eastern Mindanao. He found out that "*a number of dwellings were built on the high ridge or hilltop*" (Fox, 1966, p. 14). This is the situation that the Spaniards saw upon their arrival in the islands. In his chronicle, Morga had this observation:

*"they found its settlement in the seashore, near a large river, and under the rule and protection of a chief called Rajamora. Opposite, on the other side of the river, was another large settlement named Tondo, which was likewise held by another chief named Raja Matanda. These settlements were fortified with palm trees and stout arigues (wooden post) filled in with earth and very many bronze culverins and other pieces of larger bore."* (Morga, 1609, p.53)

## Early Filipinos' Beliefs on the Cosmic Gods

Early Filipinos believed the Supreme Being. The Tagalogs called him *Bathala Maykapal* which means "God the Creator" (Plasencia, 1589). *Bathala* is the one God revered as the "maker of all things." *Bathala* dwelled in *Kaluwalhatian* along with lesser gods and goddesses. He also sent his *anitos* in order to assist people in their daily lives. (Boxer Codex, 1570). The Visayan counterpart for *Bathala* is "*Laon*" or antiquity (Chirino, 1603), although in the dictionary of Philippine mythology, it is *Kaptan* as claimed by ethnohistorians and anthropologists who studied its oral traditions.

Something remarkable was revealed in the analysis of Mananzan (1988). He postulates that the word *Bathala* "does not have sexist connotation. In the primitive Tagalog script, the word "god" is made up of three consonants *Ba-Tha-La*. The first consonant is the first syllable of the word *babae* (woman) which symbolizes generation. The third consonant is the first syllable of *lalake* (man) which symbolizes potency. They are joined by the middle consonant, an aspirated *H* which means light or spirit. The word "god", therefore means the union of man and woman in light. And when one reads the word backwards, it reads *LaHatBa*, meaning total generation, total creator" ("to do" "creator"). In other words, the concept of god among the ancient Tagalogs was more closely linked with woman; and when linked with both the concepts of man and woman there is a nuance of union and mutuality, not subordination." (Mananzan, 1988).

The study of union and mutuality among the gods and goddesses of Philippine mythology and non-sexist Filipino beliefs of *Bathala* provided a supplementary enrichment to the importance of harmony instead of subordination in the dynamics of the relationship between people to people and people to nature. Tables 1,2 and 3 present the Tagalog deities arranged according to generation. Each tradition had a set of beliefs about the offspring of gods (Jocano, 1968). Presented in Table 1 is the first generation who resided in *Kaluwalhatian* or ancient Tagalog skyworld.

**Table 1.**  
*The First Generation Deities*

Name	Sex	Typology	Description and Function
<i>Idiyanale</i>	female	labor and good deeds	Early Tagalogs called her for guidance to attain success in their works. Her husband <i>Dimangan</i> had two offspring.
<i>Dimangan</i>	male	good deeds and good harvest	He was the husband of <i>Idiyanale</i> with two offsprings from her.
<i>Amanikable</i>	male	hunting	He was the god of hunters but in modern oral narratives he was known as the ill-tempered god of the sea after he got frustrated upon the failure of his love for a mortal maiden woman <i>Maganda</i> . In effect he swore vengeance against humans by sending turbulent waves and horrible storms to wreck boats and drown people.
<i>Ikapati</i>	female	land cultivation	She was considered as the kindest and most understanding deity helping humans in agriculture. She represented fertility of harvests. People loved her because she was a benevolent giver of prosperity and food.
<i>Mapulon</i>	male	Seasons	He was the god of seasons who was married to <i>Ikapati</i> . They had a daughter named <i>Anagolay</i> , goddess of lost things.
<i>Lakapati</i>	hermaphrodite	fertility	<u>She was a major fertility deity to whom farmers offered sacrifices like “<i>Lakapati</i>, feed this thy slave: let him not hunger”. (San Buenaventura 1613, 361).</u>

**Table 2.***The Second Generation Deities*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Typology</b>	<b>Description and Function</b>
<i>Mayari</i>	female	moon	She was the goddess of the moon and daughter of <i>Bathala</i> from a mortal woman. <i>Tala</i> and <i>Hanan</i> were her sisters.
<i>Tala</i>	female	stars	She was a daughter of <i>Bathala</i> from a mortal woman, and the goddess of the stars.
<i>Hanan</i>	female	morning	She was the daughter of <i>Bathala</i> from a mortal woman, and a goddess of morning.
<i>Anagolay</i>	female	lost things	She was the goddess of lost things, who was the only child of <i>Ikapati</i> and <i>Mapulon</i> .
<i>Anitun Tabu</i>	female	wind and rain	She was the daughter of <i>Idiyanale</i> and <i>Dimangan</i> , and goddess of wind and rain who was considered to be fickle minded.
<i>Dumakulem</i>	male	mountain	He was the son of <i>Idiyanale</i> and <i>Dimangan</i> and brother of <i>Anitun Tabu</i> . He married <i>Anagolay</i> , the goddess of lost things. He was described as a strong agile god of the mountains.

**Table 3.**  
*The Third Generation Deities*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Typology</b>	<b>Description and Function</b>
<i>Apolaki</i>	male	sun	He was the son of <i>Anagolay</i> and <i>Dumakulem</i> who was the god of the sun and patron of warriors.
<i>Divan</i> <i>Masalanta</i>	female	love, conception and birth	She was the daughter of <i>Anagolay</i> and <i>Dumakulem</i> who was the youngest of all the gods and goddesses. She was a goddess of love, conception, and childbirth. She was always there to protect lovers.

### **Harmful Tagalog Deities**

Gods and goddesses opposed to the goodness of Bathala caused destruction, harm and death. They resided in *Kasamaan* (Tagalog for the underworld) (Jocano, 1969). In his narrative, Plasencia wrote:

*“They said also that in the other life and mortality, there was a place of punishment, grief, and affliction, called casanaan (Kasamaan), which was “a place of anguish;” they also maintained that no one would go to heaven, where there dwelt only Bathala, “the maker of all things,” who governed from above. There were also other pagans who confessed more clearly to a hell, which they called, as I have said, casanaan; they said that all the wicked went to that place, and there dwelt the demons, whom they called sitan.” (Plasencia, 1689)*

**Table 4.**  
*The Gods and Goddesses of Kasamaan*

Name	Sex	Typology	Description and Function
<i>Sitan</i>	male	demon	He guarded <i>Kasamaan</i> where he resided and kept bad souls. He had four agents that led a person to sin and destruction.
<i>Manggagaway</i>	female	disease	She was one of Sitan's agents who was blamed to be the cause of disease. Sometimes, she disguised as false healer in human form. She used a magic wand to kill..
<i>Manisilat</i>	female	family destruction	She was Sitan's agent assigned to break and destroy a happy and good family.
<i>Mangkukulam</i>	male	fire	He was Sitan's only male agent tasked to emit fire at night especially during bad weather. He could also transform into a healer and create fire at a victim's dwelling place.
<i>Hukluban</i>	female	desire	As an agent of Sitan, she could assume various forms, and kill or heal anybody as she desired.

These gods and goddesses caused disease, destruction, fire and desire that destroys the harmony of the world. They were led by Sitan who perpetuated harm and evilness.

## Beliefs in the *Anitos*

Early Filipinos believed in *anitos*. *Anitos* were nature-spirits, spirits of deceased ancestors, nymphs and *diwatas*. Animism was the prevalent belief system where the environment was animated by the *anito* and their presence felt in trees, rocks, bodies of water and animals. The way to communicate to *Bathala* was through the *anitos* who spoke to *Bathala* in behalf of people. They were like *Bathala*'s servants who acted as ministers and assistants to help humans on earth. Loarca narrated in his chronicle:

*“When the natives were asked why the sacrifices were offered to the anito, and not to the Bathala, they answered that the Bathala was a great lord, and no one could speak to him. He lived in the sky; but the anito, who was of such a nature that he came down here to talk with men, was to the Bathala as a minister, and interceded for them. In some places and especially in the mountain districts, when the father, mother, or other relative dies, the people unite in making a small wooden idol, and preserve it. Accordingly there is a house which contains one hundred or two hundred of these idols. These images also are called anitos; for they say that when people die, they go to serve the Bathala. Therefore they make sacrifices to these anitos, offering them food, wine, and gold ornaments; and request them to be intercessors for them before the Bathala, whom they regard as God.”*  
(Loarca, 1582)

## Beliefs in the Life after Death and the Destination of the Soul

The experience of uncontrollable forces like natural calamities and death propelled pre-colonial Filipinos to believe in a continuation of earthly existence and the immortality of the soul. Thus all the wealth, clothing, gold and porcelain if any were buried with the dead. Slaves were killed and buried when the chief died so that their service continued in the life after death. If the dead was a seaman and great chief, he was put in the ship with slaves at the oars for his security (Loarca, 1582).

Loarca (1582) in his accounts narrated that good men who died an honorable death proceeded to heaven called *langit* by way of arch formed when it rained. They eventually became *anitos* or good spirits. The wicked are destined for *Kasamaan* and imprisoned in the infernal regions (Loarca, 1582). The memory of their ancestors were carved in

idols of stone, wood, gold or ivory called *likha* or *larawan*. They believed that these ancestors could guard them, and could bring or remove illness. (Loarca, 1582)

### **Beliefs in Faith Healing, Fortune Telling, Divinations and Superstitions**

Early Filipinos used divinations and magic charms to guide them in their activities. These could be in the flight of birds, barks of a dogs or sound of a house lizard which could be interpreted as good or bad omen. The howling of a dog at night could be a sign of tragedy or death of a person. If someone sneezes on the way to the battlefield, it was a clue for defeat. If a hunter met a lizard, he just needed to go home since there would be no catch. An ill fortune was coming if a crow or raven cried *uac uac*. Visitors were coming if the cat rubbed its face with its claws. (Boxer Codex, 1570)

They also believed in amulets for fortune, good health and protection from enemies and animals. "These amulets were embellished with the eyetooth of a crocodile, a man-shape stone, the hair of a *duende* (gremlin or goblin), favored herbs or seed or root of a tree. (Boxer Codex, 1570)

There were prevalent beliefs in malevolent spirits like the *asuwang*, *mangkukulam*, *mangagaway*, *tiyanak*, *tikbalang* and other alleged being. *Asuwang* was a person who could transform to an animal at nightfall and victimize pregnant women. *Mangkukulam* or witches could inflict harm by pricking an image or object of an intended victim. The *mangagaway* could destroy someone by using herbs and other medicinal plants. The *tiyanak* looked like an innocent young child but could suck the blood of unborn babies. The *tikbalang* was harmless and yet misled travelers in their journey at night and made fun of them. (Plasencia, 1589)

### **Early Filipinos' Practices on their Rituals to the Cosmic Gods**

Early Filipinos practiced the *maganitos* or offering and prayers to their gods and anitos. Temples and churches were not around but instead they had caves, cliffs, or the special room adjoining the houses as venues for the rituals and sacrifices (Colin, 1663).

Priests or priestesses officiated the sacrifices offered to the anitos for a special purpose or necessity. Tagalogs called them *catalonan* while

Visayans referred them as babaylan. Most of them were women or feminized men (*asog or bayok*). They could contact and interact with the *anitos* and spirit world. As spirit guides, their main role was medium during the ritual (Colin, 1663).

*“their manner of offering sacrifice was to proclaim a feast, and offer to the devil what they had to eat. This was done in front of the idol which they anoint with fragrant perfume such as musk and civet or gum of a storax-tree and other odoriferous woods and praise in a poetic song sung by the officiating priest, male or female who is called a catalonan. The participants made responses to the song, beseeching the idol to favor them with those things of which they were in need and generally by offering repeated health, they all became intoxicated”* (Plasencia, 1589).

Loarca had his own version of the appearance and practices of the *catalonan*:

*“the priestesses dress very gaily, with garlands on their heads, and are resplendent with gold. They bring to the place of sacrifice some pitarillas (a kind of earthen jar) full of rice-wine, beside a live hog and a quantity of prepared food. Then the priestess chants her songs and invokes the demon, who appears to her all glistening in gold. Then he enters her body, and hurls her to the ground, foaming at the mouth as one possessed. In this state she declares whether the sick person is recovered or not. In regard to all matters, she foretells the future. All these takes place to the sound of bells and kettle-drums. Then she rises and taking a spear, she pierces the heart of the hog. They dress it and prepare a dish for the demons. Upon an altar erected there, they placed the dressed hog, rice, bananas, wine and all other articles of food that they have brought. All this is done in behalf of the sick persons, or to redeem those who are confined in the infernal regions”* (Loarca, 1582)

The sacrificial ritual was followed by eating and drinking. Those in attendance were obliged to offer gold, cotton birds or other things according to their capacity and wish. Although this would make the *catalonan* appear generally rich and well-dressed, they did not enjoy honor and esteem after their performance and nobody gave special attention. (Colin, 1663)

The *maganito* performance was a fertility ritual for a good harvest. “*Before planting their grain some hold maganitos,, other make offerings to the anito, asking that the fields be fruitful and that the harvest be not lost. Later if the field suffers from either lack of work or too little water and the rice yield affected , they turn again to make offerings and to celebrate their maganitos*” (Boxer Codex, 1570).

In summary, pre-hispanic era had an agricultural socio-economic context. Their life was intertwined with nature and their religious concepts linked with deep respect to the environment. This was rooted in their beliefs of how the spirits participated in their day to day activities. The rituals called the *maganitos* were held to appease, seek help and protection, and ask for a bountiful harvest and for well-being.

### Stewardship among God's Creation in the Light of Foucault's Power-Relations

Within the framework of Foucault power circulates and threads like a network. It is not a commodity to be possessed or controlled. There is a need to demystify or deconstruct the idea of power over nature which is its subordination to human beings. As articulated in the study, we should have union and mutuality with nature and respect for it as the dwelling place of the sacred.

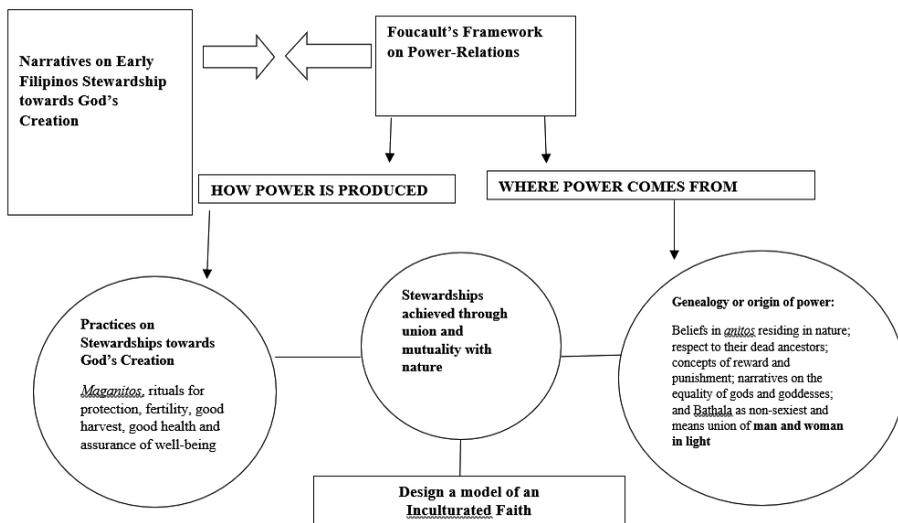


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

## Where Power Comes From

The genealogy of power came from the belief that *anitos* resided in nature and their surroundings. Natives should have deep respect for nature as not to provoke the wrath of the spirits and suffer the consequences of a miserable life. Nature had a lobbying power in this belief. Human beings are forced to enter into union and mutuality rather than subordinate nature, manipulating and controlling it based on their disposition. Nature was not seen as a property. Rather, it was managed with care. This was a heritage that early Filipinos offer to its next generation, to define *oikenomous* as a way to build a home on earth where each person is only a part of. Harmony with elements of nature, be it spirits, mountains, seas, minerals and other resources was vital to achieve stewardship of God's creation.

The respect to their dead ancestors provided power to nature that humans should value to preserve its link to their beloved ones. Any form of violation against nature was a disgrace and insult to their dead who were then part of the *anitos* to guard and watch over their lives.

The narratives of early Spanish chroniclers in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century provided the earliest writings about the beliefs and practices of early Filipinos. Although it has a condescending slant in judging their customs as idolatrous, one can filter the elements of how our ancestors valued nature, the equality of sexes and community solidarity in living together the *oikenomous*. They had concepts of rewards and punishments like beliefs of major religions in the world. *Bathala* resided in the *Kaluwalhatian* while *Sitan* the counterpart in the underworld dwelled in the *Kasamaan*. Good actions brought a person to *Bathala* and became an *anito*, while wicked ways pushed someone to the infernal region of punishment with *Sitan*. Nature obtained the power to be taken care of since a neglect of it can mean punishment even in the life after death.

Anthropological studies on Philippine mythology and their meanings further supplemented analyses on the role of the gods and goddesses. It has been observed that their typologies represent good harvest, nature, moon, stars, morning, disease, fire, destruction among others. These had direct connection to stewardship towards God's creation since a gesture of respect and honor to them means a balanced life with nature. Equality among the gods and goddesses was apparent in how they complemented their role and task. The Supreme Being *Bathala* had a non-sexist nature where a scrutiny of its name meant male and female union in light. The dynamic interdependence and mutuality

showcased the strength of stewardship among our ancestors that could be a fertile ground for an inculturated *oikenomous* today. The power came by the belief that without union, elements on earth would be disintegrated, life would become imbalance and productive life would not be realized.

### **How power is produced**

Power circulates through early Filipinos practices on stewardship of God's creation. Nature could have power through *maganitos* where early Filipinos surrendered themselves to the spirits that lived in the surroundings through prayers, sacrifices and offerings. Rituals brought into memory the power of nature and the spirits. Whenever they ritualized, they re-lived and constantly reminded themselves of the need for union and mutuality rather than subordination of the earth and exploitation without minding adverse effects.

*Maganitos* instilled both fear and responsibility. Fear was the outcome of how the power of nature offered them a mystery that was overwhelming and fascinating. Sometimes when they violated nature, they trembled since they knew its rage. Offerings and prayers were performed to appease, to seek help and ask for protection. These values ensured harmony with the environment and served as a mitigating factor to abuse the earth. When they had their incantations and dances they even imitated the movement of the wind, the birds, the clouds, fire and other elements that identified them with nature and the spirits. These music and dances became a symbol of cultural identity that they belonged to a worshipping community celebrating the bounty of life and the guidance of Bathala and the *anitos*.

When harmony was achieved with nature and the spirits, the community was empowered. Every person realized that balance was attained not in domination and power-control but in powerlessness to allow oneself to listen to the sound of nature and be able to read the signs where cooperation was needed to attain union.

Life's cycle from birth (fertility) to death should be attuned not only to the physical but to the spiritual world. Its synergy through the practice of *maganitos* transformed the imminent realities to transcendence. This could be used to enrich our search for an incultured faith.

## Conclusion: Towards an Inculturated Faith

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II, 1992) envisioned a church renewed through a discipleship in the community where there is communion, unity in diversity, equality in dignity and a community in mission. This can be realized in integral evangelization that is Christo-centric (person for others), rooted in the word of God and authentically Filipino and systematic (PCP II, 1992).

Authentically Filipino faith means Christian practices and rituals should not be alienated from the worshipping believers but anchored to their cultural heritage and identity. This calls for a holistic approach that views all of life as worship. It has an intimate connection with political, economic, and social life including the day to day encounter humans have with their surroundings. Renewed worship means to celebrate rituals that are rich in cultural values that empowered people “*to be generous and sacrificing in witnessing to their faith.*” (PCP II, 1992)

Early Filipinos before the coming of the colonizers anchored their deep spirituality to primal religion. Primal religion was based on their understanding of nature and human being’s frailties thereby pointing to dependence on divine power to ensure well-being. There was a converging point between the universal teachings of Christianity and early Filipinos’ primal religion that made them easily embrace the new religion. Both found blessings from a power beyond themselves, and this expedited the integration of the new culture to their system.

Early Filipinos’ beliefs and practices in stewardship of God’s creation propels an inculturated expression of faith where lives would be in union and in mutuality with nature. It is not just respect for God and our ancestors; it is also allowing the spirits of the environment to teach us how equality in dignity and community solidarity are essential components for well-being and authentic discipleship in Christ.

In the context of Pope Francis’ call for stewardship of God’s creation embodied in his *Laudati Si* which literally means “*Praise be to you O Lord*”, there are strong implications to care for our common home. Early Filipinos exhibited that care when they were in harmony with the spirits and anitos, which is a value orientation on our need to embrace nature as our partner in life not below us and not subject to abuses. We should dance the rhythms of life along with it as our ancestors managed to attune themselves with that union in their incantations and rituals. St. Francis of Assisi expressed our “common home” like a sister or brother in a canticle: “*Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs*”. (Laudato Si, 2015)

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# Sustainability Reporting of Leading Global Universities in Asia, Europe, and USA

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## Abstract

Sustainable development as a concept is a significant landmark in the environmental theory because it hypothesizes on how society itself should be organized, and not merely on why certain environmental safeguards should be embraced or how they can be best applied. Our study determined the sustainability reporting of selected leading global universities in Asia, Europe, and the USA. Using the descriptive and comparative research designs, fifteen higher educational institutions from leading global universities with business schools and institutional sustainability development programs were used as sample cases. Based on the universities' published Sustainability Reports, several patterns of sustainability reporting practices appeared to be being used. Results revealed that all the sampled universities in Asia, Europe, and USA publish their Stand-Alone Sustainability Reports annually, as well as publish parts of their sustainability performance in their Annual Reports at the end of every academic year. These reports are made available in their websites year-round. Findings also showed that in terms of reporting framework, the universally recognized Global Reporting Initiative is predominantly used by universities in Asia and Europe, followed by the Environmental Management System certifiable under ISO 14001 standards. USA universities, however, use a combination of standards, some not formal, but patterned it after the models such as the UN Global Standards, Corporate Knights, International Sustainability Campus Network/GULF Framework, and People and Planet Green League. Among the four priority concerns on sustainability reporting, environmental indicators obtained the highest average frequency; followed by governance, social, and economic indicators among the three regions, led by Europe and US universities. Overall, the level of sustainability disclosure is high in all the four indicators, and it is highest among European universities, followed by US universities, and then by Asian universities. We recommend that Philippine universities benchmark their sustainability reporting practices in the manner by which leading global universities practice them.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, governance, environmental impact, sustainability reporting, triple bottom line

*“Sustainable development is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”  
(World Commission on Environment and Development, WCED, 1987).*

## **Introduction**

### ***Background of the Study***

Sustainable development as a concept is a significant landmark in the environmental theory because it hypothesizes on how society itself should be organized, and not simply on why certain environmental safeguards should be embraced or how they can be best applied. This determined interpretation is extensively shared by business leaders, policy activists, and academics alike (Taylor, 2002), and now by government and church leaders who are stewards of God’s creation.

Sustainable development, as a model, came into view in the 1970’s, concurrently with the escalating industrialization. Simultaneously with the report called “Our Common Future” published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, the theory of sustainable development, which has the principle of increasing development in consideration with the environment, created a center of attention (Ercoskun, 2005) in many parts of the world, especially in Europe. The underpinning framework of sustainability is the triple bottom line (TBL) management concept which was coined in 1994 that examines the firm’s social, environment, and economic impact (Elkington, 2018). The main intent of TBL is to persuade businesses to track and manage social, environmental, and economic (not just financial or profit) value added or value destroyed as well as incite profound thinking concerning capitalism and its future (Elkington, 2018).

The publication in 1987 of ‘Our Common Future’ (also known as the Brundtland Report), presented the most frequently used definition of sustainable development, which is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This principle has massive human appeal and has withstood the test of time (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

For such an advanced model to be more than just words, the signatories to the 1992 Rio Declaration realized that they had to be able to measure and evaluate progress towards the objective of sustainability. Thus, in “*Agenda 21*”, they advocated countries to design the concept of indicators of sustainable development in such a way that will lead to self-determining sustainability of combined environment and development systems. A decade later, there is still no globally concurred method of measuring sustainability. During the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), countries again promised that they would, through the *Plan of Implementation*, exert additional efforts on designing the method of measuring sustainability. But there is no assurance, however, as to whether further advancement will be fulfilled in the next decade than has been accomplished since Rio (Vitalis, 2003).

Concurrently, education at all levels can form the world of tomorrow by endowing individuals and societies with the skills, viewpoints, knowledge, and values to live and toil in a sustainable manner (UNESCO, 2003). In this regard, the concept of life-long learning has been raised as a key thrust to accomplish sustainability. But major transformation in education and training are necessary to meet the demands of the 21st Century and impact of the advent of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0. The people they educate and train to become managers of firms and leaders of the nations should possess better appreciation of the interdependence of the economy, environment, and social issues; greater understanding of interrelationships and systems by thinking, consensus building, and decision-making; and the ability to recognize both sustainable and unsustainable practices. As educated stewards of God creation, they will be challenged to shape a sustainable future, so that they will discern and reflect on the outcomes of their behavior, decisions, and actions.

For the past three decades, sustainability has been a burning subject matter in the official agenda of private sectors, governments, and academic institutions. So far, although numerous of the goals laid down have been achieved, there are still a lot more to be done. Traditionally, higher learning institutions, called universities, have played a dynamic role in society by shaping the future leaders and citizens (Mendoza and Terpou, 2014). They should serve as core advocate agents in promoting sustainability. Universities in many parts of the world recognize that they have a responsibility to contribute towards national and global efforts in combating climate change. Therefore, sustainability guides many of the universities’ operational efforts, from master planning and design, to construction and maintenance. Likewise, this approach is

applied to building, retrofitting, and operations, as well as protecting and enhancing biodiversity. To diminish the Universities' environmental impact arising from resource use and transport, they recurrently look at ways to lessen consumption and expand resource efficiency in the areas of carbon emissions and energy management; green spaces; water management; food and living; transportation; and nature and wellness.

### ***Sustainable Development***

The concept of sustainable development created the basis for the holding of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The meeting marked the first global attempt to draw up action plans and strategies for moving in the direction of a more sustainable model of development. It was attended by over 100 Heads of State and representatives from 178 national governments. The Summit was also attended by representatives from an array of other organizations embodying civil society. Sustainable development was considered to be the solution to the problems of environmental degradation tackled by the Brundtland Commission in the 1987 report on "Our Common Future".

The main purpose of the Brundtland Report was to look into the many concerns that had been raised in the past thirty years. These concerns pertain to the following: that human activity was having severe and negative impacts on the planet, and that patterns of growth and development would be unsustainable if they continued unchecked. Key works that highlighted this thinking included that of Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" (1962), Garret Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons" (1968), the "Blueprint for Survival" by the Ecologist magazine (1972), and the Club of Rome's "Limits to Growth Report" (1972).

The concept of sustainable development received its first major global recognition in 1972 at the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm. The term was not referred to clearly, but still the international community agreed to the notion – now fundamental to sustainable development – that both development and the environment, until now addressed as separate issues.'

Moreover, the term sustainable development was popularized 15 years later in "Our Common Future", the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which consisted of what is considered the standard definition of sustainable development: "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

It was not until the Rio Summit, that major world leaders recognized sustainable development as the major challenge it remains in the present day. More recently, the World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in 2002 Johannesburg, attended by 191 national governments, UN agencies, multilateral financial institutions, and other major groups, to assess progress since Rio. The Johannesburg Summit delivered three key outcomes: a political declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and a range of partnership initiatives. Key commitments included those on sustainable consumption and production, water and sanitation, and energy.

The Brundtland Commission's brief definition of sustainable development, as the "ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", is surely the standard definition when judged by its widespread use and frequency of citation (Kolukisa & Ugurlu, 2019). The use of this definition has led many to grasp sustainable development as having a main concentration on intergenerational equity. Although the brief definition does not obviously mention the environment or development, the following paragraphs, while hardly quoted, are distinct. On development, the report states that human needs are basic and essential; that is economic growth—but also equity to share resources with the poor—is required to sustain them; and that equity is encouraged by effective citizen participation (Kates, 2005 as cited in Mendoza and Terpou, 2014).

### ***University Activities: Central Roles and Core Functions***

Historically, universities have played an active role in society by shaping the minds and hearts of its future leaders and citizens. The central roles for universities have been to: (1) educate; (2) provide human resources for innovation and research; and (3) provide other services, but these are now altering and shifting to address the current societal challenges (Mendoza and Terpou, 2014).

The realization that universities should serve as core advocate agents in promoting sustainability has led to the formation and application of several tools and guidelines that focus on sustainability in universities. The available tools and guidelines consider the impacts—positive or negative—of the university's most relevant activities; these being education, research, community outreach, campus operation, and management (Global Reporting Initiative, 2013a).

### ***CHED's ISA Framework of Core functions of Higher Educational Institutions***

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), pursuant to the goals of the government to align its quality framework with international standards and specifically with ASEAN, released in 2012, its Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSG), through CMO 46, Series 2012. This shifted Philippine higher education toward an “Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and Typology-Based Quality Management System in Higher Education Institutions”. Thereafter, it issued an ISA Handbook promoting Institutional Sustainability Assessment (ISA), which can serve as a learning process for the Higher Education Institutions and contribute to its continuing quality cycle. The ISA is developmental in nature and involves a more reflective review of the institution’s vision-mission-goals (VMG) and desired outcomes. The ISA Framework has five key result areas within which assessments are made about the performance of institutions: (1) Governance and Management (including Management of Resources); (2) Quality of Teaching and Learning (competency, programs, faculty); (3) Quality of Professional Exposure, Research, and Creative Work (including linkages); (4) Support for Students (learning resources and support structures); and (5) Relations with the Community (extra-curricular linkages, service learning, and outreach) (CMO 46, Series 2012).

Within each key result area, there are a number of indicators. Some of these are core indicators that apply to all institutions. While the other indicators apply to institutions to the extent that is appropriate in relation to the mission and stage of development of the institution. There is a total of fourteen indicators, eight of which are core indicators. One of these indicators is on sustainability or sustainable development programs, which could be the basis of the institution’s “outcomes”. These are summarized as Sustainability Report for the academic calendar year, either as a part of, or separate from, the Annual Year-End Performance Report of the institution.

### ***Sustainability Development Reporting Tools, Standards and Guidelines***

There are various available tools and guidelines for measuring, assessing, tracking, documenting, managing, and reporting sustainability practices in universities. Some tools and guidelines used by universities are particularly designed for HEIs, while others are designed for corporations, regions, or countries. The tools and guidelines vary meaningfully from each other. However, some patterns

can be distinguished when studying the characteristics of each tool and the context in which it was developed.

In the 90's, four sustainability declarations took place which targeted the higher education sector. The first one was the Talloires Declaration in 1990. The declarations claimed that accountability and responsibility form part of the universities to address sustainability mainly through leadership and sustainable physical operations. Subsequently, tools and guidelines began to be developed for or adjusted to universities (COPERNICUS Alliance, 2012). From 1992 to 1996, three auditing and management tools were developed, which focused on environmental systems management: British Standard 7750, ISO 14000, and EMAS. In the years to come, more tools that focused on environmental system management were developed: Environmental Management System Self-Assessment Checklist (1996), Environmental Performance Survey (1996), and HEPS RT (2000). In 2000, the GRI Guideline was developed, considering a wider perspective of sustainability which focused on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of an organization (Mendoza and Terpou, 2014).

### **Statement of Research Problem**

In this paper, we aimed to answer the main research question: what are the sustainability reporting practices of selected leading global universities in Asia, Europe, and the United States?

### **Statement of Specific Objectives**

More specifically, we aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the sustainability reporting characteristics of the global universities, in terms of their medium and frequency of communication of sustainability, as well as the reporting framework (tools, standards, and guidelines) they use, such as Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and other models (e.g. ISO 14001 EMS, UN Global Impact, etc.).
2. To describe the specific priority concerns disclosed in the sustainability reports of the global universities, classified according to the following indicators: governance, economic, environment, and social.
3. To analyze the level of sustainability disclosure in the reports of the global universities in terms of the following indicators: governance, economic, environment, and social.

4. To compare the different sustainability reporting practices of the selected global universities in Asia, Europe, and the United States.

### **Conceptual Model and Operational Framework**

#### ***Conceptual Framework***

Our underpinning conceptual framework is founded on the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development, which is the "ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" and is assuredly the standard definition when judged by its prevalent use and incidence of citation (Kolukisa & Ugurlu, 2019).

We noted that various descriptions of the four concepts of sustainable development can be found in the literature. But the most specific one focusing on higher education is that of the Sustainability Report on Universities by Mendoza & Terpou (2014). Their work presents a study on how universities report on sustainability in relation to four concepts: *knowledge triangle*, *quadruple helix*, *utilization*, and *resilience*. We used specifically the Knowledge Triangle Model as our main Sustainability Conceptual Framework, which is discussed briefly as follows:

The *knowledge triangle* is the interaction between education, research, and innovation, which are the drivers for knowledge-based society. The *knowledge triangle* concept was introduced by the Lisbon Agenda at the dawn of the 21st century (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). It is within this concept that a more systemic approach is taken, that not only acknowledges the importance of each of the three pillars, but also the interaction between them in order to create knowledge and other positive externalities to society (Schruemanns, 2009). Within the academic debate it is undisputable that knowledge is the means to finding solutions to complex challenges such as climate change (Carayannis, Barth, & Campbell, 2012). Knowledge is linked to social and economic development, and it is even said that knowledge is replacing physical resources as the key driver of economic growth (Commission of the European Communities, 2006; Sörlin, 2009).

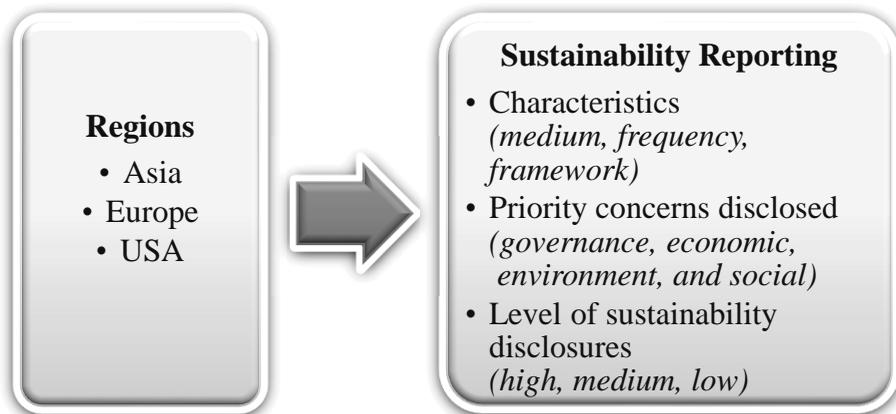
In more practical terms, the *knowledge triangle* seeks to cultivate a swifter transmission of knowledge into tangible and functional innovations—be it academic, industrial, or societal, through the implementation of definite platforms and processes between the three

corners of the triangle and vigilantly coordinating their functioning (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

The *knowledge triangle* facilitates 'knowledge-based innovations'. Innovation has been positioned at the heart of the European 2020 strategy as it is the most excellent way for addressing multifaceted and escalating urgent challenges, like climate change, resource scarcity, energy supply, among others (The Commission to the European Parliament et al., 2010). Innovation is not only about looking for technical solution to present problems, but also social answers, therefore, it is also an issue of altering mind-set and culture (Blessing, 2009).

Universities are key players in fostering the *knowledge triangle* because they are one of the most stable actors in society, and they are the only actor in which the three activities take place (Holmberg, 2014). The worldwide challenges facing the global community cannot be effectively addressed devoid of the contribution of knowledge-based innovations drawing on all areas of education and research, together with humanities, social sciences, and the arts (Flodström, 2009), Martin Schruumans, chairman of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, stated that there was an urgent need of increasing the amount and quality of innovation in universities (2009). It is emphasized in a number of policy statements that higher education institutions have a central role in building a Europe where the long-term effect of knowledge-building can be gauged in terms of economic, social and ecological progress (Lappalainen & Markkula, 2013).

### ***Operational Framework***



*Figure 1: Operational Framework of the Study*

Our review of literature led us to craft an operational framework (shown in Figure 1) by which our specific research objectives can be answered. First, we considered that the sustainability report has characteristics, such as medium and frequency of communication and the framework of reporting. Then, we examined the sustainability priority concerns related to governance, economic, environmental (e.g. energy, water, carbon emission, ecology, transportation, green spaces, etc), and social, that are incorporated in their Sustainability Report for the year, and compare them across the regions of Asia, Europe, and the USA.

### **Methodology**

We used the descriptive and comparative research designs to determine the sustainability reporting practices of the 15 leading global universities and compared them across the regions of Asia, Europe, and the USA.

Our research approach is a qualitative archival method on the universities' published Sustainability Reports on their websites, to seek answers to the specific objectives and central research question we posed at the start of the research.

The sample cases in this study are 15 leading or top global universities with business schools and institutional sustainability development programs located in Asia, Europe, and the USA. Our selection criteria included the following: (1) top university (acknowledged leading schools or those belonging to the top world universities published by the Quacquarelli Symound (QS); (2) has a renowned business school; and (3) has published sustainability report in 2017 or latest accessible in their web. For Europe, we had selected Oxford University, University of London, Cambridge University (Judge Business School), INSEAD, and ETH Zurich. While for the USA, we chose Harvard University, Columbia University, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, University of California at Berkeley, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)-Sloan. In Asia, we included Ateneo de Manila University, National University of Singapore (NUS), Hongkong National University of Science and Technology (HK-NUST), Melbourne University, and University of Indonesia.

We used descriptive statistics like frequency counts and weighted means as well as content analysis of information of the Sustainability Reports in 2017 which are available from their University

Website. We also reviewed other supplementary reports that are necessary such as Strategic Plan, Operating Plan or Annual Performance reports.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sustainability Reporting Characteristics

#### *Medium of Communication*

**Table 1.**  
*Medium of Communication per Region*

Region	Medium		
	Annual Report	Stand-Alone Sustainability Report	University Website
<b><u>Asia</u></b>			
Ateneo de Manila	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hongkong University of Science and Technology	Yes	Yes	Yes
National University of Singapore	Yes	Yes	Yes
University of Indonesia	No	Yes	Yes
University of Melbourne	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b><u>Europe</u></b>			
Cambridge University-Judge Business School	Yes	Yes	Yes
ETH Zurich	Yes	Yes	Yes
INSEAD	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oxford University	Yes	Yes	Yes
University of London	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b><u>USA</u></b>			
Columbia University	No	Yes	Yes
Harvard University	No	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Sloan School of Management)	No	Yes	Yes
University of California at Berkeley	No	Yes	Yes
Wharton School- University of Pennsylvania	Yes	Yes	Yes

The above table shows that across regions, the Stand-Alone Sustainability Report and their University Websites are the main means of communication of universities in reporting their sustainability performance. For Europe, followed by Asia, the Annual Report is also another medium of making known to the public their sustainability performance. The University of Indonesia in Asia does not have any published Annual Reports. In the USA, it has also been noted that although all the five universities publish their Annual Reports, their main focus is on Financial Performance rather than their sustainability performance. It is only the Wharton School University of Pennsylvania that includes their sustainability performance as part of their Annual Report. These Sustainability Reports are all available and accessible to the public through their respective websites. Among the three regions, universities in Europe appear to be utilizing tri-focal medium (Annual Report, Stand-Alone Sustainability Report, and University Website) of communicating their sustainability performance. This reporting practice is a helpful benchmark for interested parties who are planning to design on how to communicate their Sustainability Report to the global public.

### *Frequency of Reporting*

**Table 2.**  
*Frequency of Reporting per Region*

Region	Frequency		
	Annual (Annual Report)	Two Times a year/ Biennial (Stand-Alone Sustainability Report)	Year round (University Website)
<b><u>Asia</u></b>			
Ateneo de Manila	Yes	No	Yes
Hongkong University of Science and Technology	Yes	No	Yes
National University of Singapore	Yes	Yes	Yes
University of Indonesia	No	No	Yes
University of Melbourne	Yes	No	Yes
<b><u>Europe</u></b>			
Cambridge University-Judge Business School	Yes	No	Yes
ETH Zurich	Yes	No	Yes
INSEAD	Yes	No	Yes
Oxford University	Yes	No	Yes
University of London	Yes	No	Yes
<b><u>USA</u></b>			
Columbia University	No	No	Yes
Harvard University	No	No	Yes
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Sloan School of management)	No	No	Yes
University of California at Berkeley	No	No	Yes
Wharton School- University of Pennsylvania	Yes	No	Yes

The above table reveals that all the sampled universities in Asia, Europe, and USA publish their Stand-Alone Sustainability Reports annually, as well as publish parts of their sustainability performance in their Annual Reports at the end of every academic year. However, it is only the National University of Singapore (NUS) in Asia that publishes its Stand-Alone Sustainability Report twice a year (biennial). Again, across regions, these sustainability reports are made available in their universities' website (accessible on-line) throughout the year. This reporting practice of making the Sustainability Report accessible year-round makes it easy for any interested person or institution planning on how to go about disseminating their own Sustainability Report to a

larger public to frequently refer to these documents as models since there are always available online.

### *Framework of Analysis*

**Table 3.**

*Framework of Analysis per Region*

Region	Framework				
	Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI)	ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS)	UN Global Impact	Other standards and Registers*	No formal Framework (but follow certain principles and guidelines)
<b><u>Asia</u></b>					
Ateneo de Manila	Yes	No	No	No	No
Hongkong University of Science and Technology	No	No	No	No	Yes
National University of Singapore	No	No	No	No	Yes
University of Indonesia	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
University of Melbourne	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
<b><u>Europe</u></b>					
Cambridge University-Judge Business School	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
ETH Zurich	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
INSEAD	Yes	No	No	No	No
Oxford University	No	Yes	No	No	No
University of London	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b><u>USA</u></b>					
Columbia University	No	No	No	No	Yes
Harvard University	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Sloan School of Management)	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
University of California at Berkeley	No	No	No	No	Yes
Wharton School-University of Pennsylvania	No	No	No	No	Yes

\* Ceres & Tellis Institute Facility Report, World Business Council, Dow Jones Sustainability Index, Carbon Disclosure Project, Corporate Knights, People and Planet Green League, etc.)

The above table shows that across regions, there is no common framework used by the universities for sustainability reporting purposes. So far, the Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) and its G4 Guidelines is the more commonly utilized framework by two universities in Asia (Ateneo de Manila University and University of Melbourne), two in Europe (INSEAD and ENT Zurich), but none in the USA. This finding is supported by the study of the National University of Singapore on sustainability reporting in ASEAN commissioned by the ASEAN CSR Network, wherein the GRI framework was used as primary conceptual framework and the standard adopted by sampled countries namely, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia (Loh, et al, 2016). The popularity of the GRI as an example of available tools and guidelines consider the impacts – positive or negative – of the university’s most relevant activities; these being education, research, community outreach, campus operation and management (Global Reporting Initiative, 2013a).

However, USA universities do not adopt a formal framework but instead follows a hybrid combination of set of principles, standards, and guidelines, such as the Corporate Knights and UN Global Impact. Among the five sampled USA universities, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-Sloan and University of California at Berkeley are engaged in innovative research that addresses the negative impact on people, environment, and the economy. This confirms that the universities are key players in fostering the *knowledge triangle* because they are one of the most stable actors in society and they are the only actor in which the three activities take place (Holmberg, 2014). Furthermore, the worldwide challenges facing the global community cannot be effectively addressed devoid of the contribution of knowledge-based innovations drawing on all areas of education and research, together with humanities, social sciences, and the arts (Flodström, 2009). In Asia, this UN Global Impact framework is also used by the Melbourne University, as well as the ISO 14001 EMS by the University of Indonesia.

Moreover, the data also revealed that the Environmental Management System (EMS) certifiable to ISO 14001 standards is practiced by three universities (Cambridge, Oxford, and London) in Europe, and by one in Asia, specifically, the Melbourne University, which is strongly influenced by the British Educational System, such as Cambridge and Oxford Universities. London University uses a combination of ISO 14001 EMS, and another standard registered with the People and Planet Green League. The preference of UK-based universities for ISO 14001 EMS may be attributable to the origin of ISO standards from British standards, which evolved into an international series or family of standards in quality management; environmental management; and occupational, health and safety standards used primarily in various industries, and by both profit and not-for-profit organizations.

Data also revealed that INSEAD, which is based in France, does not adopt the ISO 14001 EMS standard, but instead uses the GRI and G4 Guidelines. ENT Zurich based in Switzerland uses both the GRI and another standard called International Sustainability Campus Network/GULF Framework.

The findings of this study, specifically on the framework of reporting used by the 15 selecting leading global universities in Asia, Europe, and the USA are coherently incorporated in the Institutional Sustainability Assessment (ISA) Framework formulated by the Commission on Higher Education which has five key result areas within which judgments are made about the performance of institutions: (1) Governance and Management (including Management of Resources); (2) Quality of Teaching and Learning (competency, programs, faculty); (3) Quality of Professional Exposure, Research, and Creative Work (including linkages);

(4) Support for Students (learning resources and support structures) ; and  
 (5) Relations with the Community (extra-curricular linkages, service learning, and outreach) (CMO 46, Series 2012). This is the mandated framework which all HEIs in the Philippines must follow to achieve alignment with the Philippine Quality Framework (PQF) in order for the Philippines to become globally competitive.

## Sustainability Priority Concerns and Level of Disclosures in the Report

**Table 4.**

*Sustainability Priority Concerns and Level of Disclosures in the Report per Region*

Priority Concerns	Asia	Europe	USA
<b>Governance:</b>	Ave: 3.00	Ave: 5.00	Ave. 4.5
Code of Corporate Governance	3	5	5
Code of Ethics /Policies	3	5	4
<b>Environmental</b>	Ave. 4.71	Ave. 5.00	Ave. 5.00
Energy	5	5	5
Water Management	5	5	5
Carbon Emission	5	5	5
Ecology and Waste Management	5	5	5
Green Spaces and Built Environment	4	5	5
Services Stewardship	5	5	5
Transportation and Travel	4	5	5
<b>Economic</b>	Ave. 2.50	Ave. 3.00	Ave. 2.50
Economic Value generation	3	5	5
Risk Management	2	1	0
<b>Social</b>	Ave. 2.40	Ave. 4.80	Ave. 4.00
Labor and Industrial Relations	2	5	5
Occupation	2	5	3
Training and Education	4	5	5
Community Involvement / Stakeholder Engagement	3	5	5
Philanthropy	1	0	2
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>3.15 (Moderate)</b>	<b>4.45 (High)</b>	<b>4.00 (High)</b>

*Scale: 1.00-2.49 (Low); 2.5-3.49 (Moderate); 3.50-5.00 (High)*

The above table indicates that across regions, European universities are all implementing governance practices, such as Code of Corporate Governance and Code of Ethics/Policies. This is followed by USA universities and Asian universities. Established universities in Europe such as Cambridge, Oxford, and leading schools in France (INSEAD) and Switzerland (ETH Zurich) have established governing boards and sustainability advisory councils. This is also the same pattern with regards to the USA universities such as Harvard University, MIT Sloan, and Columbia University.

Meanwhile, across regions, the environmental indicators (energy, water management, carbon emission, ecology and waste management, green spaces and built environment, services stewardship, transportation and travel) obtained the highest average frequency among the three sampled regions, with Europe and USA universities at the top, followed by Asia. It is the Hongkong University of Science and Technology and the University of Melbourne that were observed to have no specific report on green spaces and transportation and travel. This finding is consistent with our literature reviews, in particular, the study on sustainability disclosures in universities (Mendoza and Terpou, 2014), whereby Environmental Management and its impact is the essence of sustainability standards, protocols, guidelines, and development programs among universities .

These findings are the concretization of the main purpose of the Brundtland Report (1987), which was to look into the many concerns that had been raised in the past thirty years concerning human activity which has severe and negative impacts on the planet, and that patterns of growth and development would be unsustainable if they continued unchecked.

Furthermore, results showed that by region, social indicators (labor and industrial relations, occupation, training and education, and community involvement/stakeholder engagement) obtained both high priority ratings for selected European and USA universities; while Asia rated low. This can be explained by the explicit policies and practices by the sampled universities concerning the social impact of their practices and the prominence given to their sustainability reports.

The last indicator, economic (economic value generation and risk management) was rated moderate across the three regions, with Europe obtaining a rating of 3.00, followed by USA and Asia at 2.50 each. This outcome can be gleaned from the higher priority given to other indicators (environment, governance, and social impact), while the economic indicator is given the least. It is only the University of

Melbourne in Asia and the Cass Business School of London University in Europe which have reported initiatives related to risk management. Although some of these sampled universities in Asia gave quantitative reports to measure their sustainability performance, they are only dealing with metrics related to decrease in carbon footprint, greenhouse effect, solid waste management control, and recycling, which are quantified in terms of reductions but not translated in monetary value.

Overall, the level of sustainability disclosure in the reports is 3.88 (high) in all the four indicators. Comparing it by region, it is highest among European universities with a high average score of 4.45; followed by US universities with an average score of 4.00; while Asian universities garnered an average score of 3.15. Across all sustainability reporting practices, it is Europe that is a stand out.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings show that the selected global universities from the three regions – Asia, Europe, and the USA, have diversified practices in their sustainability reporting as gleaned from the various characteristics and priority concerns that were disclosed. Nonetheless, European universities are a stand out.

The results reveal that all the sampled universities in Asia, Europe, and the USA publish their Stand-Alone Sustainability Reports annually, as well as publish part of their sustainability performance in their Annual Reports at the end of every academic year. These reports are made available in their websites (accessible on-line) throughout the year.

In terms of reporting framework, the globally recognized GRI is predominantly used by universities in Asia and Europe, followed by the Environmental Management System certifiable under ISO 14001 standards. USA universities, however, use a hybrid combination of standards, some not formal, but utilize models, such as the UN Global Standards, Corporate Knights , ISC/Gulf Framework, and People, and Planet Green League.

Among the four priority concerns on sustainability reporting, the environmental indicator obtained the highest average frequency, followed by governance, social, and economic indicators disclosed by the universities in the three sampled regions, with Europe and USA universities leading.

Overall, the level of sustainability disclosure is high in all the four indicators. It is highest among European universities, followed by US universities, and then by Asian universities.

For practical application, we recommend that Philippine universities benchmark their sustainability reporting in the same manner by which leading global universities report them. Since we are a developing economy as a nation, priority should be given to sustainability practices related to energy, water management, carbon emission, ecology, waste management, green spaces, and built environment, as well as risk management. Our universities should establish sustainability governing boards and advisory councils to improve governance and management.

For further studies, we suggest the use of the qualitative case study approach in each of the leading universities in the three regions, utilizing the same indicators and measures we have used in this study to analyze in-depth the impact of these Sustainability Development Programs on the functions and operations of higher educational institutions, such as economic and social indicators. Quantitative empirical studies can also be made on the impact of these sustainability initiatives and practices on the long-term economic sustainability of universities, both for non-for-profit (state-owned), non-stock/Foundation, and for-profit organizations. This will encourage more organizations to develop/start-up sustainability programs, and/or enhance initiatives and practices for those already having their sustainability programs; and entice potential donors, patrons, and sponsors to support these organizations.

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# **The Impact on Life of Estero de San Miguel**

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## **Abstract**

This research responded to the challenge of Pope Francis to do research that provides better understanding of how different creatures relate to one another in the ecosystem. Through semiotic analysis applied on the life sharing of the local people and some images, this research yielded a deeper appreciation of the impact on life of Estero de San Miguel. Accordingly, the estero is an abiotic component of the local ecosystem within the district of San Miguel, Manila. It had freely offered greater provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services before to local communities and other life forms within its immediate ecosystem than today, when it had been relegated only to serve as a tributary of Pasig River and sewer of human waste. The present status of the estero shows lesser impact on life within its local ecosystem. While there is still time to finally halt this local ecological catastrophe, people must actively contribute in creating a serious awareness of, respect, and love for the estero and the environment at large. A serious awareness that focuses more on their intrinsic value, apart from their services being offered. The compounded lingual and visual semiotic reflections provided several principles that served as underlying ideological reference for a new inspiration and commitment to value creation, like the estero, and practice responsible stewardship.

**Keywords:** Estero, Ecosystem, Laudato Si, Semiotic Reflection, Stewardship

## Introduction

Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Laudato si*, began with a question, “What is happening to our common home?” This is a very timely question, as we experience alarming changes in our climate, and the corresponding effect in our common home, our planet Earth. Although there may have been a lot of discussions already on the environmental concerns in the world today, Pope Francis recognizes that there is an increasing sensitivity to what is happening in our common home. He said we need to look at these problems before we can consider how our faith can bring new incentives and requirements towards a more responsible stewardship of God’s creation. Among the problems today concerning our environment that was mentioned in the encyclical was the issue of water.

The Philippines is rich in natural resources like water. They provide the essentials of life to millions of Filipinos, yet the people are now witnessing how these are being destroyed gradually. And so, the country accepted the challenge to mitigate this environmental problem, which affects people and the ecosystems at large, most especially the polluted inlet bodies of water, the esteros. In Manila alone, this is an acute environmental problem. Basically, Manila is surrounded by water, and is composed of several esteros, which flows to the main artery of Pasig River that meets Manila Bay. Accordingly, there are about thirty-five esteros flowing through Pasig River and Manila Bay, one of which is Estero de San Miguel. It is a major inlet body of water flowing through the north-central portion of Manila, right around the city’s San Miguel district, where one can find several great institutions, like the country’s seat of governance (Malacanang Palace), parishes and shrine (St. Jude and San Miguel), educational institutions (V. Mapa Elementary School, St. Jude College, College of the Holy Spirit, La Consolación College, Centro Escolar University, and San Beda University). Esteros like Estero de San Miguel have been very important to Manila. They are essential because they serve as sewers of dirty waters and human wastes, as well as flood drains. This may be a major reason why the government, non-governmental organizations, and private individuals have embraced the big challenge of rehabilitating these bodies of water which have been highly polluted and became stagnant for some reasons in the past decades.

The proponents of this research had thought of their being much greater purposes for the esteros than just serving as flood drains, dirty water and human wastes sewers. They firmly believed that the Estero de San Miguel and the rest of esteros in Manila are considered a vital element within its local ecosystem, especially for the residing

communities and existing other life forms in earlier days. This is something interesting to rediscover. For upon rediscovering the glorious state of the esteros, especially Estero de San Miguel, local communities and institutions may gain new inspiration and commitment to pursue seriously responsible stewardship of the esteros. Thus, the proponents of this research would like to answer the relevant question, what is the pivotal role played by the Estero de San Miguel within its local ecosystem? This research has the following specific objectives: Explore the essential relationship of the Estero de San Miguel with the local communities and other life forms within its local ecosystem; analyze semiotically these essential roles played by the estero within its local ecosystem through old and new pictures, and life sharing of local people; and contribute in instilling among locals the value of responsible stewardship as per instruction of *Laudato Si* to all people, in order to renew, if not restore the vital role played by the Estero de San Miguel within the scope of its ecosystem.

This gesture in a way is following the advice of Pope Francis to all people who are into environment-related issues research endeavor, that one must yield better understanding of an ecosystem. He said, “*Ongoing research should also give us a better understanding of how different creatures relate to one another in making up the larger units which today we term “ecosystems”*” (Pope Francis, #140).

Quite a number of literatures have been published already on the issue of creation, environment, or ecology. Towards the end part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a noticeable burgeoning of literatures on the said issue, and especially after the global escalation in 2006 of the “*An Inconvenient Truth*,” an American documentary film that raised international public awareness of global warming and reenergized the environmental movement. The succeeding paragraphs are salient points raised by some of the literatures that were published during this time frame:

### **On the Existence of Creation**

In *The Universe Story* of Swimme and Berry, they elaborated the extent of our awareness to the existence of other beings and non-beings around us. They said, we can begin to understand that the story of the earth is also the story of the human, as well as the story of every being of the Earth. Their narration of the story of the universe also hopes that this reality can bring about finding expression in it, not only in this narrative, but in poetry, music, and ritual throughout the entire range of modern culture, on a universal scale. Such expressions will sensitize people to the

story that every river, and every star, and every animal, is telling (1994, p.3).

*Laudato Si* pronounced that the creation account in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. They suggest that human life is grounded on three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself (Pope Francis, p. 44). The Earth was here before us, and it has been given to us (p. 45), and the entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God (p. 56).

The universe, as a whole, in all its manifold relationships, shows forth the inexhaustible riches of God. We understand better the importance and meaning of each creature, if we contemplate it within the entirety of God's plan. As the catechism teaches: "God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities, tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other." (CCC, p. 340) (Pope Francis, p. 58)

We have been exposed to many stories of how the world had evolved, and according to Dr. Paul DeJillias in *Our Cosmic Origins*, these stories of our creation help us to understand who we are, what our role and mission on Planet Earth is, and what our destiny will be (p. 63).

### **On the Human's Response to Creation**

According to Swimme and Berry, with all our scientific insights, we have not attained a meaningful approach to the universe, and thus we have at the present time, a distorted mode of human presence upon Earth. We are somehow failing in the fundamental role that we should be fulfilling – the role of enabling the Earth and the entire universe to reflect on and to celebrate themselves, and the deep mysteries they bear within them, in a special mode of conscious self-awareness (p.1). Swimme and Berry also put it that the human has taken over such extensive control of the life systems of the Earth that the future will be dependent on human decision to an extent never dreamed of in previous times. We are deciding what species will live or perish, we are determining the chemical structure of the soil and the air and the water, we are mapping out the areas of wilderness that will be allowed to function in their own natural modalities (p. 4).

Pope Francis states in *Laudato Si* that the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet, the poor (p. 31).

Our present condition now of ecological crises bring about pressure on our end. Matthew Fox states that we are becoming more and more aware that humanity had not been a good guest on this Earth of late. We have some severe disciplining to undergo if we are to recover the art of savoring, which is what guesting (receiving gratefully) is about. And we must let go of much that is humanly chauvinist if we are to recover the truth of hosting all beings. Cosmic hospitality requires a deeper and deeper reverence for all that is and all that might be (p. 116). If we are truly serious in this effort to life preservation, Matthew Fox says that we need true holiness and genuine hospitality because they lead to gratitude. In our gratitude, we would be able to appreciate the reverent mystery that it is. We would not need to control but being still with the gift. Savoring. Thanking. Our thanks at the pleasure that the blessings of creation are about is itself our return of blessing for blessing (Fox, p. 115) for we have been bestowed with this original blessing of the goodness of creation.

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace focuses on how man, who is created in God's image, "received a mandate to subject to himself the Earth and all that it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness, a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to him who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all" (p. 282). For the council, the Church is not opposed to technological advancement for "science and technology are a wonderful product of a God-given human creativity, since they have provided us with wonderful possibilities, and we all gratefully benefit from them." For this reason, as people who believe in God, who saw that nature which he had created was 'good', we rejoice in the technological and economic progress which people, using their intelligence, have managed to make (p. 283).

Adlrin M. Peñamora, in the journal *Why, O God?*, stated that only by relearning how to be truly a "kapwa" to others that we can regard the Earth as Kapwa, to regard creation as we regard ourselves (p. 135), for to be human is to be "earth" before the Creator (p.133).

Glorina P. Orozco and Macrina T. Zafaralla, in their research *Socio-Economic Study of Two Major Metro Manila Esteros (Estero de San Miguel and Estero de Quiapo)*, revealed that attitude and actions of stakeholders to their esteros were influenced primarily by their economic status, educational and cultural background. Institutional initiatives, such

as environmental education and community-based programs, were looked into as possible key for the effective rehabilitation and attainment of sustainability of Manila esteros (June 2011, pp. 52-59).

The City of Manila Waterways, in July 11, 2014, posted an article entitled *Estero de San Miguel Reborn* in the website The Urban Roamer owned by Karl Aguilar. In the said article, government agencies local and national (Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and partner organizations were given recognition on their efforts exerted to rehabilitate and clean up the major waterway in the district of San Miguel, which is still ongoing up to this day. A related message was reiterated by Carlo Jacob Molina in his contribution to Inquirer.net, *Look: 'Cleaner', 'more alive' Estero de San Miguel in Manila*. In the article, with accompanying pictures, he manifested the results of the efforts done by the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC), with P52 million spent in 2014 just to restore the estero.

Literatures about ecology, ecological problems, and guiding principles in approaching ecological problems abound in quad media. But only few literatures are found focusing on a body of water like an estero, much more concerning the esteros in Manila. And if there are literatures dealing with esteros in Manila, the emphasis were mostly how human attitude and behavior affected the esteros and what should be done in order to rehabilitate what was formerly pristine esteros like Estero de San Miguel. Not a singular literature was found paying attention to the glorious state of any estero in Manila, and explore the essential role played by the estero within its local ecosystem. Borrowing from Pope Francis' understanding of what is an ecosystem, it is the harmonious ensemble of organisms existing in a defined space and functioning as a system. It is in this context that this research is being undertaken by the proponents of this study.

### **Conceptual Model and Operational Framework**

One may infer that creation has been a hot topic nowadays because of the evident ecological crisis the world is now facing. It is quite saddening because the world got interested to discuss matters about creation due to this increasing and inevitable cosmic decay, and not because of her intrinsic goodness and beauty. What most people are unaware of is that creation has been a hot issue being addressed a long time ago within the Christian tradition alone. This has been deliberated in various literatures and by personalities of different places and time, in

the language that is not political, scientific, and economic, but of faith, religious, or spiritual.

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, from the book of Genesis, written within the period of Babylonian captivity, the priestly and Jahwist writers poetically blurted out how God created the entire cosmic world and everything within it including human beings with God's full satisfaction at the end. It was said, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). The noble intention was primarily to insinuate that God wants a good and just world (Charpentier, 1997, p. 72). Elevating the dignity of humanity, God bestowed upon man and woman all these creations as graces for their own good, as mentioned in Genesis 1:29-30. A more elating revelation on humanity's part were the pronouncements made by God saying, "Let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over the wild animals, and over all creeping things that crawl along the ground"(Genesis 1:26), and "there was no man to till the earth" (Genesis 2:5). These were pronouncements of God about what human beings should do in life in relation to all the graces God gave them. This concern about human beings' responsible stewardship over all of God's creation is purposely given for their good. It is a non-tyrannical or domineering act endangering their human existence (Christian Community Bible, 2004, pp. 6-7).

Creation was generously given praise by the Psalmists and prophet Isaiah in the sacred writings because, for them, they were expressions of God's glory, "*The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims the works of his hands*" (Psalm 19:2), his incomparable wisdom, "*How varied are your works, Lord! In wisdom you have made them all; the Earth is full of your creatures*" (Psalm 104:24), power, "*Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these: He leads out their army and numbers them, calling them all by name. By his great might and the strength of his power, not one of them is missing!*"(Isaiah 40:24), and they praised him, "*Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all the deeps of the sea; lightning and hail, snow and thick clouds, storm wind that fulfills his command; mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars; animals wild and tame, creatures that crawl and birds that fly*"( Psalm 148:7-11). That is why God Himself was so pleased with them (Piper, 1987).

The quest in giving recognition on the venerability of creation persisted and is expressed in various forms. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century holy rule of St Benedict, it was emphasized among monks to be frugal (Rule of Benedict 39:9-10), an approach proper in taking care of the environment. It entails taking only what is needed, and not willfully exploiting

resources until there is nothing left for future generations, or until the land is stripped of its capacity to support life (Saint Meinrad Seminary & School of Theology 2018). Furthermore, the patron saint of Europe prescribed to all his monks about reverence of all things. He said, “*treat all goods as if they were vessels of the altar*” (RB 31.10). This in turn captures the Benedictine concept of ecological stewardship that becomes a virtue of exceptional value in Benedictine monasteries.

St. Francis of Assisi, whom St. Pope John Paul II named as the patron saint "of those who promote ecology" in 1979, in 13<sup>th</sup> century, passionately and romantically expressed his vision for all the creative world as brothers and sisters through his “*Canticle of the Creatures or Canticle of Creation*”. Keith Warner, OFM, insinuated that being intimately related to creation itself, just like what St. Francis did, will help people grow more fully into the mystery of God, especially nowadays because people are so alienated from the Earth and from one another. What is needed is not only learning something about the material relationship of the Earth and humanity, but also understanding this relationship more broadly as a spiritual community. There is a need for a sense of enchantment in understanding the modern world (Warner, September 2012).

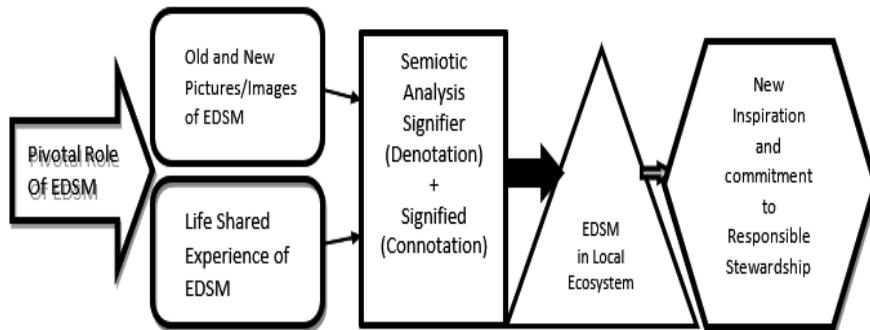
At present, the second encyclical of Pope Francis “*On Care for Our Common Home*” (*Laudato Si'*), made an appeal to the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of current environmental challenges, to dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. Among the key ideas the Holy Father presented in this encyclical is that of “integral ecology”, i.e. that people and planet are part of one family, where the Earth is our common home. It invites people to protect God’s creation for future generations, to embrace a lifestyle change for their own good, and to take care of people who are poor and more vulnerable.

The Culture of ecological appreciation and reverence, of affirming the intrinsic beauty and goodness of every created thing within an ecosystem should be revived and reinforced. It’s about time to bring back mysticism and enchantment on human perspective of nature, environment, or cosmic world to renew inspiration and develop within oneself a heart of a committed steward of God’s creation.

The proponents of this research is resolved to participate in this renewed challenge towards care of mother earth. This research, in particular, will explore more on the natural beauty and goodness of the Estero de San Miguel (EDSM) before it became polluted and continuously being rehabilitated. This will be made possible by applying Semiotic analysis on the gathered data about the said estero in the form of shared life experiences of the local residents and pictures.

The entire research endeavor will be guided by the operational framework presented below:

### *Operational Framework*



*Figure 1: Operational Framework of the Study*

### **Methodology**

This research was descriptive and exploratory in nature with the help of simple semiotic analysis applied on the data in the form of pictures and oral narratives of the life sharing of the people residing within the scope of the ecosystem where Estero de San Miguel is to be found. In securing the data necessary for this research the proponents used dual approaches: survey - interview and archival. The respondents for this research were individual (for their sharing about the Estero de San Miguel), and organizational (for archival gathering of old and new images of the said estero). The researchers used purposive sampling to secure the necessary data needed for their analysis. The criteria observed in the selection of the 10 individuals were at least 60 years old and above, male or female, and can share his or her vivid memories about the estero. While the 3 organizations needed for picture-sourcing of the estero were reputable organizations and known for possible keeping and producing of old and new pictures of the said estero.

The researchers conducted an ocular visit to the estero and the local communities and institutions nearby. They sought the help of the community officials to identify possible respondents on the study. Upon identifying the prospective respondents for this research, they were subjected to individual personal recorded interview. For some data shared

that were unclear, the researchers validated these by asking clarificatory remarks. Then the recorded data were translated into lucid written form which were used for analysis. In gathering data through pictures, several organizations or institutions were sought. Through letters, they were asked to allow the researchers to search for old images of Estero de San Miguel that will be used for semiotic analysis. New pictures of the estero were provided by the researchers themselves by taking pictures of the estero.

For the analysis, the semiotic analysis framework was used. Semiotics (or semiology) was the field of study that was concerned with signs and/or signification. The two dominant models of what constitutes a sign were those of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. The fundamental question in semiotics was how meanings were formed. Semiotic research approached signs as existing in various forms: pictures, words, letters, objects, natural objects, gestures, phenomena, and actions. Saussure offered a 'dyadic' or two-part model of the sign. He defined a sign as being composed of: a 'signifier' (signifiant) - the form which the sign takes; and the 'signified' (signifié) - the concept it represents. The shared life experiences of the locals near Estero de San Miguel were all subjected to the "Signifier-Signified" system of semiotic analysis. In the case of the images, they were treated with Roland Barthes' identification of the "denotative – connotative" levels of meaning. All these signs were analyzed critically and semiotically to ensure the intended results will be achieved.

## **Results and Discussion**

All the transcribed individual interviews of the respondents and several images with direct and indirect relations to Estero de San Miguel that were obtained from the different archives, virtual or non-virtual, were gathered together and subjected to semiotic analysis that was influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce, and Roland Barthes.

### **Lingual Signs**

In presenting the semiosis of the transcribed narratives of the respondents about their personal or transferred knowledge and actual or current experiences of the Estero de San Miguel, the proponents of this research decided to use as themes the fundamental services of an ecosystem in order to qualify the pivotal role played or impact on life of the estero within its local ecosystem. The acknowledged services offered by the ecosystem are provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services (Biodiversity Information System for Europe, 2019). After the lingual semiosis, a cohesive lingual reflection is presented.

**Provisioning Services.** These are the products obtained from ecosystems, such as food, fresh water, wood, fiber, and the like.

**Table 1.**

*Semiosis of the provisioning services of Estero de San Miguel*

Signifier	Signified
<i>Isda, Biya, Dalag, Hito, Hapon, Tulya, Maliliit na Talangka, Gurami</i>	The estuary was a rich body of water that produces a variety of aquatic animals such as fishes, crabs, and shrimps that may be eaten by people to help sustain their living.
<i>Malinis na tubig, Sobrang linaw ng tubig</i>	The estero then flows with clean and clear water that was used by human communities for drinking, bathing, and washing purposes.
<i>Napakarumi na, maamoy na tubig, may gasolina, oily at polluted ang tubig, maduming tubig, malamok</i>	The condition of the Estero de San Miguel had changed badly. The quality of water degraded to the level of being detrimental to the health of the human communities. It can cause diseases like dengue.

The Table 1 presents the semiosis of the provisioning services of Estero de San Miguel from the narratives of the participants.

**Regulating Services.** These are the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes, such as climate regulation, natural hazard regulation, water purification, waste management, and others.

**Table 2.**

*Semiosis of the regulating services of Estero de San Miguel*

Signifier	Signified
<i>Malinis pa ang Pasig river kaya malinis ang tubig sa estero, Ito po yung pinakadulo ng San Miguel area papunta na sa Pasig River</i>	The estero was described as a tributary of a bigger body of water that was the Pasig River
<i>Pag malakas ang ulan, malalim ang tubig, pag habagat tumataas ang tubig, baha</i>	The estero helped regulate local area flooding caused by habagat and typhoon
<i>Tributary to ocean and seas</i>	The estero served as tidal water regulator. Though it starts and ends with Pasig River, it is located near another great body of water, the Manila Bay
<i>Gagawa ng poso negro, saan padadaanin? Derecho sa ilog</i>	The estero has become a sewer of human waste
<i>Nagdudumi ang Pasig River dahil nanggagaling dito sa maliliit na estero</i>	The estero helped in draining the water as it flows towards Pasig River

Table 2 presents the semiosis of the regulating services of Estero de San Miguel from the narratives of the participants.

**Cultural Services.** These include non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems, such as spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreation, and aesthetic values.

**Table 3.**

*Semiosis of the cultural services of Estero de San Miguel*

<b>Signifier</b>	<b>Signified</b>
<i>May bahay na matanda ni Dr. Jose; may mga bahay dyan, panahon pa ng mga kastila</i>	The place where the estero was located might have been a beautiful place that enticed people to come and build houses beside the estero since the Spanish colonial era
<i>Walang naglalaba, walang naliligo at nagtatapon, malinis ang tubig, walang amoy, sobrang linis walang nagdudumi Nakakapaglaro sa gilid. Nanghuhuli ng isda, nakakalusong kami, tampisaw pa kami dyan, nagkukuwentuhan lang sila dyan, naliligo kami, sa tabi ng ilog nagbabaybay</i>	People then showed respect, care and discipline towards the estero  The estero provided a place for people to spend leisure, relaxation, and fun for children
<i>Napakagandang lugar, maganda noon maaliwalas at walang amoy May mga kababalaghan pang kwento dyan, katulad ng pari na naglalakad na wang ulo, may lumulutang na babae, yung nanay ko at ibang tao sa community nakakakita sila ng madreng nagdadasal ng hating gabi, pugot ang ulo</i>	The estero brought beauty and inspiration in the local area The estero has become a source of superstitious beliefs and folklore
<i>Yung lugar naming yun may garrison ng hapon Usong ang tanan gamit ang estero</i>	The estero has historical value or insinuation The estero was used for elopement by couples
<i>Malayo ang itsura nito noon, dumumi ng 95%, mabaho, maitim na tubig, naging itim, naging burak ang ilog, mabaho lalo na kung summer</i>	The condition of the Estero deteriorated badly. This evoked the feeling of dismay among people living near the estero. It expresses the lack of discipline of the people
<i>Nilinis pero burak pa rin</i>	The human intervention of rehabilitating the estero seemed partially successful
<i>Nagkakasundo mga tao dito, nagkukuwentuhan, may naghahakot ng basura, hindi na ngayon bumabaha</i>	The sudden positive changes that happened to the estero brought a sense of joy to people, a sense of home, and respect towards it

Table 3 presents the semiosis of the cultural services of Estero de San Miguel from the narratives of the participants.

**Supporting Services.** These highlight the importance of ecosystems to provide habitat for various living species and to maintain the viability of life.

**Table 4.**

*Semiosis of the supporting services of Estero de San Miguel*

<b>Signifier</b>	<b>Signified</b>
<i>May mga isda at hipon, may mga tulya at water lily, may mga isdang gurami, halamang wild, maliliit na talangka, may nakukuhang biya, may mga hito at dalag, may mga damo, talahiban, mga puno</i>	The estero provided a natural habitat for some aquatic plants and animals
<i>Palayan, magkabilang gilid ng estero may factory ng karton</i>	The place of the estero was recognized as viable for agricultural growth and some business establishments

Table 4 presents the semiosis of the supporting services of Estero de San Miguel from the narratives of the participants.

### **Lingual Semiotic Reflection:**

Considering the narratives of the respondents on their personal or transferred knowledge and experiences of the Estero de San Miguel being treated with semiotic analysis expressed through the “signifier – signified” system of analyzing them, the proponents had conceived that the estero had more positive impact on life within the local ecosystem of San Miguel District of Manila. This positive impact is qualified through various services brought about by the estero as an abiotic component of the local ecosystem. Based from the narratives, in the early years of the estero, as a tributary of a bigger body of water that is the Pasig river, it enjoys the condition of being a fresh, clear, and clean body of water. It served as a natural and viable habitat for some water animals and plants that somehow contributed in sustaining the healthy lives of human communities residing near the estero. As a tributary, it helped regulate and drain the water that flows from the Pasig River coming from both ends of the estero. More than these, the estero was imbued with socio-cultural and even economic significance that made life within the local ecosystem natural and yet vibrant. The migration and convergence of human communities in the area of San Miguel district contributed slowly in the deterioration of the healthy and natural condition of the estero. This

sad fate of the estero can point to the lack of discipline, disrespect of the people towards the estero (and the Pasig River), that eventually led to loss of estero's homey and mystical value. The miserable condition of the estero had drawn the attention of people to commit some interventions to rehabilitate it. The rehabilitation done to the estero brought mixed feelings among the people. Most of them were satisfied with the good changes they saw in the situation of the estero. Some were a bit dismayed because of the quality of the water had remained filthy with foul odor. Although water quality had a little improvement, aesthetically, the estero became pleasant to see because of added greeneries placed on the sides, which are expected, not just to beautify the estero, but at the same time eliminate the foul odor emitting from the estero, and somehow help purify the water from its pollutants. The impact on life now of the Estero de San Miguel within the local ecosystem may have been less and less in quality in terms of the services being offered. It has remained as it is, a body of water waiting to be recognized again for its intrinsic goodness as a nonliving component of the local ecosystem in San Miguel district of Manila.

### Visual Signs

The images to be presented were from different periods in time. They were linked in one way or another to Estero de San Miguel. By applying the semiotic method and processes on the images inspired by Barthes, of citing the explicit and hidden meanings, the proponents tried to qualify the impact on life of the estero within its immediate local ecosystem, primarily within the San Miguel district of Manila. After the visual semiosis, a cohesive visual reflection is presented.



Image 1. *Old picture of a view in San Miguel, Manila showing native houses along the Pasig River bank*

**Denotation** – Old picture of a view in San Miguel, Manila showing native houses along the Pasig River bank and alleged confluence of its tributary Estero de San Miguel, with lots of trees and a river boat floating. The image was taken circa 1870 and owned by Biblioteca Nacional De Espana.

**Connotation** - Human communities that thrived along the Pasig River and one of its tributaries, Estero de San Miguel, were provided with clear and fresh water. Both bodies of water provided a habitat that supports not only human communities but of plants and animals as well.



Image 2. A late 1920's picture of San Beda College.

**Denotation** – A late 1920's picture of San Beda College (now a university) and its vast vacant lot along Mendiola Street, with some of its early structures that includes a portion of the present abbey. On the other side of the street was Centro Escolar de Señoritas (Centro Escolar University). Also seen was the Estero de San Miguel at the back and side of San Beda College. Lining along both sides of the Estero were trees, big houses, and some factory-like structures, the Mendiola bridge with small boats underneath, some caratelas traversing the street. The image was from San Diego Air and Space Museum by J. Tewell.

**Connotation** - The Estero de San Miguel, with its clean and clear water, separated the San Beda College from structures of human communities, as well as factories and business establishments. The Estero was being used as a mode of transportation with the use of small bancas. The existence of vegetation and human communities suggested the idea that the Estero served as a viable life support to living organisms within the local ecosystem.



Image 3. *An earlier or 1870 image of a nice home along the Pasig River, San Miguel, Manila.*

**Denotation** – An earlier or 1870 image of a nice home along the Pasig River, San Miguel, Manila. Seen also were other gated big houses with plants, and the reflection of the nice houses on the waters of Pasig River. Image was credited to Thomas Lukis Mansell by John Tewell.

**Connotation** - The nice home along Pasig River within the San Miguel district implies the beauty and the serenity of the place preferred by some affluent members of the society then as represented by the big structures of houses. As “nice homes” were built along a great river in San Miguel, Manila, where the Estero de San Miguel is also to be found as a tributary, implies the area was very conducive for human settlement. The reflection of the nice houses on the waters of Pasig River implies the healthy condition of the river, which is a condition possibly shared by the Estero de San Miguel being its tributary.

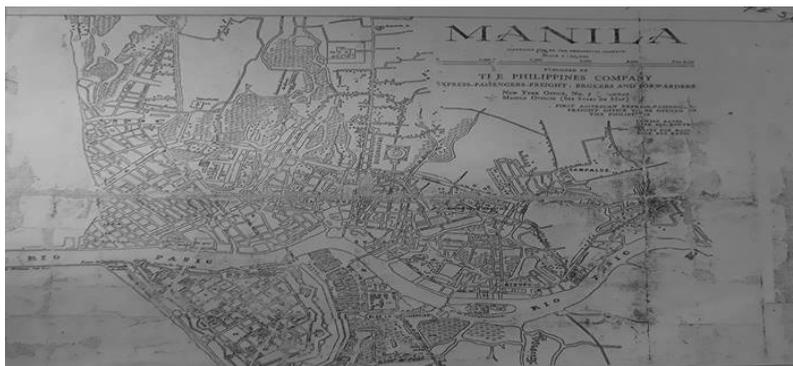


Image 4. *A late 1800's old map of Manila.*

**Denotation** – A late 1800's old map of Manila published by The Philippines Company, express - passengers, freight, brokers, and

forwarders, the first American express-passengers, freight office to be opened in the Philippines. It included streets and bodies of water including Estero de San Miguel.

**Connotation** - Estero de San Miguel was recognized and considered as an important tributary of Pasig River (Rio Pasig then) as depicted in the map along with other tributaries and streets that may be used in transporting something as mentioned literally by the American Express Company, ‘There are many canals or esteros emptying into this [Pasig] river,’ and “[t]he strange and brilliantly colored “cascos” and the long and narrow “bancas” move slowly up and down the canals.’



Image 5. A current Google map of San Miguel district showing the Estero de San Miguel and the existing institutions on both sides of the estero.

**Denotation** – A current Google map of San Miguel district showing the Estero de San Miguel and the existing institutions on both sides of the estero. It also shows both ends of the Estero as confluents at Pasig River.

**Connotation** - The Estero de San Miguel had served as a tributary of the Pasig River. At the same time it served as a natural demarcation that separated the large part of the San Miguel district from other districts of Manila. The estero and the great Pasig River secured some significant historical, political, economic and religious values. Within it are found significant and historical institutions like the Malacanang Palace, the seat of governance and the Mabini Hall. It is home to some educational institutions like the San Beda University, Centro Escolar University, La Consolacion College, College of the Holy Spirit, St. Jude Catholic School, and Victorino Mapa High School. Some business establishments

were located in the area like the San Miguel Brewery during the Spanish colonial era, but later demolished and became part of the the Malacanang Palace Complex and Casa Roses. Among the religious institutions present in the area are the Abbey of the Our lady of Monserrat, St. Jude Parish, and the National Shrine of St. Michael Archangel. Other significant establishments found outside the San Miguel district, but along the Estero the San Miguel, are the Technological Institute of the Philippines, Arellano University, and Tanduay Distillers. Inc.



Image 6. *Current google map of Estero de San Miguel showing existing barangays or human communities residing on both sides of the estero.*

**Denotation** - Current google map of Estero de San Miguel showing existing barangays or human communities residing on both sides of the estero.

**Connotation** - The Estero de San Miguel is a concrete expression of a sociological principle that says, where a body of water is, human communities are to be found. The waters of Estero de San Miguel had served different purposes to different barangays inside and outside the San Miguel district of Manila. For the most part, the estero served as a sewer, carrying off drainage water and waste matter of all these human communities and existing business establishments.



Image 7. *Comparative shots of Estero de San Miguel somewhere on P. Casal.*

**Denotation** – Comparative shots of Estero de San Miguel somewhere on P. Casal. The upper image, taken in 2010, shows a dirty polluted part of the estero with informal settlers on one side. While the lower image, taken in 2012, shows a cleaner part of the estero with more vegetation and a man sailing on a raft.

**Connotation** – The entire image sends a message that some changes had happened in the condition of the Estero de San Miguel through human interventions. Although there were some artificial changes done, those did not fully reinstate the estero to its ideal condition because the water had remained polluted.



Image 8. *Shots of the same portion of Estero de San Miguel, Concepcion Aguila area*

**Denotation** – Shots of the same portion of Estero de San Miguel, Concepcion Aguila area, taken in different periods, 2010 and 2012. The comparative shot displayed the presence of the informal settlers and polluted water on the upper part, and a cleaner area on the lower part of the image.

**Connotation** – The image depicted the human intervention done to the area of Estero de San Miguel. It caused the demolition of structures of the informal settlers built alongside the estero. The water, though cleaner, still appears polluted.



Image 9. *Another portion of the Estero de San Miguel, near San Beda University, Mendiola.*

**Denotation** – The image bears another portion of the Estero de San Miguel, near San Beda University, Mendiola. The upper part shows the polluted water of the estero with garbage on the side and very minimal greenery on one side. The lower part of the image shows the same place but with more vegetation on both sides and less garbage floating on still polluted waters.

**Connotation** – The image implies a partial human intervention was done on this portion of estero de San Miguel. This proved that any human action when put together, guided with the right intention will always have a good result.



Image 9. *A recent shot of the Estero de San Miguel, from P. Casal Bridge facing the direction towards the Muslim community, Quiapo, Manila.*

**Denotation** – a recent shot of the Estero de San Miguel, from P. Casal Bridge facing the direction towards the Muslim community, Quiapo, Manila. Some garbage were floating at the estero.

**Connotation** – The intervention done to rehabilitate the Estero de San Miguel that started several years ago will become futile, if the program will not be continued, arresting and correcting some human inappropriate actions that continue to pollute the estero.

**Visual Semiotic Reflection:**

Visually reading the images presented by getting into the denotative and connotative levels of their meanings, the impact on life of the Estero de San Miguel in its local ecosystem had regressed badly over the years. What used to be a natural tributary of Pasig River, filled with clear and clean water, evoking various feelings of joy, awe, respect, peace, and security, had become a dirty, mucky, and foul smelling tributary of Pasig River. Factors that may have contributed to this seemingly irreplaceable changes were the burgeoning settlers along and near the estero, residential or commercial establishments, public and private institutions that were served by the estero as sewer of their various wastes. The lack of discipline among the settlers in managing their wastes and the inadequate understanding on the services offered by the estero to human communities and the ecosystem at large may have resulted to the unjust disrespect and feeling of apathy towards the estero. The sudden rush of developments in almost all areas of human life caught humans by surprise, and confused them further about the things they have to prefer and value more in life. This scenario led to the sacrifice even more of experiencing the beauty and goodness of the nonliving components of the ecosystem, like in the case of Estero de San Miguel. The rapid developments in life, accompanied with value laden rationality and

appropriate planning, coupled with the insatiable will to act, and correct ecological considerations, must find concrete expressions in the ordinariness of life of the people. This is what exactly is happening recently in the rehabilitation of the Estero de San Miguel. Though it is still only partially rehabilitated, the fact is, it is being rehabilitated. In this case, consistency must be brought to the table, and the love for nature is nurtured personally as well, so that there will be a resurgence of greater impact on life the estero within its local ecosystem.

### **Compounded Lingual and Visual Reflection**

Based on the lingual and visual semiotic reflections, the researchers purposely present a compounded lingual and visual reflection through some reflected principles as underlying ideological references for a new inspiration and commitment to value creation and practice of responsible stewardship. These principles are presented also in the light of the papal encyclical *Laudato Si*.

The Book of Wisdom 15:5 says, “for from the greatness and beauty of created things, comes a corresponding perception of their creator.” The ecosystem, with everything that constitutes it, reflects the sanctity of the Creator. For this reason, the estero, which is a nonliving component of its local ecosystem in the San Miguel district of Manila, must be regarded as a sacred vessel. This same idea is something well-emphasized by St. Benedict in his holy rule 31.10, in trying to counsel his fellow monks on the value of responsible stewardship in relation to the use of their resources. For him, they are being used as modes of experiencing the presence of God.

In recognizing that God is the source of all beings, including the estero, all creatures, therefore, are brother and sister to one another who deserve love and respect. This idea is something that is indispensable. This attitude somewhat guarantees our continued evolution and preservation of each member’s unique existence in this cosmic world.

The same importance and respect must be rendered to the estero, just like the kind of importance and respect that is given to any biotic or living components of a local ecosystem. For the estero, just like any components of the ecosystem, offers a lot of services for the goodness of all. And all of these services are given freely, not even expecting anything in return from all that is being served by the estero. Therefore, due importance and respect must be generously rendered to everything that is in the ecosystem, like the estero.

Subscribing to the cosmic principle about seamless reality, the estero is a reflection and extension of every component of the ecosystem, especially of the human beings. This is an allusion of interconnectedness,

that the estero's condition and of all other created things are reflections and extensions of the inner disposition of humanity. And so, if humanity is in the state of grace, the estero is preserved and sustained. If humanity is in the state of sin, the estero is abused and destroyed.

Considering the principles presented, the researchers would like to end this section with a challenging question from the Book of Genesis 4:9, and a wise principle that instigates one commit oneself to be a responsible steward of God's creations, and that is, "Am I my brother's (creations – Estero de San Miguel) keeper?" The humble response of everyone to this question should be a resounding, yes! With what is now being done by the people, the Estero de San Miguel still has the future of returning to its original condition. If not, the estero can at least become something that everyone will truly be proud of and say, "I am its keeper!" Be hopeful that it will happen, as Pope Francis said in his message to an international congress on care for our common home in the context of large cities, "placing on each one the little that corresponds to him in his responsibility, much will be achieved" (Brockhaus, 2017).

### **Conclusions**

This research endeavored to see the impact on life of Estero de San Miguel. It explored the essential relationship of the estero with the local communities and other life forms within its immediate ecosystem. Also, this research intended to contribute in instilling among the locals the value of responsible stewardship, as per instruction of *Laudato Si*, in order to renew, if not restore, the vital role played by the estero within the scope of its ecosystem. Through deeper semiotic reflection derived from the narratives of the people and some images of Estero de San Miguel, the researchers arrived at the following conclusive and reflective statements.

The estero is an abiotic component of the local ecosystem within the district of San Miguel, Manila that had freely offered greater provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services in earlier times to local communities and other life forms within its immediate ecosystem than today, when it only serves as a tributary of Pasig River and sewer of human waste.

Any bodies of water is indispensable for life, that's what Pope Francis implied in his encyclical *Laudato Si*. Just like other elements of the ecosystem, a clean and fresh estero points to God's love of his creatures. In itself, there is an innate goodness that humanity most especially must recognize and care for, aside from its free services being offered to all that is within its local ecosystem in the San Miguel district of Manila. If its goodness, beauty, and importance will continuously be ignored, it will eventually lose its beauty and importance within its local

ecosystem. It will no longer have its essential impact. It will pose a danger to local human communities and to other elements of the immediate ecosystem. At present, the Estero de San Miguel has lesser or is slowly losing its natural impact on life. While there is still time to finally halt this natural local catastrophe, everyone must commit to be responsible stewards of the estero. Aside from literally cleaning the estero, getting rid of its pollutants, beautifying the surroundings, and justly dealing with the man-made causes of the pollution, everyone must seriously participate and purposely create an awareness of respect and love for our entire environment. This will be a great blessing to the present humanity and the future generations. The researchers are hopeful that one day, humanity will be able to sing in one voice, what St. Francis of Assisi had sang hundreds of years ago, "Praised be my Lord, for the sister of water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste."

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# Capitalism vs. Creation Spirituality Resolve (C.S.R.): A Tete-a-tete of Two Cultural Consciousness

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## Abstract

This research work argues that religious conviction is contributory to the making of the culture of Capitalism in the West. This was presented by annotating Max Weber's Sociology of Religion. There, the study presents Capitalism's cultural values influencing the behavior and attitude of the modern man. From here, the paper establishes how the values of Capitalism, in the global extent, became the main culprit in the destruction of the ecological system. To see both sides of the story, the paper examines how capitalists respond to this environmental crisis created mainly by them. At this point, the paper argues why the 'method' of most economic experts, including those of the philanthrocapitalists, fails in resolving the problem of sustainability vis-à-vis environmental wellbeing. After discoursing on what Capitalism has done and the ill-effects it has produced, the paper presents a dialectic between Capitalism and Creation spirituality. There it argues why Creation spirituality, reflected from the different faith traditions, becomes the appropriate cultural consciousness that serves as antidote to the environmental malaise caused by Capitalism. While a synthesis between the two opposing values of each spheres could be made using a dialectical framework, the paper opts instead to take the position of Creation spirituality. The paper points out that the way to counteract the "colonizing" position of Capitalism is for religion to take charge. In the end, the paper argues that only in paradigm-shift where the position of Creation spirituality is taken, that genuine solution can be achieved in this pressing environmental crisis. Lastly, the paper recommends to utilize the principles and values of Creation spirituality via incorporation of it in religious academic curricula. Likewise, the study bids the same in the wider sphere of interreligious relations and communications that religious leaders, preachers and teachers should consider as a course of action to take.

**Keywords:** Capitalism, Creation spirituality, Environmental destruction, Panentheism, Religion(s)

## Introduction

The present economic scheme of globalized mass production and its “colonization of the lifeworld” (Habermas, 1981) agenda run counter to **how nature works**: 1) generates and regenerates (“waste equals food”), 2) thrives in diversity, and 3) lives off solar income (Rasmussen, 2005). These “counter-creative” behaviors are brought about by a particular cultural consciousness present in the modern age – Instrumental-rationalism (Weber, 1905), primarily found in Capitalism. The capitalistic mentality, however, is not anymore just held by those who run companies and businesses, its values and behaviors have already penetrated the personal lifestyle of the mass who were “touched” by it. Two seminal works speak of this.

Max Weber (1905) in *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, justifies that the “methodical conduct of life” influenced by the Protestant religious interpretive systems, is the most important factor in the rise of capitalism.

In *the Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, Jurgen Habermas (1981) explicates that the cultural rationalization from which the structures of consciousness typical of modern societies emerge adopts cognitive, aesthetic-expressive, and moral-evaluative elements of religious tradition.

Thus, if a particular cultural consciousness, i.e. Capitalism, is the likely cause for the mass to behave in a specific manner, could this specific behavior be the reason for the detriment of environmental homeostasis? Conversely, could it be then that another cultural consciousness serves as antidote to this malaise?

In Carl Gustav Jung’s (1957, 1958) challenging and provocative work – *The Undiscovered Self*, he argues that civilization’s future depends on the individual’s ability to resist the collective forces of society. Only by gaining an awareness and understanding of one’s unconscious mind and true, inner nature – “the undiscovered self” – can individuals acquire the self-knowledge that is antithetical to ideological fanaticism. But this requires that individuals face their fear and the duality of the human psyche. He argues that only then can individuals begin to cope with the dangers posed by mass society – “the sum total of individuals” – resist the potential threats by those in power.

Matthew Fox (1983) in his book *Original Blessing*, describes people who embrace original blessing as those who love and celebrate life. They reverence God’s creation, whether it be nature or other human beings. There also, he posed (and likewise, answered) the question, “In

our quest for wisdom and survival, does the human race require a new religious paradigm?” “Does creation-centered spiritual tradition offer such a paradigm?”

Yes! According to Matthew Fox (1983), Creation spirituality is that paradigm that is already present in the tradition of Christian faith though not given much attention by many theologians. In his book *Original Blessing*, he presented the “Four Paths of Creation spirituality.” First in the list, is the path of the positive (*via positiva*) where the “tasting” of beauty and cosmic depths of creation happens in forms of affirmation, thanksgiving and ecstasy (pp. 33-34). As the creative energy (*Dabhar*) is always active, imaginative and playful, a creation-centered person should be likewise, sensitive, aware, alive and awake. This affirmation of blessedness, accordingly must always be recalled. Second to this is the path of the negative (*via negativa*). Simply put, it is the stage of befriending darkness, self-emptying and letting go (pp. 175-176). There is no *via negativa* without *via positiva*, entailing here an intricate relationship of the different stages in Creation spirituality. Embracing both pleasure (*via positiva*) and pain (*via negativa*), light and darkness, tension and struggle, the product of polarities is what the third path is all about (*via creativa*). This is the rebirthing of “dabhar,” a product of the dialectical consciousness (p. 210), manifested through arts and other artistic expressions. Nevertheless, genuine creativity cannot remain in a romantic sense, it should lead one towards transformation and emancipation of those around him (her). This is the fourth path, *via transformativa*. It is the renewal of creation towards a renewed-centered life, i.e., in renewing relationships where erotic justice, love, compassion reigns over contemplation (p. 247).

Pope Francis (2015), in *Laudato Si*, strikes a call to conversion for all the people of good will and those in the Church as well to change their ways in relating with the natural environment, reminding them that the earth needs protection and care as it was created by God. To wit,

*The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So, what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of*

*virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience (p. 217).*

From all of the abovementioned literature, to lead us out to answer our concern, the following questions and sub-questions were asked:

“Why must one opt for Creation spirituality as the value and course of action to take in radically resolving environmental problems caused by Capitalism?”

1. What is Capitalism according to Adam Smith, Milton Friedman, et.al.? What is its main concern? How did Capitalism bear out from religious conviction?
2. In what manner has Capitalism destroyed the natural environment? What social responsibilities do corporations/businesses have?
3. In what way does the cultural consciousness of Creation spirituality found in religions become the remedy to the problem of the environment?
4. How can theological education contribute to the common project of healing the environment?

### **Methodology**

The research was done in an expositional manner. Archival/library research was the method it utilized.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The study uses an underpinning framework that seeks to understand the phenomenon of Capitalism versus Creation spirituality. The dialectical process of Karl Marx (1867/1990) and the theory and practice of Jurgen Habermas (1984) were used in explaining the seemingly opposing views espoused by Capitalism and Creation spirituality. To be particular, the assertion of Capitalism as an economic system supports a position (thesis) that it destroys the environment, while on the other hand, the assent for Creation spirituality serves as an antithesis of Capitalism as it promotes environmental wellbeing. The narrative on the conflict of these two opposing concepts is resolved by recommending to side with the one protecting the environment, while at

the same time, allowing a new awareness of Capitalism that respects the wellbeing of the environment (synthesis).

The thesis-antithesis-synthesis paradigm is a Hegelian/ Marxist approach in resolving contradictions in society. While at the same time, the Habermasian Critical theory brings about hope for equality via critical theory approach of the Frankfurt School tradition.

## Discussion

To jumpstart this exposition, a short account on how the spirit of Capitalism was started is presented.

### The Nascent Phase of the Capitalist's Consciousness

The cultural rationalization from which the structures of consciousness typical of modern societies emerge adopts cognitive, aesthetic-expressive, and moral-evaluative elements of religious tradition (Habermas, 1981). This rationalization (Weber, 1905) designates the growing autonomy of law and morality, which made its way within religious interpretive systems. Radicalized salvation prophecies led to a dichotomy – one, between a quest for salvation oriented to inner, spiritually sublimated, sacred values and means of redemption, and the other, the knowledge of objectivated, external world. Weber showed that the beginnings of an ethic of conviction (*Gesinnungsethik*) developed out of this religiosity of conviction (*Gesinnungsreligiousitat*) (Habermas, 1981). Likewise, corresponding to cultural rationalization at the level of the personality system, “methodical conduct of life,” whose motivational bases, is the most important factor in the rise of capitalism, according to Weber (1905). In the value orientations and behavioral dispositions of that style of life, he discovered the correlate in personality of a religiously anchored, principled, universalistic ethic of conviction which had taken hold of the strata that bore Capitalism. In the first place, then, ethical rationalism penetrates from the level of culture to that of the personality system. The concrete form of the Protestant ethic, which is centered on vocational conceptions, means that ethical rationalism provides the foundation for a cognitive-instrumental attitude to inner worldly happenings, in particular to social interactions in the domain of social labor (Habermas, 1981). To elucidate further, the *Sociology of Religion* by Max Weber would be of service.

In Max Weber's exposition from his only published book *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), he argues that Western Capitalism was born out of some ethical and religious values and ideas. There he hypothesized that modern capitalism was engendered and legitimized by the theology brought about by the Protestant Reformation.

One of these Protestant theologies was the one propagated by John Calvin (1509-1564,) Calvinism. There he promulgates the idea that grace and sacraments do not secure one to attain salvation, for it is only the inscrutable will of God who will determine who will be saved and who will be eternally damned. However, the question who will be predestined to be saved and who will be predestined to be damned still lingers. Thus, as a kind of provisional answer, the idea of pre-destiny determined by one's actions (i.e., labor) comes about. In Calvinism, the ethics towards work is reconceptualized as a religious calling, making the Calvinist to conscientiously and actively fulfill his calling frequently, all throughout his lifetime. Work becomes his system of life for a Calvinist.

Pietism, another protestant group, founded by the German Lutheran theologian, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), emphasizes the intensified ascetic practices that are aimed at the attainment of a blissful community with God. This gives the asceticism of Pietism a mark of other-worldliness that is so different from Calvinism. Nevertheless, Pietism produced officials, clerks, laborers, domestic workers, and patriarchal employers that are all necessary for the modern capitalist order. Weber, however, argued that Pietism was not as effective in generating the capitalist's spirit as Calvinism does.

Methodism, founded by the English theologian John Wesley (1703-1791), is all about the methodical, and systematic regulation of the members' day to day conduct for the purpose of attaining the certainty of salvation. It has basically two stages. The first stage pertains to the emotional act of methodically inducing conversion. The second stage follows once the emotional feeling of conversion is attained, and thereby pertains to the rational struggle for perfection. In this manner, Methodism is closer to Calvinism, than it is to Pietism.

The several Anabaptists sects, that traces their origins to the two English Separatists, John Smyth (1570-1612) and Thomas Helwys (1550-1616), tries to emulate the early Christian communities of the apostles, and tends to avoid the world and its activities. However, through their idea of the continuous revelation by the spirit, their attitude towards the world and worldly activities has changed. The ongoing revelation of the

spirit created an attitude of silent waiting and listening among the Anabaptist sects. For them, this attitude of silent waiting and listening to the revelations of the spirit, means overcoming everything that is impulsive and irrational. For Weber, this attitude of silent waiting and listening has two possible outcomes: on one hand, it may create ecstatic outbreaks; and on the other hand, it may creep into the everyday workman's world. For the Anabaptist sects, it is the second possible outcome that has materialized. Since the Anabaptists were prohibited from engaging in services for the state, the ethic of careful and deliberate weighing of courses of action first saturated the domestic sphere and then vented out to commerce and industry.

Weber claimed that Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and the several Anabaptists sects brought about a new paradigm of worldly asceticism that has created a whole new system of values that is very different from the traditional model. Protestantism created a mentality where leisure, enjoyment and waste of time are stigmatized as deadly sins; where bodily and mental labors are man's vocation; and where division of labor is emphasized. This new mentality is what caused the emergence, as well as the legitimation, of the spirit of Capitalism.

But what is the nature of Capitalism in the first place?

### **Capitalism, at its finest (or worst)?**

The book of the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith (1723-1790), *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), theorizes the nature of Capitalism. Capitalism, in a nutshell, is a system of social organization by which private money-making (the build-up of capital, of "herds" of money) is its principal end. He defends this way of organizing human affairs on moral sense overturning religious admonitions that one should repudiate selfishness. Free and mutually beneficial trade, according to him, does a better job of assuring the general welfare than either selfless sharing or charity does. Smith (1776) has this to say, viz.,

*But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that*

*which I want, and you shall have this which you want is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages (pp. 30-31).*

From this statement, one can have an impression of Smith's view about the necessity and expectancy of human selfishness/ self-love expressed in amassing of profit in the Capitalistic system. Yet, one may also ask, "how about social responsibility by businesses and corporations?" Milton Friedman (1912-2006), in his seminal book *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962/2002), has this to say, viz.,

*This view shows a fundamental misconception of the character and nature of a free economy. In such an economy, there is one and only one social responsibility of business - to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud (p. 133).*

Likewise, a capitalist supports the society in such way, as Friedman quoting on Adam Smith (1776, Bk. IV, chap. ii, p. 421) elaborates,

*led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest, he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good (p. 133).*

Friedman (1962/2002) further justifies the dis-orientation of social responsibility with business enterprise as follows,

*Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the very foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible. This is a fundamentally subversive doctrine. If businessmen do have a social responsibility other than making maximum profits for stockholders, how are they to know what it is? Can self-selected private individuals decide what the social interest is? Can they decide how great a burden they are justified in placing on themselves or their stockholders to serve that social interest? Is it tolerable that these public functions of taxation, expenditure, and control be exercised by the people who happen at the moment to be in charge of particular enterprises, chosen for those posts by strictly private groups? (pp. 133-134)*

In the same way, according to Joel Bakan (2004) in his book *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*,

*The corporation is an institution... a legal institution, one whose existence and capacity to operate depend upon the law. The corporation's legally defined mandate is to pursue, relentlessly and without exception, its own self-interest, regardless of the often-harmful consequences it might cause to others. (pp.1-2)*

This self-interest for one's gain of profit in business, and conversely, the rejection of the capitalist's social responsibility, will prove to be an oversight from its 'wielders,' as destruction of the environment emanates.

### **Capitalists' Responsibility to the Natural Environment**

The present economic scheme of globalized mass production runs counter to HOW NATURE WORKS: to generate and regenerate ("waste equals food"). It does not care where resources come from, or what roles they play and what roles they are for in the Community of Life in home milieus. Therefore, it does not only contribute to the destruction of social-environmental ecologies, but generates one of the great periods of species extinction in history, the first in human hands (Rasmussen, 2005). For

instance, every time plastic is utilized and “dispose” of, it cannot be expected to go back to the ground and generate life again. They remain to be some oddities of environment, and thus, of life.

The present globalizing economy also amplifies the negative impact of ignoring nature’s essence: DIVERSITY. Life thrives in variations. Diversity will always be the way of nature to continue life in each place. Saint Thomas Aquinas wisely noted that multiplicity and variety “come from the intention of the first agent” who willed that “what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another”, inasmuch as God’s goodness “could not be represented fittingly by any one creature”. “Hence, we need to grasp the variety of things in their multiple relationships (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 63).” The present global economy does not incorporate adaptability and sustainability into the very fabric of locality. It prefers globalized “development,” sustainable or otherwise, rather than complex local and regional sustainable society and community, thereby runs against the grain of nature itself and creation’s integrity (Rasmussen, 2005). Can this be regarded as another form of Neo-colonialism?

Capitalism does not live off solar income. Rather, it extracts from the one-time endowment of the earth in ways that threaten sustainability for present and future generations. It serves a crowded planet that has high consumption rates, particularly in rich quarters, increasing exponentially in population every year. Yet, present economic theory and practice do not have routine ways to measure carrying capacity, mainly because the biological life central to the economy of nature is absent in the equations of Capitalism’s global economy (Rasmussen, 2005). Nature respects balance and moderation. The global economy, on the other hand, thrives on surplus and greed.

This research is not to generalize that all capitalists are evil, but when asked, how to resolve the havoc caused to the environment? This is the offer:

Archie Carroll (2008) gave his four-forms of social responsibilities of businesses, viz.,

*First of these is the **Economic responsibilities**. This is the orientation to produce goods and services that society wants and to sell them at fair prices... Second, as a partial fulfillment of the social contract, it (society) has also laid down the ground rules—the laws—under which business is*

*expected to operate. **Legal responsibilities** reflect a view of “codified ethics” in the sense that they embody basic notions of fairness as established by our lawmakers... Third, **Ethical responsibilities** embody the range of norms, standards, and expectations that reflect a concern for what consumers, employees, shareholders, and the community regard as fair, just, or in keeping with the respect for or protection of stakeholders’ moral rights... Fourth, there are business’s **voluntary/discretionary, or philanthropic, responsibilities**. These activities are purely voluntary, guided only by business’s desire to engage in social activities that are not mandated, not required by law, and not generally expected of business in an ethical sense. Such activities might include establishing loaned executive programs in the community, giving to charitable causes, providing day-care centers for working parents, initiating adopt-a-school programs, and conducting in-house programs for drug abusers (pp. 33-34) (Emphasis supplied).*

But just as these abovementioned responsibilities are identified, it does not mean, however, that they are being practiced religiously, i.e., unless “something” would prompt them to carry out that “responsibility,” particularly the responsibility of being philanthropic.

David Rieff (2015) studied the philanthrocapitalist Bill Gates to arrive with an answer. Gates mentioned in an entry from his blog (Gates Notes) dated at the end of 2013, that the best books he had read that year, while he enjoyed fiction, “I (He) read mostly nonfiction because I (he) always want to learn more about how the world works”. Rieff (2015) commented that such statement does not seem to occur to Gates that music or culture, in general, also speak of how the world works, which likewise, cannot be learned elsewhere. Furthermore, in the *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Annual Letter of 2013*, Gates was heard repeatedly saying, “You can achieve amazing progress if you set a clear goal and find a measure that will drive progress towards that goal.” Or in its longer version, as he once put it, the crucial things in his foundation’s work are setting clear goals, picking the right approach, and then measuring results to get feedback and refine the approach continually (Rieff, 2015).

What is missing from all of these, which philanthrocapitalists have overlooked, like Gates, is the understanding that people make choices that may seem incomprehensible from an econometric point of

view, or irrational from the perspective of those who believe that the state exists in part to mitigate human being's propensity to make choices that are against their long-term interests (Sunstein, 2014). Yet, that makes eminent good sense to them and they are unlikely to be "nudged" into relinquishing (Rieff, 2015). What is undeniable is their contention that the rationalist expectations of the development world (were) founded on the shoals of culture, custom, and human psychology (Rieff, 2015). Thus, whatever the current developmentalist orthodoxy may be, the fundamental problems of the world have always been moral, not technological (Rieff, 2015). Or as Angus Deaton criticized "the 'hydraulic' approach" to development aid, "You cannot develop other people's countries from the outside with a shopping list for Home Depot, no matter how much you spend" (Rieff, 2015). It has to come from within. And indeed, money is not the main problem, nor the solution with the aforesaid methods.

Similarly, if Capitalism had originated from a religious cultural-consciousness (Weber, 1905) resulting to a system, that at the same time brings death to social relations and to the environment, can it be possible then that another cultural-consciousness serves as "antidote" that could change the people's outlook about reality (worldview), the processes of their social relations, and their misinformed eminence over their natural environment?

## **A Creation-conscious Spirituality**

The fall-redemption spirituality, propounded by St. Augustine of Hippo, was given certain stature in the (Catholic) Christian tradition for the longest time now, giving some bearing on the moral outlook of the modern wo/man. While this spirituality gives a moral impetus for practice that reconciles and nurture relationships – with God and with our fellow humans, the issue of human relationships with the environment, however, is side-stepped. It seems, though, this type of spirituality has been falling short in determining the proper way of relating with the natural environment. For instance, the fall-redemption spirituality sees the world to be impure and so one must be freed from it. Likewise, the world is being treated as belonging to the flesh, where it needs to be chastised. Such view of the world (ethic/spirituality) does not just bring about duality in the relationship with the world (physical environment), but even worse, animosity towards it. Thus, the fall-redemption spirituality is

not enough or even appropriate to deal with our environmental problem. A paradigm-shift, therefore, must be considered to bring about real change in viewing the nature of the problem with nature.

Matthew Fox (1983) argues that the creation tradition has been forgotten almost entirely as religion by theologians, and that only artists, poets, scientists, feminists, and political prophets are the only ones keeping it alive. Creation spirituality is a tradition that is historically and biblically rooted. It also claims its communion of Saints. However, it is rather new to culture, that the creation-centered spirituality is barely given attention by the Christian religion, unlike the fall-redemption spirituality. In his book *Original Blessing*, he presented the “Four Paths of Creation spirituality.” First in the list, is the path of the positive (*via positiva*) where the “tasting” of beauty and cosmic depths of creation happens in forms of affirmation, thanksgiving and ecstasy (pp.33-34). As the creative energy (*Dabhar*) is always active, imaginative and playful, a creation-centered person should be likewise, sensitive, aware, alive and awake. This affirmation of blessedness, accordingly, must always be recalled. Second to this is the path of the negative (*via negativa*). Simply put, it is the stage of befriending darkness, self-emptying and letting go (pp. 175-176). There is no *via negativa* without *via positiva*, entailing here an intricate relationship of the different stages in Creation spirituality. Embracing both pleasure (*via positiva*) and pain (*via negativa*), light and darkness, tension and struggle, the product of polarities is what the third path is all about (*via creativa*). This is the rebirthing of “dabhar,” a product of the dialectical consciousness (p. 210), manifested through arts and other artistic expressions. Pope Francis (2015) describes it in the same way, “God in some way sought to limit himself in such a way that many of the things we think of as evils, dangers or sources of suffering, are in reality part of the pains of childbirth which he uses to draw us into the act of cooperation with the Creator” (p. 58). Nevertheless, genuine creativity cannot remain in a romantic sense, it should lead one towards transformation and emancipation of those around him/her. This is the fourth path, *via transformativa*. It is the renewal of creation towards a renewed-centered life, i.e., in renewing relationships where erotic justice, love, compassion reigns over contemplation (p. 247).

Thus, unlike the Augustinian fall-redemption spirituality, the Christian spirituality of creation works on the idea that, humans are **originally blessed**, blessed abundantly by the gifts of nature bestowed by God. Creation spirituality works on the **celebration of the innate human goodness**, on **creative energies** directed by one’s **passion (eros) and**

**imagination** conferred by the divine. This, consequently, makes humans **co-creators and healers** of this world (universe) – to bring things **whole and new**. This is made possible as creative works become the **embodiment of what is creative and good in each individual**, found in the work of each hands, in words that reflect the truth, in the voice that expresses the deepest selves, but most of all, in the beautiful things people create, reflected in songs, in poems, **in varied forms of art**, and **in the fullest union of each one with the divine, in prayers and rituals**. And since it encourages individual creativity, those who involve themselves in such project can actually work together without forcing on each other's capacity (level of contribution) or capability (talent) to bring about the desired result. By this, the project driven by Creation spirituality becomes **community-building, a liturgy** par excellence! (Fox, 1983).

This necessity for rituals akin to this principle is found in Diarmuid O' Murchu's (2004) *Quantum Theology* 9<sup>th</sup> Principle, "Because we are primarily beneficiaries of light (and not of darkness) and our final destiny – both here and eternally – is that of enlightenment, we all need those sacred moments ritualistic/sacramental space, serving as heightened encounters with the sustaining mystery that enfolds us." Thus, the essentiality of rituals is ontologically in everyone, which upon practice makes the truest form in each one. Teilhard de Chardin (1975) precisely captured this in a line saying, "We are not human beings having spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having human experiences." Likewise, it is said that humans are innately spiritual, and that includes all other life forms. And when the proper timing happens (maturation), humans cannot but ritualize their relationship with the divine mystery (O' Murchu, 2004). This is so, because "the ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things" (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 60).

### **Capitalism versus Creation spirituality**

With the abovementioned characteristics of Creation spirituality, it becomes the soul in the too avaricious, materialistic values promoted by Capitalism. Thus, to put this two cultural consciousness vis-à-vis:

Capitalism unlike Creation spirituality does not work on the person's creative imagination or on his/her passion, since it is more concerned with the quantity of products a laborer can produce for the

capitalist to profit. The work of the laborer does not reflect his/her person; instead there is a depersonalization happening to him/her as he/she is just working to “deliver the goods”. His creative energies are relegated to the interests of the capitalist. And so, a commodification of his/her fruit of labor happens (Marx, 1990 [1867]). There the worker becomes alienated to his work, from his nature as a creative being, as co-creator and a healer. He/ She is, likewise, alienated from his own fruits of labor thus, there is no true ownership and sense of responsibility from his/her part, which consequently, there could be no real enjoyment for him/her out of fulfillment, or a celebration out of a rewarding task (Marx, 1990 [1867]). It cannot be ritualized!

As creative energies are stymied in a capitalist-driven environment, there is an absence of variations in people’s products. Like products that are manufactured in factories, where uniformity is reproduced disguised as “quality-standard”, culture becomes stultified and ready-made as well. This is expected since art is lost, because the ones who should give soul to it is nowhere to be found. And so, mass and popular culture proliferates. And as products become pop (popular), uniformed, and life-less, their worth becomes valuable only in their utilitarian sense (Critical Theory). While this seems to be innocent at first glance, this in turn influences the valuation of oneself and others because the power of social setting directs thinking and behavior. This is the case with the way one looks at work and spending in the present day. Take for instance the values that most advertisements show. While they seem to uphold some noble values like intimacies in the family, friends, or with special loved ones, in the end, the endorsement of products still takes the center stage, like in the tag-line of a certain advertisement: “Love ko ‘to.” The power of advertisements creates in consumers a very influential illusion – *false needs*, making each one believes that what can fill the longings or void in the individual (which only real intimacy can complete) could be satisfied by the products that the capitalists offer. Another deceptive-approach that sways people to act in their interest is to make them believe that once they patronized certain products, they will become unique, if not a cut above the rest. Sociologists called this modus pseudo-individualization (Critical Theory). It is pseudo because the products in the capitalist’s setting are illusory diverse. And when products seem to be new, unique, or different, a critical outlook will tell consumers that they are just “different packaging” wrapped in jargons and visuals purposely placed to entice or confuse them to purchase. This is expected in capitalist’s products because, again, there is no real art in them. They are not real art because they do not reflect the creativity of their maker,

there is no soul in them; they are pure “matter” manufactured by the bulk by mechanized noesis.

Likewise, it must be noted that workers in the capitalist’s setting do not really co-operate with one another, they compete (Marx, 1990 [1867]). And if ever they work together, they do so because they were told by those who hired them. The most likely reason for this is to prompt them for the on-time delivery of “goods”. Compare this, on the other hand, with the work of volunteers, who really give themselves in the service of others. They put their heart and soul in what they do to contribute for the betterment of the community, or even the larger society. And what drives them to do such is their passion for life, not the wage or fame they gain from doing it. A perfect example of this would be the kind of cooperation present to those who work and live in rural communities where the “bayanihan” spirit still lingers. Contrasting this to the urban milieu where the wage-earners are slaves of their work, such as those found busy dashing in their cubicles dubbed as “work-stations”. There is neither spirituality, nor real passion/creativity in those kinds of work, making the workers self-centered and myopic in their view.

This is the cultural consciousness of the un-critical mass driven mainly by materialism, likened to economic-driven “automatons” serving only the powers that be.

So how does one empower oneself to be liberated from this enslaving, functionalist-control by the capitalistic-system, so one can grow holistically and start the healing? Or probably, the better question to ask is, “How can Creation spirituality, as a cultural consciousness, reflected in religions, become the counterbalance to Capitalist’s value-system, and in turn become the antidote to the socio-environmental sickness?”

Again, if Western Capitalism, according to Max Weber (1905), was borne out of cultural consciousness influenced by the Protestant Reformation theology i.e., Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and some sects of Baptist, how could this be not the case with the Chinese and Indian religions, when compared to the theology, philosophy and spirituality of the Protestant religions? It is apposite, therefore, to examine the reason for the implausibility of the latter religions (Asian) to be the fertile ground for Capitalism to grow. Conversely, as these religions reflect more of the philosophy of Creation spirituality in them.

Nevertheless, in the great task of re-creating a culture, this time in the global extent, truly the help of each one of us can offer is much needed. Since the crisis that looms today is global, they affect all persons equally, whether Christian, Buddhist, or agnostic; whether capitalist or communist; whether black, white, yellow, brown, or red, whether old or young, whether rich or poor; First world or Third world. The crisis of ecology undeniably affects everyone! (Fox, 1983). Again, in the *Original Blessing*, Fox (1983) tried to integrate the wisdom of both Eastern and Western spiritualities, and global indigenous cultures, with the emerging scientific understanding of the universe, and the passion for creativity. Creation spirituality is both a tradition and a movement. It is a tradition, since the historical Jesus himself embraced the wisdom tradition of Israel. It is a movement, since it is being celebrated by mystics and agents of social change from every age and culture. Or as Pope Francis (2015) puts it, “If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it” (pp. 45-46).

The following discussion brings this forth.

### **Different Divine Perceptions (God in relation to the world)**

*Theism* is the perception and belief of the divine (God) to be immanent in the world, yet transcends it. Believers considered their God to intervene in the affairs of the world though apart from it. Some believed that this God is a single entity as one Supreme Being (monotheism). Others think that the divine is separated into a specific number of separate but interactive entities (polytheism) like in Hinduism. Still, some emphasized that God is personal and actively involved in the created order. This includes Judaism, Christianity, Islam and some sects within Hinduism.

*Pantheism* (literally means “all is God/ God is all”) is the perception and belief that God and the physical universe as a whole are one. It is as if God is everything, and everything is God. This religious belief is commonly found in primal religions, especially with those that involve nature or animal worship. Today the main pantheistic religions being practiced in the world are Wicca, and some sects within Hinduism. Likewise, most of the indigenous peoples practice traditional religions that are pantheistic in essence.

***Panentheism*** (literally means “all-in-God”) is the perception and belief that the divine pervades and interpenetrates every part of the universe and also extends beyond time and space. This is the kind of divine perception where the principle of Creation spirituality is clearly found. Several Asian religions adhere to this. The most manifest of these is Taoism.

In a nutshell, the TAO is believed to be the eternal, all pervading, inexhaustible, source of all things. It is THE WAY of all things, the way of the Universe, the rhythm, ordering principle behind all life. It is the womb from which all life springs and to which it returns. The ‘Tao’ is the integration of contrast (Yin-yang): active-passive, light-dark, male-female, positive-negative. In the infinite universe, ‘yin and yang’ are eternally fluctuating and that all things partake of varying quantities of each. Nothing is all Yin, nothing is all Yang, everything contains the seed of the opposite (other). They do not really oppose but complement and balance each other. Each of these opposites creates tension between its complementary antagonistic elements. Between them they generate the pulsation and breathing of the universe. Just as the positive and negative poles of battery, creating a flow of electrons, the Yin-yang also produces a current called *chi* or *qi*. According to its philosophy, the universe works harmoniously in its own ways, i.e. when one exerts his/her will against the world which is out of rhythm with the cycles of change, there may be a disruption in harmony. Unintended consequences may more likely result from it rather than the willed outcome. Thus, the consciousness to seek attunement with way of nature is very profound in Taoism.

This panentheistic understanding has also developed in the past two centuries in the Christian tradition responding to scientific thought (Clayton and Peacocke, 2004a). But even in the earlier times one can already refer to Christian mystics supporting the same belief. As St. Thomas Aquinas declared, “Each and every creature exists for the perfection of the entire universe.” “All things are united according to friendship to each other and to God” (1917). Likewise, Meister Eckart stated, “My mouth expresses and reveals God but the existence of a stone does the same” (*Speech 53, DW II, p. 535*). Equally, Hildegard of Bingen proclaimed, “God has composed the world out of its elements for the glory of God’s name. God has strengthened it with winds, bound and illuminated it with stars, and filled it with other creatures” (Fox, 1987).

Other mystics from non-Christian religions, as well as sacred texts, also support the same thought. According to Ibn Al-Arabi (n.d.),

*In as much as God's Essence is Independent of the words, the cosmos is not He, but in as much as God freely assumes relationships with the words through attributes such as creativity and generosity the cosmos manifests the He. If we examine anything in the universe, God is independent of that thing and infinitely exalted beyond it. He is "incomparable" (tanzīh) with each thing and all things. But at the same time each thing displays one or more of God's attributes, and in this respect the thing must be said to be "similar" (tashbīh) in some way to God.*

The ancient Hindu scripture *Bhagavad-Gita* expresses this same panentheistic thought poetically, "O Universal form, I see in your body many, many arms, bellies, mouths and eyes, expanded everywhere, without limit" (11.16).

Thich Nhat Hanh (1999), a Buddhist scholar has this to say,

*One thing is made up of all things. One thing contains the whole cosmos... A piece of bread contains sunshine... Without a cloud, the wheat cannot grow. So, when you eat the piece of bread, you eat the cloud, the sunshine, you eat the minerals, time, space and everything.*

Chief Seattle (1854) of the Suquamish and Duwamish tribes, a Native American mystic has remarked,

*Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect." "All things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man... the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports.*

### **Creation-conscious Spirituality within Religions**

Religions are not their creeds; they are more than their belief-systems. A religion expresses a subjective relationship to a certain metaphysical, extramundane factor. The meaning and purpose of religion lie in the relationship of the individual to God (i.e., Christianity, Judaism and Islam) or to the path of salvation and liberation (i.e., Buddhism). From this basic fact all ethics are derived, which without the individual's

responsibility before God can be called nothing more than conventional morality (Jung, 1957). Coming from this argument, one can deduce that a perception of the divine does not fully comprise a religion, or make one an adherent of it (become religious). Thus, in principle, a theist's and panentheist's view can be both present in one and the same adherent of a certain religion. Applying C. G. Jung's (1957) aforementioned definition of religion, a person who adheres in one, personal, involved God manifesting his divinity in the affairs of the world (theist), can also have confidence that this same God is present in the created world (panentheist). In other words, a Jew, a Christian, and a Moslem although have a perception of the divine in a monotheistic manner, may likewise, adhere to a panentheistic view of the divine. Thus, conformity to a certain religious view, i.e. Panentheist's, would not dissolve another (e.g. Theist's), instead, would enlarge it. Likewise, a Christian who views God as a Redeemer, does not negate nor diminish God's other persona as Sustainer, as Creator, and so on and so forth, when that person experienced God differently in another instance. The tragedy, however, happens when one gives too much attention to one particular view of God, and turn a blind eye to God's other great realities. In fact, if one really respects God's nature, it cannot be assumed that God could only be viewed from one end, or one's end. So, adherents of certain religions cannot be expected to have only one view and experience of the divine. They may always have a plurality of God-experience, more so, if the experience they had was first-hand (personal).

While spirituality would still be seen to be different from religion, what is definitive is that, spirituality is more all-encompassing and holistic, meaning spirituality crosses different religious convictions. However, it is undeniable that spirituality is found more tangibly in religions.

Coming from this thought, Christianity should not only have the Augustinian fall-redemption spirituality. Christianity's rich tradition involves Creation spirituality as well. In fact, this is already present since the inception of the faith (Fox, 1983). Thus, Creation spirituality must be brought to the fore more than ever, that is, if desired to bring about real change in the human consciousness. The Augustinian fall-redemption spirituality falls short in responding and healing the wounded relationship humanity has with the natural world. Therefore, it is only by this that one can truly respond appropriately to the environmental "dis-eases" brought about by humanity's predisposed Capitalist-mentality.

## Conclusion

### Religious culture to counteract Capitalism's "dis-eases"

If Capitalism brought with it a "massification" and de-personalization of individuals, reflective of the cultural industry, which results to a social consciousness-con-praxis that leads to the destruction of the natural environment, then religion as a personal ascent to the metaphysical and extramundane, would be the cultural-consciousness that will serve as antidote to counter-balance it. It is not ethical principles, however orthodox, that lay the foundations for the freedom and autonomy of the individual, but simply and solely the empirical awareness, and incontrovertible experience of an intensely personal, reciprocal relationship between man and extramundane authority which acts as a counterpoise to the "world" and its "reason" (Jung, 1957, p. 22). The psychological opposition between these two realms of experience is not only vouched for in the New Testament but is still exemplified very plainly today in the negative attitude of the Church to atheism and materialism (Jung, 1957, p. 23). The individual will never find the real justification for his existence, and his own spiritual and moral autonomy, anywhere except in the extramundane principle capable of relativizing the overpowering influence of external factors. The individual who is not anchored in God can offer no resistance on his own resources to the physical and moral blandishment of the world. For this he needs the evidence of inner, transcendent experience which alone can protect him from the otherwise inevitable submission of the mass. Merely intellectual or even moral insight into the stultification and moral irresponsibility of the mass man is a negative recognition only, and amounts to not much more than a wavering on the road to the atomization of the individual. It lacks the driving force of religious conviction, since it is merely rational (Jung, 1957, p. 23).

Pope Francis (2015) in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si*, calls every one of goodwill for a moral and spiritual transformation in their connection to Earth's ecosystems. He says, caring for creation is as old as Genesis, as clear as the Sermon on the Mount, and as transformative as St. Francis of Assisi. This transformative way of St. Francis is what Creation spirituality, in essence, is all about.

*Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human. Just as happens when we fall in love with*

*someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise. He communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them “to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason”. His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. Such a conviction cannot be written off as naive romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine our behaviour. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously (pp. 10-11).*

Further, the Pope expounds: “Ecological culture... needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational programme, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm. Otherwise, even the best ecological initiatives can find themselves caught up in the same globalized logic” (Pope Francis, 2015, pp. 83-84).

## **Recommendation**

### **A Call to a Renewed Theology**

If the cultural consciousness of religion is the answer to the malaise caused by the un-natural relationships and processes caused by misinformed mindsets in life, then only in paradigm-shift can it be holistically and radically heal the waning condition of the Mother Earth.

Education, in my opinion, is still the primary course of action we should have if we want to change the ways of people. A call to **a renewed paradigm in doing theology** is necessary, if religions will be the leading impetus for our change of ways. Theology can no longer belong to Christianity, nor to any formal religion; it has to become an agent for global transformations. We must do theology at the heart of the world,

and not in the confines of church or formal religion. The theological encounter becomes most creative when we engage with the pressing global issues of our time. Likewise, in its global praxis, theology must seek to demolish dualism, i.e., to outgrow all human constructs, and pursue intimacy with the skills and discernment of a multidisciplinary imagination (O' Murchu, 2004).

In the educational milieu for instance, tertiary theological contents do not reflect/ include the concept of Creation spirituality. Catechetical ministry, likewise, concerns itself more with the fall-redemption (sin-salvation) type of spirituality. An inclusion therefore of Creation spirituality (Fox, 1983) is called for. Religious educators and catechists are, likewise, beckoned "to understand" (phenomenologically speaking) Creation spirituality, or better still, to become living witnesses of it.

Second, a review ("see again") of the **deep understanding of the real values of religion** must also take place. While religions would generally have the elements of creed (faith conviction), code (ethic/ morals), and cultic acts (rituals), spirituality, however, is just closely found in the elements of morals/ ethics, and in the "linguistification" of sacraments (rituals). The Four Paths of Creation spirituality (Fox, 1983) must be revisited. Contemplation must become a landmark of theology; while the pursuit of justices becomes its dominant praxis. And all the rest becomes a window dressing, useful, but not essential (O' Murchu, 2004). This being said, religions' essence is "felt" in their transformative and creative elements. In this case, the active elements of religion, seen in the quality-kind of relationships their adherents concretized in dealing with their fellow, especially with those who are in need, (this time including the environment "his sister"), must be endorsed the most.

Third, as "Life is sustained by a creative energy, fundamentally benign in nature. With a tendency to manifest and express itself in movement, rhythm, and pattern. Creation is sustained by a superhuman, pulsating restlessness, a type of resonance vibrating throughout time and eternity" (O' Murchu, 2004). Humans need to co-operate with this God and the divine that are described as a creative energy, which is perceived to include, but also supersede, everything traditional theology attributes to God (O' Murchu, 2004). This **co-operation to care for the earth** should be a priority agenda of the different religions. A common plan of action to respond to the call of healing the environment is a unifying force for religions to dialogue, participate, and work together. The alliance between economy and technology ends up sidelining anything unrelated

to its immediate interests. Consequently, the most one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the environment... (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 40). While community-service in many forms are practicable, an integration of the values of Creation spirituality to one's everyday life, however, is still the best way to articulate that common care for the earth. Application of new technology and without any need for ethical considerations or deep change (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 43) can only get us far if not, treacherous. It is here once again, that we should underscore the importance of evangelization/ education to care for the earth. It could, in fact, become more resolute if the primary mandate of every faith tradition now includes Creation spirituality in their preaching and teachings.

In the end, the common project of different religions, the conviction to work for the common good (of the earth) is crucial and urgently needed at this time. Theologians, religious educators, catechists, imams, priests, rabbis, gurus, spiritual masters, religious activists, preachers, teachers, and scholars must do their share and act now. We need urgently to walk the talk, as well as, converse what needs to be traversed!

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# **Caring Behaviors, Spiritual, and Cultural Competencies: A Holistic Approach to Nursing Care**

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## **Abstract**

Holistic approach to nursing care is a comprehensive model which involves all facets of care which involves mental, spiritual, and social needs of patients. However, studies have shown that most nurses are not familiar with this model of caring and only considers the corporeal needs of the patient. Thus, the aim of the study was to assess the caring behaviors, spiritual and cultural competencies of nurses. Also, the extent of influence of cultural and spiritual competencies to the caring behaviors of Filipino nurses were determine. The study utilized a causal research design and a purposive sample of 124 Filipino medical-surgical nurses who were employed in Level 3 hospitals were included. The data were collected through survey using three (3) questionnaires which includes Nurse Cultural Competence Scale developed by Perng and Watson (2012), the Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutic Scale developed by Mamier and Taylor (2014) and the Caring Nurse Patient Interaction Scale developed by Cossette et al. (2006). The data collected was analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and univariate linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that Filipino nurses rated themselves good in terms of spiritual and cultural competencies. Specifically, the subscales of cultural competencies which includes cultural skills, cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity were also rated as good. On the other hand, the caring behaviors of Filipino nurses were rated as excellent. The same findings were also noted for two of its subscales, the clinical care and comforting care while both relational and humanistic care were rated as very good. Spiritual competencies showed a significant influence in the caring behaviors of nurses, however, no significant influence was noted between the cultural competencies and caring behaviors of nurses.

**Keywords:** Caring behaviors, cultural competencies, holistic care, spiritual competencies

## Introduction

Caring plays a vital component in the role of nurses and provides a guiding framework in the practice of nursing. It involves a holistic approach in providing an optimal level of care to patients. Holistic care is described as a behavior that recognizes a person as a whole and acknowledges the interdependence among one's biological, social, psychological, and spiritual aspects (Zamanzadeh, Jasemi, Valizadeh, Keogh & Taleghani, 2015). It involves a broad range of approaches which includes therapeutic management, communication, self-help, education and complementary treatment. According to Selimen and Andsoy (2011), holistic nursing is concerned with all facets of patient care and considers its effects on the treatment process and the patients' thoughts, emotions, cultures, opinions, and attitudes are considered contributing factors to recovery, happiness and satisfaction.

Indeed, the process of caring is an interactive and inter-subjective human process which occurs during moments of shared vulnerability between two or more people, both the self and other directed process (Wolf, Giardino, Osborne & Ambrose, 1994). It has been the core focus of nursing practice which was emphasized by nursing theorists, such as Leininger and Watson. Given the vital role that caring plays in the practice of nursing, it is critical to understand which behaviors of the nurse are exemplified as caring based on the theory of Watson (1985). Larson defined nurse caring behaviors as acts, conduct and mannerisms enacted by professional nurses that convey concern to patient's safety, attention, and feeling cared for; the sensation of well-being and safety resulted from enacted behaviors of another (Larson, 1984 as cited by Wolf, Dillon, Townsend & Glasofer, 2017).

Aside from nurse caring behaviors, another aspect that should be emphasized is the spiritual care competence of nurses. Spirituality is the core of human existence which includes immaterial aspects of human life and is experienced through the relationship of a human's life with God, him or herself, others and nature (Khorrami-Markani, Yaghmaie, Khodayarifard, & Alavimajd, 2012). Spirituality can help patients in the process of illness recovery by facilitating their autonomy and assisting them to live and grow beyond the limitations imposed by their illness (Mizock, Millner & Russinova, 2012). According to Burkhardt and Jacobson (2002), people with high spiritual well-being have a holistic approach to life and they deal with the issues around them with an open mind and flexibility. Hence, assessment of spiritual care competencies among nurses is an essential part of holistic nursing care. Furthermore, the Canadian Nurses Association (2010) encourages nurses to

“demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for diversity in spiritual beliefs, support of spiritual preferences and attention to spiritual needs as nursing competencies” (p. 2).

Along with spirituality comes a multicultural society. As health care professionals, we find ourselves providing services in an environment where patients and their families may be of different cultures, traditions, languages and spiritual backgrounds (Wintz & Cooper, 2009). Thus, in order to meet the ever changing health care needs of patients in a multicultural society, provision of care in a way that is suitable and culturally sensitive for all patients becomes a necessity.

In addition, Zamanzadeh et al. (2015) stated that there is a compelling evidence that most nurses have been educated with a biomedical allopathic focus and do not have a good understanding of the meaning of holistic care. He further added that nurses are not familiar with holistic care, neglect this model of caring, do not use this method and consider patients' corporeal needs only. In this regard, patients' other needs and sometimes more serious problems are not addressed (Solimen & Andsoy, 2011; Olive, 2003; Tjale & Bruce, 2007). The mental, spiritual, and social needs of patients are neglected and patients are considered as biological machines (Porter, 1997; Kolcaba, 1997).

Thus, the study explored the extent of influence of spiritual care competencies and cultural competencies on the caring behaviors of nurses.

### Operational Framework

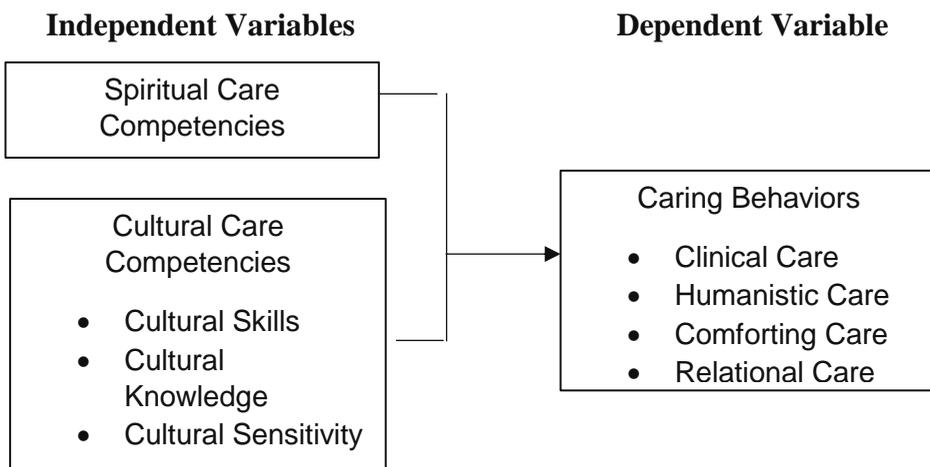


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The study determined the two sets of variables which include the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables include the spiritual competencies of nurses and cultural competencies which include cultural skills, cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity. On the other hand, the dependent variables include the caring behaviors of nurses which are described as clinical care, humanistic care, comforting care and relational care. The extent of influence of the spiritual and cultural competencies to the caring behaviors of Filipino nurses were also examined.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study utilized a causal research design. This design is used to measure what impact a specific change will have on existing norms and assumptions. Causal effect (nomothetic perspective) occurs when variation in one phenomenon, an independent variable, leads to or results, on average, in variation in another phenomenon, the dependent variable (Bachman, 2007).

In the study, the influence of the spiritual and cultural competencies in the caring behaviors of Filipino nurses were determined.

### **Setting of the Study**

The study was conducted in selected Level 3 Hospitals located in the City of Manila since they provide more health care services compared to level 1 and Level 2 Hospitals. Level 3 Hospitals in the Philippines are those that are teaching/training hospital; has provisions for physical medicine and rehabilitation unit, ambulatory surgical clinic, dialysis facility and blood bank. It must also have a DOH licensed tertiary clinical laboratory with standard equipment necessary for the performance of histopathology examination and a DOH licensed Level 3 imaging facility with interventional radiology (DOH Administrative Order No. 012, 2012).

### **Respondents of the Study**

In this research study, the number of respondents was based on the total population of staff nurse in different shifts assigned in medical and surgical ward.

Staff nurses that were included are those with a minimum of 1-year length of service as a medical and/or surgical staff nurse because they have already adjusted well enough to this area of care. Total

enumeration of staff nurses that work in the medical and surgical wards was included in the study.

### **Sampling Technique**

The participants of the study were selected using purposive sampling since the researcher believes that selected nurses were the best source of information for the study undertaken. This refers to selection of sites or participants that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question; they must be willing to reflect on and share this knowledge (Creswell, 2003).

In the study, a total of 124 Filipino nurses assigned in the medical surgical wards of selected hospitals in Manila were included.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The research was approved by the Arellano University Ethics Review Board. The participants were advised about the nature and purpose of the study, as well as their rights in order to secure their consent to be involved in the study. It was also made clear to all informants that they reserve the option to withdraw from the study at any point during the data collection phase. They were also assured that data collection was conducted according to their convenience. Also, the possibility of the study to be presented and published in a research journal was made known to the participants. All the gathered data from the participants will be kept secured and accessible only to the researcher and will be destroyed through appropriate means (e.g. shredding) after 5 years.

Reasonable steps were taken to ensure privacy, anonymity, and security of information gathered during the course of the study.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher utilized standardized research instrument tools, which are divided into four parts. First is the demographic profile which contains the age, sex and the length of service of the respondents, second is the Nurse Cultural Competence Scale developed by Perng and Watson (2012) which was used to determine the cultural competencies of Filipino nurses, third was the Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutic Scale developed by Mamier and Taylor (2014) which was used to assess the spiritual care competencies of Filipino nurses and lastly, the Caring Nurse Patient Interaction Scale developed by Cossette et al. (2006) which was used to determine the caring competencies of Filipino nurses. The researcher secured permission from the authors to use their research instruments.

### **Nurse Cultural Competence Scale**

The Nurse Cultural Competence Scale is a 20 item tool developed by Perng and Watson (2012). It is subdivided into four constructs: cultural knowledge (items 3, 9, 11-12 and 13), cultural sensitivity (17 and 20), and cultural skills (items 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 14, 16, 18-19)

### **Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutic Scale**

This tool is a 17-item instrument developed by Mamier and Taylor (2014) used to measure the frequency of nurse therapeutics or practices intended to support patient spirituality.

### **Caring Nurse Patient Interaction Scale- Nurse**

Caring Nurse Patient Interaction Scale or CNPI-23 adapted in the study of Cossette et al. (2006) describes the attitudes and behaviors that can be seen in clinical practice and that can be measured according to importance, frequency, satisfaction, competency and feasibility. It is divided into three parts: demographic data, survey scale and open ended questions.

The Survey Scale comprises of 23 items, grouped under four dimensions: Clinical Care (Statements 1 to 9), Relational Care (Statements 10 to 16), Humanistic Care (Statements 17 to 20) and Comforting Care (Statements 21 to 23).

**Table 1.**

#### *Interpretation of the Scales*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Value Range</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
5	4.20-5.0	Excellent
4	3.40-4.19	Very Good
3	2.60-3.39	Good
2	1.80-2.59	Fair
1	1.0-1.79	Poor

The tool is a 5-point Likert scale with five response options ranging from “Excellent” (five points). “Very Good” (four points), “Good” (three points), “Fair” (two points) and “Poor” (one point). Table 1 shows the verbal interpretation of the scale used in the study.

### **Reliability Procedures**

After establishing the validity of the instruments, reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha Statistics was conducted. An alpha within the range of 0.70-0.95 was accepted as satisfactory for internal consistency (Polit & Beck, 2014).

The CNPI-Nurse, Nurse Cultural Competence Scale and the Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutic Scale underwent a reliability test to ensure its applicability for use in the Philippine setting. Results showed that the CNPI-Nurse, Nurse Cultural Competence Scale and the Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutic Scale has an alpha coefficient of 0.731, 0.986 and 0.962 respectively which satisfies the acceptable range.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

In order to gather the necessary information, the researchers sought permission to conduct the study among staff nurses from the hospital administrators and chief nurses in eleven (11) Level 3 Hospitals in Manila. Also, a letter was sent to the original author of the instrument to ask for their consent to use the tool.

Then, the researcher asked permission for willing participants that fits in the inclusion criteria set. The purpose of the study was then explained to the participants. Then, the Nurse Cultural Competence Scale, Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutic Scale and Caring Nurse Patient Interaction Scale CNPI-Nurse Scale was administered to all nurses assigned in different shifts at the medical and surgical ward. The participants were not under any time pressure while answering the questionnaires and the researchers were present to answer questions or to make clarifications. The collection of data lasted for a week in each hospital.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

This research study utilized five (5) statistical treatments which included frequency, percentage and weighted mean to determine the level of spiritual and cultural competencies as well as the caring behaviors of nurses. Standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the data. Finally, univariate linear regression was used to determine the influence of the spiritual and cultural competencies to the caring behaviors of Filipino nurses.

## Results

**Table 1.**

*Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 124)*

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean (SD)
<b>Age (Years)</b>			29.37 ( $\pm 6.94$ )
<b>Sex</b>			
<i>Male</i>	24	19.35%	
<i>Female</i>	100	80.65%	
<b>Length of Service (Years)</b>			4.55 ( $\pm 5.91$ )

Table 1 illustrates the demographic profile of the respondents. It can be noted that the mean age of the respondents was 29.37 years old ( $\pm 6.94$ ). In addition, majority of the respondents were female (80.65%). It is also noted that the mean length of service was 4.55 years ( $\pm 5.91$ ).

**Table 2.**

*Descriptive Statistics of Spiritual Care Competency, Cultural Care Competency, and Caring Behaviors among the Respondents (n = 124)*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation <sup>a</sup>
<b>Spiritual Care Competency</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b><math>\pm 0.82</math></b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Cultural Care Competency</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b><math>\pm 0.92</math></b>	<b>Good</b>
<i>Cultural Skills</i>	3.26	$\pm 0.85$	Good
<i>Cultural Knowledge</i>	3.22	$\pm 0.90$	Good
<i>Cultural Sensitivity</i>	3.23	$\pm 0.98$	Good
<b>Caring Behaviors</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b><math>\pm 0.53</math></b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<i>Clinical Care</i>	4.37	$\pm 0.50$	Excellent
<i>Relational Care</i>	3.89	$\pm 0.72$	Very Good
<i>Humanistic Care</i>	4.16	$\pm 0.64$	Very Good
<i>Comforting Care</i>	4.48	$\pm 0.59$	Excellent

<sup>a</sup>**Legend:** Poor = 1.00 to 1.79 Fair = 1.80 to 2.59 Good = 2.60 to 3.39

Very Good = 3.40 to 4.19 Excellent = 4.20 to 5.00

As presented in Table 2, the mean spiritual care competency score was 3.33 ( $\pm 0.82$ ), which can be interpreted as a good level of competence. Similarly, results showed that the overall mean cultural care competency score and the mean cultural skills, mean cultural knowledge, and mean cultural sensitivity scores were between 3.22 and 3.26, denoting that these were of good level. Results also showed that the overall mean caring behavior score was 4.20 ( $\pm 0.53$ ), interpreted as excellent. The same findings can be noted for 2 of its subscales – clinical care and comforting care. However, both relational and humanistic care dimensions had mean scores of 3.89 ( $\pm 0.72$ ) and 4.16 ( $\pm 0.64$ ), respectively, interpreted as very good.

**Table 3.**

*Univariate Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence Spiritual Care Competency and Cultural Care Competency on the Clinical Care Dimension of Caring Behaviors among Respondents (n = 124)*

Predictors		Clinical Care Dimension (Caring Behaviors)			
		Standardized Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value (two-tailed)	R <sup>2</sup>
Spiritual Competency	Care	0.18*	0.05	0.050	0.031
Cultural Competency	Care				
	<i>Cultural Skills</i>	0.05	0.05	0.572	0.001
	<i>Cultural Knowledge</i>	0.04	0.05	0.692	0.001
	<i>Cultural Sensitivity</i>	0.04	0.05	0.697	0.001

\*Significant at 0.05

†Significant at 0.01

The linear regression analysis for the influence spiritual care competency and cultural care competency on the clinical care dimension of caring behaviors is presented in Table 3. As shown above spiritual care competency significantly influenced clinical care ( $\beta=0.18$ ,  $p=0.050$ ), denoting that for every 1-unit increase in spiritual care competency, clinical care score increases by 0.18-unit. It is also notable that spiritual

care competency measured approximately 3.10% of the total variance of clinical care.

**Table 4.**

*Univariate Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence Spiritual Care Competency and Cultural Care Competency on the Relational Care Dimension of Caring Behaviors among Respondents (N = 124)*

Predictors	Relational Care Dimension (Caring Behaviors)			
	Standardized Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value (two-tailed)	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Spiritual Care Competency</b>	0.29 <sup>†</sup>	0.08	0.001	0.086
<b>Cultural Care Competency</b>				
<i>Cultural Skills</i>	0.05	0.07	0.575	0.003
<i>Cultural Knowledge</i>	0.10	0.07	0.291	0.009
<i>Cultural Sensitivity</i>	0.10	0.07	0.284	0.009

\*Significant at 0.05

<sup>†</sup>Significant at 0.01

On the other hand, the three dimensions of cultural care competency, specifically cultural skills ( $\beta=0.05$ ,  $p=0.572$ ), cultural knowledge ( $\beta=0.04$ ,  $p=0.692$ ), and cultural sensitivity ( $\beta=0.04$ ,  $p=0.697$ ) did not significantly influence the clinical care domain of caring behaviors.

Table 4 illustrates the univariate linear regression analyses for the influence of spiritual and cultural care competencies on the relational care dimension of caring behaviors. As gleaned from the table spiritual care competency significantly predicted relational care ( $\beta=0.29$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). This result indicated that for every 1-unit increase in spiritual care competency, relational care score increases by 0.29-unit. Interestingly, spiritual care competency accounted 8.60% of the total variance of relational care. Results also showed that cultural skills ( $\beta=0.05$ ,  $p=0.575$ ), cultural knowledge ( $\beta=0.10$ ,  $p=0.291$ ), and cultural sensitivity ( $\beta=0.10$ ,  $p=0.284$ ) did not significantly predict the relational caring dimension of caring behaviors.

**Table 5.**

*Univariate Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence Spiritual Care Competency and Cultural Care Competency on the Humanistic Care Dimension of Caring Behaviors among Respondents (N = 124)*

Predictors	Humanistic Care Dimension (Caring Behaviors)			
	Standardized Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>p</i> -value (two-tailed)	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Spiritual Care Competency</b>	0.28 <sup>†</sup>	0.07	0.002	0.078
<b>Cultural Care Competency</b>				
<i>Cultural Skills</i>	0.04	0.06	0.635	0.002
<i>Cultural Knowledge</i>	0.06	0.06	0.529	0.003
<i>Cultural Sensitivity</i>	0.05	0.06	0.550	0.003

\*Significant at 0.05

<sup>†</sup>Significant at 0.01

The univariate linear regression analyses for the influence of spiritual and cultural care competencies on the humanistic care dimension of caring behaviors is depicted in Table 5. As presented, spiritual care competency significantly influenced humanistic caring, with a standard regression coefficient of 0.28 and a computed *p*-value of 0.002. This result indicates that for every 1-unit increase in spiritual care competency, the humanistic caring score increases by 0.28-unit. Moreover, the computed R<sup>2</sup> is 0.078 meant that spiritual care competency measured 7.80% of the total variance of humanistic caring. However, results also showed that none of the dimensions of cultural care competency significantly predicted humanistic caring behaviors

**Table 6.**

*Univariate Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence Spiritual Care Competency and Cultural Care Competency on the Comforting Care Dimension of Caring Behaviors among Respondents (N = 124)*

Predictors		Comforting Care Dimension (Caring Behaviors)			
		Standardized Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value (two-tailed)	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Spiritual Competency</b>	<b>Care</b>	0.28 <sup>†</sup>	0.06	0.002	0.078
<b>Cultural Competency</b>	<b>Care</b>				
	<i>Cultural Skills</i>	0.07	0.06	0.472	0.004
	<i>Cultural Knowledge</i>	0.09	0.06	0.318	0.008
	<i>Cultural Sensitivity</i>	0.03	0.05	0.753	0.001

\*Significant at 0.05

†Significant at 0.01

Table 6 illustrates the univariate linear regression analyses of the influence of spiritual care competency and cultural care competency on the comforting care dimension of caring behaviors. As presented, spiritual care competency significantly influenced comforting care ( $\beta=0.28$ ,  $p=0.002$ ), denoting a 0.28-unit increase in comforting care score for every 1-unit increase in spiritual care competency values. In addition, spiritual care competency measured 7.80% of the total variance of comforting care. As presented in the table, cultural skills ( $\beta=0.07$ ,  $p=0.472$ ), cultural knowledge ( $\beta=0.09$ ,  $p=0.318$ ), and cultural sensitivity ( $\beta=0.03$ ,  $p=0.753$ ) did not significantly influence comforting care.

## Discussion

Caring plays a vital component in the role of nurses as it provides a guiding framework in the practice of nursing. It involves a holistic approach to reach optimal level of care to patients. Hence, it is important to understand the factors that influence caring among nurses.

Studies have revealed that nurses who have a high level of understanding of spirituality provides spiritual care to their patients (Wong, Lee, L. & Lee, J., 2008; Musa, 2017; Mamier, Taylor & Winslow,

2018). In the study, Filipino nurses were shown to have a good level of spiritual care ( $3.33 \pm 0.82$ ). Filipinos are known to be spiritual and religious which was primarily influenced by 300 years of Spanish colonial rule, this is the reason why Filipino nurses consider the spiritual care as an essential part of integrated care. Also, Yilmaz and Okyay (2009) stated that nurses viewed spirituality as a part of the integrated care. In addition, the study of Hellman, Williams and Hurley (2015) found that 80% of nurses asserted that they could attend to patients' spirituality while taking care of their physical needs, however, they were uncertain about their ability to produce an oral or written report. According to the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN) one of the responsibilities of nursing education is to prepare nurses to identify spiritual distress and to provide spiritual care (Meyer, 2003). However, McSherry and Jamieson (2011) concluded that there is a low percentage of nurses who were equipped to provide spiritual care. In another study, McSherry (2006) stated that the concept of spirituality is poorly understood and inappropriately defined to the extent that nurses do not consider spiritual care as part of their responsibility.

Another factor that should be considered is cultural competence. According to Saha, Beach and Cooper (2008), cultural competence has been identified as the essential capacity to provide quality and effective healthcare to clients. The cultural competence of nurses is an important index to measure the overall medical service quality of hospitals and was shown to have significant associations with patient satisfaction and patient trust, thus, fostering the cultural competence of nurses is crucial for increasing satisfaction in patients' medical experience (Tang et al., 2018). However, the study of Lin, We and Hsu (2019) revealed that nurses were unprepared when encountering different cultures. Also, certain studies have shown that nurses have a high level of cultural awareness but has a low to moderate level of cultural competency (Kawashima, 2008; Bunjitpimol, Somrongtong & Kumar, 2016; de Beer & Chipps, 2014). In the study, Filipino nurses were found to have a good level of competency with a mean rating of 3.24 ( $\pm 0.92$ ) which showed that nurses are equipped with necessary skills to provide culturally sensitive care to patients. The Philippines has a very diverse culture, having been influenced by several countries including China, United States and Japan and is evident in various practices of the Filipinos. In addition, living in an environment with culturally diverse people, and experience in caring for patients from diverse cultures and special population groups were shown to be predictors of cultural competence (Cruz, Estacio, Bagtang & Colet, 2016).

In another aspect of holistic care, Filipinos nurses have an excellent level of caring behaviors, with comforting care as the highest, followed by clinical care, humanistic care and relational care. The concept of caring has been embedded in the curriculum of nursing, thus, caring has been a common language and innate to all nurses. The findings were supported by the study of Calong Calong and Soriano (2018) among Filipino nurses. They further concluded that caring behaviors has a significant relationship with patient satisfaction. Kuan (1993) stated that caring for Filipinos is more than kindness because ideal caring is a total gift of self to others done with the best of one's ability together with love and devotion without expecting anything in return.

It was found in the study that cultural competency has no significant influence to caring behaviors of nurses. On the other hand, spiritual competency significantly influences caring behaviors. Atashzadeh-Shoorideh, Abdoljabbari, Karamkhani, Shokri Khubestani, and Pishgooie (2017) stated that caring behaviors and spiritual health are related to each other. Furthermore, spirituality was shown to have significant relationship with caring behaviors (Bakar, 2017; Priambodo, 2014). Hence, developing an understanding of spirituality could lead to provision of spiritual care to patients and may influence the caring behaviors of nurses.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, spiritual competencies showed a significant influence in the caring behaviors of nurses, however, no significant influence was noted between the cultural competencies and caring behaviors of nurses.

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# **Restoring the Sanctity and Dignity of Life Among Low-Risk Drug User Surrenderers**

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## **Abstract**

The proponents of this research developed their interests to look into every good points a community-based relapse prevention program being implemented by a particular local community among low-risk drug-users surrenderers. This included appreciating the design of the program and how it impacted the participants and the community of Barangay Salapan, San Juan City. All these being viewed from the underlying principles of restorative justice, in the pursuit of describing how the sanctity and dignity of human life is being restored using the five stages of appreciative inquiry as method of analysis. The rehabilitation program being implemented by the local community and supported by the local government provided a silver lining for the victims of the prohibited drugs. Initially, it helped redeem their lost personal sense of dignity, social respect and acceptance, and become a productive and significant individual members of their particular families and their beloved community. It was emphasized that the restoration of the sanctity and dignity of life demands greater openness, volunteerism, respect sincerity and discipline from each of the persons involved in the rehabilitation program. It was noted also that all the sectors of the local community should be united and unselfishly support the program regardless of political color or affiliation, religious background, economic interests and social biases, so that the sacredness and dignity of life which is very primal as a value will be constructively attained.

**Keywords:** Sanctity and dignity of life, Drug Rehabilitation Program, Appreciative Inquiry, low-risk drug-users, Restorative Justice

## Introduction

There has been a heightened appreciation of the sanctity and dignity of human life in the past decades. With the advent of so many developments in the areas of science and technology, and new discourses in philosophy, anthropology, law and politics, the sacredness of human life and its inherent value of dignity became hot issues of fierce debates. This is even true in the Catholic Church. For many decades now, the Church has taken the issue of the sacredness and dignity of human life as one of the most significant current topic of theological, philosophical, anthropological, and moral discourses. In fact, a lot of Catholic social teachings were written to clarify and provide the faithful an official teaching on these issues. The Catholic Church proclaimed that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is considered to be as the foundation of all the principles of Catholic social teachings.

In our modern society, the sanctity and dignity of human life has been under direct attack and being threatened by various issues like abortion, euthanasia, war and terrorism, cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty (USSCB, 2018). And more recently, according to Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si*, new forms of social aggression has risen. These are illegal drug trafficking and the growing illegal drug use by young people (2015, #46). His Holiness exclaimed that all these destroy the quality of life and society. This in turn, is an expression of disrespect and rejection of the sanctity and dignity of human life. Looking at the world today, illegal drugs indeed has now become a social menace, a symbol of social decline and a rupture in the sacredness of life and its intrinsic value of dignity. The abuse of illegal drugs has marred the sanctity and dignity of its users. It hinders them from using their freedom and making rational choices for self-actualization as well as enjoying the fullness of life. Worst is, this social problem has cost lives, destroyed trust among families and relationships in the community, and has also threatened cohesion in society.

In the Philippines alone, the incumbent government in its assumption to office in July 2016, reported that there are 1.8 million current drug users in the country while 4.8 million have used drugs at least once in their lives. As immediate response, the national government launched its anti-drug campaign called *Oplan Tok-Hang*, where the authorities visited and knocked on the doors of suspected illegal drug users/dealers to check on them, to make an appeal for them to stop their use and selling of illegal drugs, and counsel them to change their ways. The Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Philippine Drug

Enforcement Agency (PDEA) has reported that so far, there have been 1,308,708 who have voluntarily surrendered and professed their willingness to undergo a rehabilitation program. Notwithstanding, there have been 3,200 drug personalities who have been killed in police-led anti-drug operations, excluding those killed by vigilantes or other entities. This bloody outcome had caused the government's effort to eradicate the illegal drugs problem in the country under closed scrutiny from local and international human rights advocates.

In order to help the national government on its anti-illegal drugs campaign, local government units (LGUs) have been mandated to participate in *Oplan Sagip* as initiated by the Dangerous Drug Board (DDB). The LGUs, through Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC), has developed a community-based treatment and rehabilitation services and interventions for the surrenderers under its low-risk category. DDB statistics shows that the low-risk category or mild substance use disorder comprise 90% of the surrenderers. After assessment and evaluation of the surrenderers, those under its low risk category are sent back to their respective communities and instructed to attend the community-based rehabilitation program and will then be monitored of their progress. This kind of intervention on the part of low-risk drug-users surrenderers of which the local community has participation seems to be very appealing and easy to accept by many civic organizations and religious groups locally and abroad. Something that has not yet been publicized by mainstream media. Nonetheless, this kind of intervention somewhat jibes with the findings of recent studies showing that the stakeholders of the local community, primarily the basic cell of the society – whether it be the family-, the extended family, significant others, friends and neighbors, have great contributions to the behavior and decisions of the drug user. More to this, they are also the ones who are gravely affected by the behavioral consequences of the drug-user. Thus, it is but essential to involve the stakeholders in restoring the dignity of life and freedom of the drug-user surrenderers which can start with mending trust and healing relationships in the family and in the community (Caday, F., 2017; Yip, P., et al, 2011). In reality, the *Oplan Sagip* program shares with this contention.

It has been almost two years now a community-based rehabilitation program was implemented by several local government units through their respective barangays. It is in this juncture that the proponents of this research developed their interest to look into the program, the effects it had with its attendees, and appreciate every good points the program as a whole had impacted to the low-risk drug-user surrenderers and its entire immediate community. All these being viewed

from the perspective of Restorative Justice as the pursuit of restoring the sanctity and dignity of human life using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach.

The proponents of this research would like to answer the basic question, “*What are the practices initiated by the local community in order to help restore the sanctity of human life and its intrinsic value of dignity among low-risk drug-users surrenderers?*” Specifically, the researchers aim to: Determine the specific causes that have led people into becoming low-risk drug users and the psycho-social and spiritual effects that they have experienced and consequently desecrated their lives and disrespected their dignity as a person within their community; discern the mutual vision of the local barangay and its low-risk drug user surrenderers in implementing and undergoing a community-based treatment and rehabilitation services and interventions; and assess their recommendable restorative practices of the community-based treatment and rehabilitation services and interventions program being implemented for low-risk drug user surrenders through Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach.

Every human person shares in the sanctity of life. Each are endowed with human dignity that makes one’s life worthy of respect and protection. And now due to many factors that threaten the sacredness and dignity of human life, this issue had become more and more a hot interest expressed in various forms by many people, whether they be in civic and religious organizations, and even across disciplines and cultures. These following are some of them:

### **On the sanctity and dignity of human life**

The Sacred Scriptures provide us the fundamental references for philosophical, theological, moral, and spiritual discourses on human life. The first reference, as God has said, “*Let us make man in our image, to our likeness’...So God created man in his image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them* (Genesis 1:26-27).” underscores the very idea that human life is sacred and fashioned in the sacred image and likeness of God. This concept of the sacredness of human life is reinforced in details by the biblical imagery that says, *Then Yahweh God formed man, dust drawn from the clay, and breathed into his nostrils a breath of life and man became alive with breath* (Genesis 2:7). This biblical reference serves as the foundational principle of every important teachings contained in all Catholic social teaching documents.

St. John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter, *Evangelium Vitae*, published in 1995, declares what human life on earth is. He pointed out that “... life on earth is not an ‘ultimate’ but a ‘penultimate’ reality; even

so, it remains a sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility and brought to perfection in love and in the gift of ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters” (# 2). This insinuates the idea that each one is called to live a sacred life which is a divine gift, close to God and His sacred people. In a general sense, the document was written to reiterate the view of the Roman Catholic Church on the value of life and to warn against violating the sanctity of life.

Other magisterial documents either explicitly or implicitly discuss the sanctity and dignity of human life:

The post-synodal apostolic exhortation of St. John Paul II signed in Rome on December 30, 1988, *Christifideles Laici (Christ's Faithful People)*, also recognizes the sacredness of the human person. It says, “But the sacredness of the human person cannot be obliterated, no matter how often it is devalued and violated because it has its unshakable foundation in God as Creator and Father. The sacredness of the person always keeps returning, again and again” (CL 5).

*Donum Vitae (The Gift of Life)*, is a document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that offers specific replies to common questions about the Catholic Church's position on the dignity of human life. It was composed in 1987 by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger prior to his election as Pope Benedict XVI. One finds in this document a declaration regarding the sacredness of human life. It states that,

“... human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves ‘the creative action of God’ and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being (DV Intro 5).”

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith's Declaration *Jura et bona* (1980) expresses a strong statement that says life is sacred and a gift of God's love: “*Most people regard life as something sacred and hold that no one may dispose of it at will, but believers see in life something greater, namely, a gift of God's love*” (JEB # 1).

*Mater et Magistra*, the encyclical written by Pope John XXIII on the topic of "Christianity and Social Progress" and was promulgated in 1961, asserts that “*human life is a sacred reality because from its inception it reveals the creating hand of God*” (# 194). He insinuates, in this encyclical, the necessity to work towards authentic community in order to promote human dignity.

**On restorative justice and rehabilitation of drug users**

An article written by Amanda Ploch in 2012, *Why Dignity Matters*, says that human dignity provides an informative perspective from which to analyze the right of offenders to rehabilitation. If human dignity is firmly embraced as a foundational concept, then this can pave the way for a right to rehabilitation. Those wishing to encourage expansion of rehabilitative services for offenders should use the concept of human dignity in their efforts, as human dignity not only provides support for a right to rehabilitation, but further does this in a beneficial way than the other justifications for rehabilitation. The legal system should not lose sight of the powerful potential that human dignity has in ensuring respect for the rights of a vulnerable group.

Sandu, A. and Damian, S. (2012), in their literature entitled *Applying Appreciative Inquiry Principles in the Restorative Justice Field*, connects the issue on human dignity with the principle of restorative justice. They said, the concept of human dignity is supported by Restorative Justice whose philosophy creates an alternative justice that restores the communal condition before the commission of the crime. According to them, restorative justice works in solving the crime-created conflict by focusing with equal interest in assisting victims in repairing the damage caused by them. They added, the offender also must be helped to understand, accept and fulfill his obligations towards the victim and the community. Restorative justice implementation encourages collaboration between parties, victim restoration, and offender reintegration.

The United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) in 2004, reported the idea of reintegration of offenders especially in the rehabilitation of drug-users. This became known as a therapeutic community model which is a community-based treatment for drug abusers that originated in Synanon, Santa Monica, California in 1958. It was gradually recognized by the public institutions as offering hope for those in recovery from drug addiction. The programme is designed to enable the participants to recover their physical and mental health and be able to function properly in society through the interaction of the community members. In the process of attaining this ultimate goal, the modification of negative thinking, emotion and behavior is achieved by the use of self-examine, group truth-telling sessions, confrontation, various games and activities.

### **On a community-based rehabilitation literature**

Mazo, G.N. (2017), In his article “*Transformational Rehabilitation: Community-Based Intervention to End the Drug Menace*,” published in the International Journal of Research – Granthaalayah, explores how a community-based transformational rehabilitation plan in Tanauan, Leyte, was crafted by the stakeholders to heal and restore the self-worth of the 396 surrenderers. The general objective was to enable the participant to understand the process of healing and recovery from their old lifestyles and embrace the new life of moral recovery. He exposes in the article that the act of volunteering for the transformational rehabilitation program shows an eagerness of surrenderers to renew their lives. The program is said to be effective based on the feedback from the surrenderers and their families because it really addressed the inner core of their problems. The holistic approach and gradual realization from the self, to the family and to the community made them truly commit to mend their ways.

Cooperrider, D. and Whitney, D., (2005), in their research entitled “*A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry Case*,” emphasizes that when everybody is respected, valued and given worth, people, groups, communities respond in a more constructive, positive, life-affirming ways, even spiritually. Human relationships flourish “*where there is appreciative eye – when people see the best in one another, when they share their dreams and ultimate concerns in affirming ways, and when they are connected in full voice to create not just new worlds but better worlds. Perhaps our inquiry must become the positive revolution we want to see in the world.*”

A lot may have been written about the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church on the sanctity and dignity of human life, including the many factors that threaten and can destroy it, and the possible interventions that may restore it through the years. But still, very few literatures (if not, none at all) tackle the issue on the restoration of the sacredness of human life and its intrinsic value of dignity as a subject matter. By considering, inquiring into and analyzing a community-based rehabilitation program given to low-risk drug user surrenderers in the country can such be appreciated. This brings to us the uniqueness of this research and its contribution to the academe and the society at large.

## Conceptual Model and Operational Framework

The Judeo-Christian tradition has been very loud with its basic and yet very important teaching on the restoration of the sanctity of human life and its inherent value of dignity. The Book of Genesis first yielded to us the foundational principle of this important teaching when the sacred human writers pronounced the edifying statements, “*Let us make man in our image, to our likeness,*” (Gene. 1:26) and “*Then Yahweh God formed man, dust drawn from the clay, and breathed into his nostrils a breath of life and man became alive with breath*” (Genesis 2:7). The principle on the sanctity and dignity of human life may have been forgotten for a while because of the concept of the original sin, introduced through the disobedience of the first humans to God’s instructions, but nonetheless still gives much importance by God and His people, the Judeo-Christians. As it was vividly insinuated in the sacred writings about the exploits of certain individuals and their tribes guided meticulously by the covenantal love of the Divine Creator. The sanctity of life and human dignity finally found its way to full restoration through the sacrificial death on the cross by the Son of God the Father, Jesus of Nazareth.

The sanctity of human life and its dignity cannot be taken away from every person, but it can be threatened and damaged severely by certain individuals, institutions, organizations of people that enjoy unbridled power, driven by pride and selfish intentions, and blinded by fame and wealth. That is why the Catholic Church never wasted time forming the conscience of the faithful and the world, and keeps reminding them about the noblest principle of restoring the sacredness of life and human dignity. Now, it has become part of the Church’s duties and obligations within itself and in the world that is, becoming a responsible steward of human life. This is openly expressed as teachings without reservations in several catholic social documents. Catholic Social Teachings are social principles and moral teachings of the Church in protecting the sanctity of human life and dignity and promoting social justice. These teachings have been issued through papal, conciliar, and other official Church documents since the late 19th century.

The Catholic social teaching themes (Himes, 2001) that have arisen from the basic principles of the sanctity and dignity of human life, and are deemed essential for this research are as follows:

***Call to Family, Community, and Participation.*** For the family is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened as it is the foundation of coexistence and a remedy against social fragmentation; Another is the way a community organizes its economics and politics, laws and policies, directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community; In as much as the community, there are also its people. People should be shapers of history, not just passive recipients of other people's decisions.

***Rights and Responsibilities.*** Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met – to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

***The Principle of Solidarity.*** Humanity belongs to one human family whatever our nationality is, our race, ethnicity, economic standing, and ideological differences. Family and community are called to solidarity in their right and duty to participate in shaping a more just and humane society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially, restoring the dignity of the drug-user surrenderers.

***The Principle of Common Good.*** This concept of the common good is the moral formula of the greatest good for all, including the poor, the weak, the vulnerable, the 'menace' or offenders, simply on the basis that they are human beings and are, therefore, with inherent worth.

Another essential principle that this research hinges on is the principle of *Restorative Justice* (RJ) (Mikulich, 2012). The ideals of RJ is founded also on the principles of the CST. It offers alternative criminal justice practices that emphasize on repairing the harm done by unjust behavior. It addresses three problems of the traditional system:

- Negligence of the hurts and needs of victims. RJ calls for genuine justice that includes healing of the victims' dignity.
- Does not call offenders to account, the system encourages defendants to plead not guilty. RJ invokes that the common good emphasizes 'punishment' is not only to defend public order and safety but should be a complete process of rehabilitation for the offender – (i.e. taking responsibility, making amends, and reintegrating into the community.). CST's rights and responsibilities mean that offenders must be held accountable without violating his or her basic rights.

- Negligence of the needs of the broader community. CST and RJ both stresses that the common good considers the needs of the victims, the accountability of the offenders, and the need to repair and restore relationships within the entire community. RJ roots on biblical shalom, “peace”, which involves God’s “unifying love” that saves and redeems all relationships.

CST and RJ share are underlying paradigms of building a more just and humane society. They are complementary frameworks that, when combined, create a powerful lens for examining and articulating interpretations about the restoration of the value of human life and dignity.

The entire research will be guided by this operational framework:

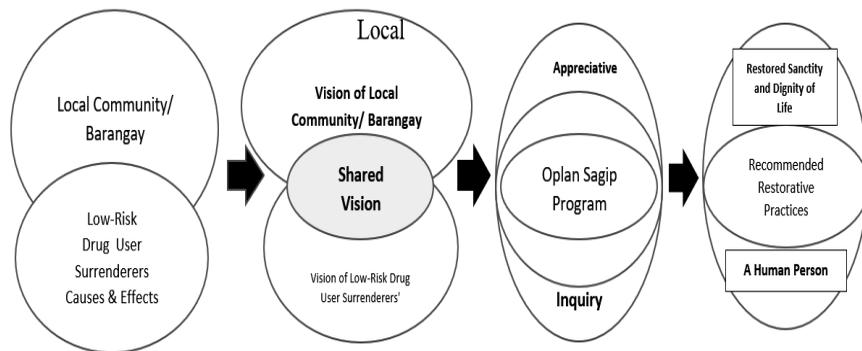


Figure 1. Operational Framework

## Methodology

This research was descriptive in nature with the help of simple Appreciative Inquiry Approach applied on the implemented community-based rehabilitation and interventions program as experienced by the low-risk drug user surrenderers of a local community or barangay and some significant persons involved. In securing the data necessary for this research, the proponents used dual approaches: survey (interview) and archival. The respondents for this research were low-risk drug user surrenderers and other participants of KKDK in Barangay Salapan, San Juan City. The researchers were helped in choosing the said barangay,

their low-risk drug user surrenderers, and other participants of the local KKDK and by one of the friends of the researchers.

The concerned barangay was presented with a letter of request to conduct an interview about its community-based rehab and intervention program being implemented with some of the locals (low-risk drug user surrenderers with their relatives or friends). Before the personal interview was conducted, the identified respondents were informed about the nature of this research. Their consent to take part in it and the possibility of its publication was asked from them. The researchers also honored the right of the respondents to remain anonymous if in case they would like their identity protected. Each respondent was designated with a certain code to hide his or her identity. The researchers also followed the ethical guidelines of the Barangay Anti-Drug Addiction Council (BADAC) in dealing with, and handling their subjects with their corresponding data. The researchers observed the security guidelines of the Barangay Anti-Drug Addiction Council (BADAC) regarding safety measures of the subject and the researchers. The researchers requested the local officials if it is alright to conduct the interviews in an available room or hall in their barangay hall.

Upon identifying the prospective respondents for this research, they were subjected to individual or group-recorded interviews. If in case the data shared were unclear, the researchers would then validate them by asking clarificatory remarks. Then the recorded data were translated into lucid written form for analysis using Appreciative Inquiry Method.

The research is qualitative-descriptive. For the analysis, the Appreciative Inquiry Analysis framework was used. The shared experiences of the respondents were subjected to simple system of Appreciative Inquiry Analysis. There were keen identification of all positive and beneficial practices from the community-based rehab and intervention program as implemented by the local community or barangay, as experienced and shared by the low-risk drug user surrenderers themselves and as observed by their relatives and friends. Gathered data were analyzed and grouped according to themes then patterns examined and organized. From these, restorative practices were reacted upon(?) and feasible activities were suggested to make better their program for restoring the sanctity and dignity of life of the surrenderers.

## **Results and Discussion**

The narratives of the respondents-participants of this research were analyzed through the five D stages of the appreciative inquiry, define, discover, dream, design, and delivery. Accordingly, Appreciative

Inquiry is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms (Cooperrider, & Whitney, 2005). For this research, the implicit intention is to provide a third party non-participant objective evaluation of the researchers on how the sanctity and dignity of life of the low-risk drug-users surrenderers in Barangay Salapan, San Juan City was restored. This was made possible through considering the intervention initiated by the local community led by the barangay officials in coordination with the city authorities especially the office of the Vice-Mayor.

### **Definition Stage**

A new addition to the four classic stages of Appreciative Inquiry's Method of analysis. This concerns clarifying on what the researchers are to inquire into and learn more about.

In this study, the researchers gave focus on the core value of restoration of the sanctity and dignity of life. This positive value is to be appreciated from the very life experiences of the low-risk drug-users surrenderers in Barangay Salapan, San Juan City, who participated in the "Katatagan Kontra Droga sa Komunidad" (KKDK), a community-based relapse prevention program implemented by the barangay in coordination with the City of San Juan. There were actually an estimate of more than three hundred surrenderers in the watch list of the said barangay. One hundred forty of them were enrolled in KKDK. Low-risk drug users are assessed by the Anti-Drug Abuse Council (ADAC) of the local government that uses the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) that was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Once referred by the concerned ADAC, they undergo intervention through the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Campaign (BADAC). The researchers managed to meet and interview several graduates of the intervention, their relatives and friends, and local officials including the facilitator of the KKDK program.

## Discovery Stage

This stage peculiarly cites the best experiences of the people with the program, the things they deeply most value, the core, life-giving factors in their experiences, and even what they hope for in the future.

Upon scrutinizing all the narratives from the people who got involved in the KKDK program in Barangay Salapan, several themes had surfaced as positive experiences. The following statements, *gusto ko ng magbagong buhay, gusto ko at kaya kong magbago, namulat sa katotohanan na hindi kaya magbagong mag-isa, napapanahon na siguro at nagsawa na rin ako sa ganung systema, para mabago ang takbo ng aking buhay, magbago para sa security*, expressed one of the most glaring realizations that they ever had while undergoing the rehabilitation program, the need for change in their lives. It was a moral and personal decision for most of them to change their lives, from the fact that they voluntarily surrendered and undergo the rehabilitation, as they consistently exclaimed, *wala po, ako mismo ang kusang loob na may gusto para mapatunayan sa kanila na nagbago na ako*. In a way, this was an open admission that they have committed mistakes in life and that they would like to these. The best experience considered was also their appreciation of the importance of other people's help to achieve the much needed change in their lives. This was insinuated by their remarks, *barangay na ang humikayat sa amin, dahil sa programa ng gobyerno, nasa watchlist na kasi*. It was a best experience for them that their local community slowly started to accept them as a person and an important member of their own family and community. This social acceptance was well-expressed from these statements: *tinanggap na ako muli ng aking kabarangay. gumanda ang takbo at pagsasama ng pamilya, nag-uuusap-usap na, nagkaroon ng komunikasyon, naging close kami ng pamilya ko*. The issue on social acceptance was further emphasized through the trust issues that the surrenderers had experienced when they were given jobs by the local community and even city authorities. They said, *yung ibang surrenderees nagwowork na as a traffic management, sila nagko-control ng traffic, yung iba naman nasa city engineering, tumutulong sa pag-ano, binigyan ako ng trabaho ng minamahal naming vice mayor, nagkatrabaho ako at nabigyan ng kita*. Actually, this was not only a social issue for them but something economic as well. This added a conviction to really pursue a change in their lives. From all of these positive experiences, they are now experiencing peace and security, as they say, *nabigyan ako ng pagkakataon o chance na makapagtrabaho at ayusin ang buhay ko at maibalik unti-unti ang dati kong pagkatao, nakakagalaw ng walang alinlangan, walang takot na nakakalabas ng bahay, nasusuportahan at napoprotektahan ang aming buhay*. Most

importantly, from what they have experienced, they have rediscovered the value of one's life.

### **Dream Stage**

The creation of a dream that is anchored in the life-experiences that they have had is what this stage is all about. By using the findings and stories from the discovery stage there will be an articulation of a compelling, memorable and ambitious picture of their desired future. Deviating a little from the traditional nature of this particular stage where the participants of the program are the ones articulating their envisioned dreams, for this study, the proponents of this research are the ones articulating their envisioned dreams. This will be done by digging deeper on the narratives of the participants of the program, where the dreams are possibly hidden. This is a sort of innovation on the Appreciative Inquiry Method of Analysis.

What can we draw upon from the positive experiences of the participants of KKDK program? Revisiting the transcribed narratives. What seemed to be the envisioned future of the participants was basically the restoration of what used to be the quality of life enjoyed most especially by the surrenderers-participants of the community-based relapse prevention program implemented by the barangay Salapan in the City of San Juan. Their quality of life before they were tagged as low-risk drug-users. A life that is living freely but responsible at the same time, healthy-living, living peacefully, being socially accepted, active and committed to be significant member of their own families and their barangay. A life that values the sacredness and dignity of life. An aspiration that will not remain as a dream permanently, but, is slowly being embraced and experienced by the surrenderers themselves as they remain and continue taking the KKDK program initiated by the local community.

**Table 1.***Best practices of the program based from the narratives of the people*

<b>Best practices of the program based from the narratives of the people</b>	<b>Significant values</b>
<i>barangay na ang humikayat sa amin, dahil sa programa ng gobyerno..from Ateneo kasi galing yung modules namin</i>	Collaborative initiative of the Community, learning institution, and the government
<i>yung programa kasi namin hindi sya yung pinupush na, 'ikaw, magbago ka', yung pinapataas namin yung self-confidence nila na kaya nilang magbago... kumbaga, ang nakita namin dun, lumakas ang pananaw nila sa sarili nila, 'na ako kaya kong magbago'...</i>	Rebuilding self-confidence Positive self-concept Commitment to change
<i>na-explain sa kanya na hindi iha-harass yung mga kliyente, kakausapin ng maayos, kakausapin na parang kaibigan</i>	Proper, friendly, and non-coercive orientation
<i>kaya yung module namin ay once a week lang sya kasi yung iba talaga may trabaho, hindi sa public, may private work...</i>	Client availability considerate and modular program
<i>pinapipili naman sila maam, kung umaga, tanghali o hapon... Tuesday, Thursday at Friday...15 weeks... tuloy-tuloy talaga maam, kasi kahit graduate na sila, minomonitor pa rin sila... kasi long-term process po yung pagbabago... sa isang buwan, siguro tatlong beses sa isang buwan...random drug tes...kina-counseling po yan maam... ipapatawag, tapos ang kumakausap na po dyan ay yung mismong psychologist...</i>	Long term process of monitoring, Physical and psychological intervention
<i>tapos, after naman nung program, inooffer naman kung gusto nyong magwork dito?</i>	Economic support
<i>well, yung ibang surrenderees nagwowork na as a traffic management, sila nagko-control ng traffic, yung iba naman nasa city engineering, tumutulong sa pag-ano... so, more on livelihood yung epekto kayalang hindi lahat kasi...</i>	
<i>kasi yung module nyan more on family eh at tsaka yung spiritual nyan kaya ...Katatagan Kontra Droga (KKDK)</i>	Familial, and spiritual formation
<i>Tinanggap na muli ako ng barangay..naging close kami ng pamilya...kinakausap at pinapansin na nila ako</i>	Social acceptance

## **Design Stage**

Traditionally, the design stage of the AI is more of a process discerning the ideas that brings energy and life to the participants and the organization. It is in this stage that determines what should be repeatedly done in order to achieve the preferred future. Relying from the shared narratives of all the participants in KKDK program especially from the designated facilitator of the KKDK in barangay Salapan, as validated by the experiences of the actual surrenderers, their relatives and friends, the researchers have had quite a good grasp of KKDK, its design as a program, especially what is perceived to be its best practices. Refer to the table above.

The KKDK program is a community-based relapse prevention program implemented by the local government given to the barangay for low-risk drug-users surrenderers. Formulated by the Ateneo group of psychologists, KKDK is made up of several formative modules on personal, familial, communal and spiritual life. Accordingly, the program is discreetly intended to boost and raise the confidence-level of the surrenderers to pursue change in their lives by personally getting rid from themselves the intention and addiction to use prohibited drugs. In this program, the low-risk drug-users surrenderers were given proper orientation regarding the program, emphasizing that they, the facilitators, will just talk to them as friends. The participants were given the freedom to choose the particular day they would conveniently attend the modules for two hours. In the case of Barangay Salapan, they can freely choose from Tuesday, Thursday or Friday sessions, or Saturday for those who have private work. The sessions lasted for fifteen weeks. Within that period, the participants were given two to three random drug tests. If found positive, they were counseled by a psychologist, then further evaluated if allowed to continue the program. All the participants continue to be monitored even after graduating from the program. Those who were not able to complete the modules were to be followed up through letters to return to the rehabilitation program. After taking the program, the surrenderers were motivated to work, or to go back to their previous work. Some of them were offered jobs by the local community official and San Juan City as well.

From the perspectives of the researchers, the said rehabilitation program initiated by the local community and supported by the City of San Juan for the low-risk drug-users surrenderers was found very formative. Although the scale of its popularity seemed low among the listed surrenderers, it was a fact that the program can truly be effective and helpful to the problematic members of the barangay because of the quality of its graduates. What was commendable about its design was the

non-coercive mood observed in helping the surrenderers, more so the reinforced level of confidence seen among them to personally pursue rehabilitation and change themselves. A certain level of freedom and tolerance was observed on the part of the surrenderers by the implementers that is seen to have enabled them to be helped more efficiently by the program, and they (the surrenderers) have taken advantage of. Generally, the program's design, as experienced by the concerned people, seems holistic because it addresses not just the personal-psychological life of the surrenderers but their familial, social, spiritual and even economic grasp of it as well. The possibility of restoring the sacredness and dignity of life of the low-risk drug-users surrenderers were initially restored.

### **Destiny Stage**

Destiny is about empowering people to experiment with and improve upon their designs. It is in this AI stage that the determination of additional concrete ways to experience the dream is done. Thus the researchers, in this case, suggest some innovations on the program. Should there be more homegrown-trained members of the community that would serve as facilitators, it would be easier in carrying out the specific activities of the rehabilitation program. This will be a great help in absence of the facilitators who are nonmembers of the community. There should be greater positive awareness of the entire community regarding the rehabilitation program so that there will be a more cohesive communal support that would be given to the future participants. This can be done by distributing to each household, a copy of the primer of the rehabilitation program, this will let them know the appropriate disposition that is needed in relation to the participants of the program. Knowledge is moral and can be supported in bringing about real change. At least an appropriate orientation on the program can be shared in the local academic institution. All these must be done to create an environment of respect and love within the local community towards the participants of the program. The local community must conduct, if possible, a community-wide children's orientation on the reality of the prohibited drugs especially focusing on its ill effects. A house-to-house orientation can be done. Children, who are so innocent and vulnerable, will prevent themselves in becoming victims of prohibited drugs and probable future participants of the rehabilitation program. Remember, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Since the rehabilitation program is being supported also by the local government, there must be a pledge of assurance that there will be continuity of the program by whoever is seated as officials of the local government. This will eliminate doubts from the community and the participants about the consistency of the

program's implementation. Church parishes must also actively get involved in the conduct of KKDK, because it addresses the primal important value, the restoration of the sanctity and dignity of life.

### **Conclusion**

In as far as the restoration of the sacredness and dignity of life a continuous contention the low-risk drug-users surrenderers in barangay Salapan, San Juan City is concerned, there is a glaring hope that it will be achieved. The KKDK, being implemented by the local community and supported by the local government, and several institutions, provides a silver lining for the victims of the prohibited drugs that have destroyed them and affected their families negatively as well as harmed the good of the community. The KKDK is best practices, in essence are described as a collaborative initiative of the community, learning institution, and the government: 1) rebuilding self-confidence; 2) positive self-concept; 3) commitment to change; 4) proper, friendly, and non-coercive orientation; 5) client availability consideration and modular program; 6) long term process of monitoring; 7) physical and psychological intervention; 8) economic support; 9) familial and spiritual formation; 10) and social acceptance, helped redeem their lost personal sense of dignity, social respect and acceptance, and become a productive and significant individual members of their particular families and their beloved community. The restoration of the sanctity and dignity of life demands greater openness, volunteerism, respect, sincerity and discipline from each of the persons involved in the rehabilitation program. There is a need to intensify the program further by constantly evaluating it and, if necessary, consider to revise it, all for the benefit of the participants. It will be well-achieved if all the sectors of the local community would have a concerted and unselfish effort to support the program regardless of political color or affiliation, religious background, economic interests and social biases. After all, restoration of the sanctity and dignity of life of anybody is of primal importance. An obvious limitation of this research is that it was conducted only within one particular local community. If future researches of similar nature will be conducted in other localities with other sets of low-risk drug-users surrenderers, the issue can be discerned more precisely. Researchers also recommend greater exposure for the dynamic participation of future researchers in the implementation of KKDK in local communities. Lastly, the researchers recommend to include in future research the participation of the local churches to provide description of an all-sector participation within local communities in the rehabilitation of their low-risk drug-users surrenderers.

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# **The Athletes After Retirement: How are they Doing?**

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## **Abstract**

Academic institutions and sports agencies intend to increase the winning performance of current athletes by building confidence and contributing to favorable conditions of retired athletes. This study investigated the influences of the years of retirement and physical self-inventory on human sufferings experienced by the retired athletes. Based on the literature review, there were limited empirical studies on the conditions of former athletes after years of retirement, their glory, physical inventory, and sufferings, and the relationships among these characteristics. Using mixed research methods, this research studied the conditions of retired athletes in Metro Manila. The study confirmed that physical self-inventory influenced post-retirement human suffering. Post-retirement athletic identity, financial status and decisions to voluntary retire were observed to be the most prevalent experiences related to human suffering. However, retired athletes enjoy experiences with their educational status, other career benefits, health condition, control of lives, management of changes, and the warm support of their families and colleagues.

**Key Words:** physical self-inventory, human sufferings, retired athletes,

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Sports are admirable tools and platforms for change towards a better and healthier life, fueled by passion for sports in the Philippines with various inspirations from champions in different categories (Blanco, 2016). Winning sports teams and athletes who have brought honor to universities, communities, and nations became notable figures in history after retirement (Park, Lavalley & Tod, 2012). With the desire to document, establish, improve and share best practices in sports, this study intended to uncover the conditions of retired athletes who deserve to be in favorable conditions as characterized by physical self-inventory or the perceived levels of self-esteem and physical and mental wellness (Maiano, Morin, Ninot, Monthuy-Blanc, Stephan, Florent, & Vallee, 2008). DosSantos, Nogueira & Bohme (2016) noted that high performance outputs of athletes are also influenced by their concerns about their future. This research also exposed the pain and glory experienced by retired athletes during life outside of the sports profession. The research results are expected to benefit current and retired athletes (Brinkman, 2014). McKnight, Bernes, Gunn, Chorney, Orr, & Bardick (2009) differentiated athletic career retirement that takes into account relatively younger age versus occupational retirement wherein advanced age is a common characteristic.

Human sufferings are reflected when there is distress or dissatisfaction in the attainment of moral, spiritual, physical, emotional, legal, intellectual, and cultural needs (Brinkman, 2014). In managing this, it is important to anticipate and prepare for life after retirement (Koonce, 2013). Golden (2011) finds that academic support encourages student athletes while the misunderstanding with coaches, who commonly lack counseling skills to guide proactive athletes to life after athletics, hinder healthy relationships. To overcome human suffering by lowering expectations, stewardship behavior involves selfless desire in serving and connecting followers' sense of identity and self to the collective identity of the organization. (Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014, p.139). High self-esteem, and physical and mental wellness are important in order to exhibit stewardship behavior (Effelsberg et al., 2014).

The physical self-inventory (PSI) is an assessment of human physical and mental wellness, and confidence based on self-perception. PSI is a French alternative to physical self-perception profile (PSPP) for use by psychology researchers who are interested in assessing adults'

physical self-perceptions (Maiano et al., 2008). Maiano et al. (2008) adopted the measurement dimensions of Fox and Corbin (1989) on generic physical self-concept domains that include general feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and physical self-esteem. Self-perceptions on sports competence, physical attractiveness and physical strength are also measured in PSI (Maiano et al., 2008).

### **Research Problem**

This study intended to uncover the conditions of retired athletes as measured by physical self-inventory. It also aimed to uncover the human sufferings and glory experienced by retired athletes based in Metro Manila, Philippines. It investigated how the retired athletes are doing after years of exit from amateur or professional sports and athletics.

Specifically among the retired athletes based in Metro Manila, Philippines, this research answers the following research questions:

1. What are the influences of the years of retirement on physical self-inventory and experienced human suffering?
2. What are the influences of physical self-inventory on experienced human suffering?
3. What are the detailed conditions and their influences related to human suffering at post-retirement stage of the said athletes?
4. What are the fulfillment and the glory enjoyed by the retired athletes?

Hernandez, M. (2012) validates that “psychological ownership of the beneficiaries of stewardship behaviors creates individuals’ willingness to subjugate their personal interests to protect beneficiaries’ ongoing well-being and sacrifice their own gain” (p.186).

### **Statement of Specific Objectives**

In particular, this research intended to determine the current conditions of the retired of athletes based in Metro Manila, Philippines:

1. the influences of the years of retirement on physical self-inventory and experienced human suffering;
2. the influences of physical self-inventory and experienced human suffering;
3. the detailed conditions and influences related to human suffering at post-retirement stage of said athletes; and
4. the fulfillment and glory enjoyed by the retired athletes.

This research could be beneficial in providing suggestions to develop current athletes and determine valuable support for retired athletes.

## Review of Related Literature

There were limited empirical studies on the conditions of former athletes after years of retirement, their glory, physical inventory, their sufferings and the relationships among these characteristics. Brand, Gerber, Beck, Hatzinger, Puhse, & Holsboer-Trachsler (2010) predicted better psychological functioning and more favorable personality traits among athletes who had lower scores for depressive symptoms and trait anxiety with high levels of physical exercises. Maiano et al. (2008) marked on the reliability, validity, and appropriateness of physical self-inventory as an instrument for younger French populations, but did not test association with factors that are relevant to retired athletes. Park et al. (2012) gathered data about the different dimensions associated with athlete's career transition out of sports.

### Table 1.

#### *Research gaps identified from reviewed journal articles*

Author (Year)	Research Gaps
Thompson (2018)	<i>Context.</i> The study emphasized the trends in health and fitness, especially using wearable technologies and use of gadgets. However, their impact on conditions after retirement was not studied.
Cover (2017)	<i>Research Methods.</i> Indifference resulted from experience of 1 or more concussions by retired collegiate athletes, although concussion management guidelines improved. This is a qualitative research and needed further quantitative studies.
Li (2017)	<i>Context.</i> This research evaluated how Chinese retired athletes increased strong professional quality but showed weak social communication and learning capacity. Further training on social communication and learning capacity were recommended.
Mohamed (2017)	<i>Settings.</i> This research had different contexts because it studied that gender is immaterial in adolescents' reflections of physical and sports education on physical configuration in Skikda, Algeria.

**Table 1.**  
*Continued*

Author (Year)	Research Gaps
Blanco (2016)	<i>Research Methods.</i> There is a lack of empirical studies to evaluate the impact of sports on the positive attitudes, values and passions of people. Blanco (2016) dwelled on narratives of famous athletes and sports professionals.
DosSantos, Nogueira & Bohme (2016)	<i>Context.</i> This study concluded that the perception of the athletes about the support system at retirement was poor and could force apprehensions on high performing athletes (DosSantos, Nogueira & Bohme, 2016). DosSantos et al. (2016) suggested new research to include intervention programs and case studies.
Li., Niu & Quian (2016)	<i>Contextual.</i> Among Chinese athletes, improvement of insurance and security systems were deemed important to manage risk of injuries and favorable career development and transformation if it happened.
McMillan (2016)	<i>Respondents.</i> Narcissism and high regard of self by retiring athletes influenced attainable healings in the retirement transition process. This research is a qualitative research and lacked number of respondents to validate the propositions.
O'Brien & Eller (2016)	<i>Research Methods.</i> O'Brien and Eller (2016) offered insights about athletes need to be oriented on the realities after retirement to prepare them. This research lacked hypothesis testing.
Beehr & Bennett (2015)	<i>Respondents.</i> The operational definitions of bridge employment and related constructs like retirement and career job were not clear. The limitation was the lack of randomly selected respondents to quantitatively determine significant predictors of bridge employment.
Cosh, Crabb & Tully (2015)	<i>Setting.</i> This study on the locus of transition difficulties and psychological well-being difficulties underwent by the retired athletes were conducted only in Australian cultural context.
Brinkman (2014)	<i>Context.</i> Application of the concepts to athletes was limited.

**Table 1.**  
*Continued*

Author (Year)	Research Gaps
Debois, Ledon & Wylleman (2014)	<i>Research Methods.</i> Qualitative analysis showed a non-linear path to excellence with several normative and non-normative transitions from the start of the athletic career to the post-career stage. There were limitations for its sample, in qualitative methodology, and generalizability. Only nine athletes participated in the study. Cross-sectional research on only 9 individuals was inferior to longitudinal evaluation from the start of career to retirement.
Villanova & Puig (2014)	<i>Respondents.</i> There were only 26 Spanish Olympians from different summer Olympic sports interviewed about their experiences, which weakened the quantitative approach to confirm the need for preparation for career after retirement from sports.
Cosh, Crabb & LeCouteur (2012)	<i>Setting.</i> In the Australian context, privileged or actively chosen decision to retire from sports was more difficult than retirement due to age or injury. There was lack of quantitative research on related topics.
Brand et al. (2010)	<i>Context.</i> While it was true that depression and anxiety could trouble psychological functioning, holistic human development might be investigated as intervention in addition to exercise.
Kadlcik & Flemr (2008)	<i>Respondents.</i> This research was conducted to explore the process of sport career termination in the Czech Republic, but with a limited number of respondents. The athletes had been exposed to changes in their post-retirement lives in the social, psychosocial, health, and economic spheres.
Maiano et al. (2008)	<i>Research Methods.</i> Maiano et al. (2008) worked on the reliability, validity, and appropriateness of physical self-inventory as an instrument for younger French populations but did not test association with factors that are relevant to retired athletes.

The selected research articles are limited in some aspects like the following: specificity of contexts; locations; lack of samples and empirical studies, that involved quantitative research methods; lack of deliberate research themes as qualitative research; and differences in respondents' profiles. These are shown in Table 1.

The nature of the research gaps in the reviewed journal articles are primarily contextual and sampling size limitations as seen in Table 1.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Retirement from sports could exert influenced on physical self-inventory and on human suffering as Koonce (2013) revealed years of retirement had impact on favorable and unfavorable experienced of retired athletes. Furthermore, retirement from sports could be related to human suffering. Brinkman (2014) highlighted languages that expressed human sufferings so that people can understand different human conditions and act upon these. Bolton (2010) made a distinction between three kinds of human distress of which the kind that results from mental disorder is only one. In addition to *pathological* distress, another kind of distress is connected to normal *life transitions* (e.g., in work, education, or family contexts), and distress connected to various forms of *social deprivation or exclusion*. From the analyses of languages of suffering above, it is quite obvious that different languages are suitable for articulating different kinds of distress. A political language obviously connected to the third category mentioned by Bolton is intent; it relates to thematizing processes of power and social injustice. Whereas a moral language is often relevant to life transitions like a divorce which have been the result of one party's deceitful behavior. Existential language can also be considered relevant to social deprivation as in experiences of loss. The religious language can be, like the diagnostic one, a colonizing language that seeks to dominate the understanding of suffering, which happens when all the problems that befall humans (from physical illness to poverty) are interpreted as an almighty deity's reactions to the sinful actions of human beings. But, on a less "imperialist" reading, the religious language like existential and moral languages, can be said to concern itself with making suffering meaningful by placing it within a cosmic framework. (Brinkman, 2014, p. 643)

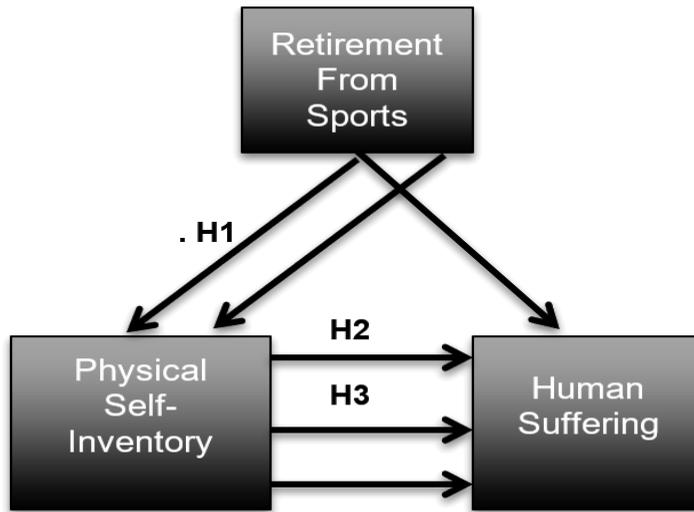


Figure 1. Factors Influential to Post-Retirement Human Suffering

This research further assumed that PSI is related to the intensity of physical activities that are currently related to sports activities of athletes. PSI and the language of human sufferings (Brinkman, 2014) described the conditions of the retired athletes. The subdomain level is then occupied by four specific dimensions of physical self-perceptions: sport competence (SC: athletic ability, ability to learn sports, etc.), physical condition (PC: stamina, fitness, etc.), physical attractiveness (PA: physical attractiveness, ability to maintain an attractive body over time, etc.), and physical strength (PS: perceived strength, muscle development, etc.) (Maiano et al., 2008, p. 831).

### Hypothesis

Based on the related literature, three hypotheses were formulated. Hatamleh (2013) showed that causes of athletes retirement were struggles with coaches and problems with the sports federation. Athletes experienced difficulties during retirement, missing the social aspect of sports, and experiencing a lack of self-esteem, which were feelings they kept to themselves. Speaking with a friend who listened, was used as a coping strategy by the athletes. Athletes experienced stress during and following retirement. Finally, the quality of the sports career termination process depended on the freewill of the athletes'. The journal articles reviewed highlighted the importance of the period before retirement than after retirement. DosSantos et al. (2016) showed that 43.2% reported that

the concentration on being high-performing was negatively affected by concerns about the future. 74.7% claimed that post-sport career assistance was deficient; and 78.3% emphasized that career prospects after retirement were serious problem. Preparations prior to retirement had influence on the confidence and well-being of athletes. Pre-retirement planning was essential to favorable post-retirement experience (Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008). Koonce (2013) argued that athletes who considered spending a shorter period of time being active in sports to prepare for future plans and retirement, and that expectations defined the fulfillment of each person. Park and Lavalley (2015) indicated that athletes generally have low degree of readiness for retirement and a considerably small social support networks. Ireland and Korea managed the concern through support programs that influenced athletes' career transition experiences. Emile et al. (2013) found that openness to experience and implicit theories of ability were related to endorsement of aging stereotypes (shared beliefs about personal characteristics) and suggested that endorsement was a vital factor of engagement in physical activity in older adults.

Based on the results indicating the importance of pre-retirement conditions, the post-retirement years were deemed insignificant to thoughts about physical attributes. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated.

***H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between years of retirement as athlete and physical self-inventory.***

Maffulli (2010) emphasized that promotion of a physically active lifestyle was reinforced globally because of the many health benefits, and its impact on the physical and emotional well-being of a person. Cosh et al. (2012) noted that the implications of such limited identity positions and choices were explored in relation to the psychological distress and clinical concerns that had emerged among many athletes in the transition out of elite sport. Cosh et al. (2012.p.8) stated: "Yet to retire with individual agency is also repeatedly constructed as preferable. Thus, to retire according to the privileged version is, in practice, highly problematic". Kadlcik & Flemr (2008) identified several factors contributing to the positive adaptation to athletic retirement and the antecedents constraining the transitional processes. Indeed, athletes experienced significant changes in their lives after retirement specifically in the social, psychosocial, health and economic spheres. Several causes of career retirement were age, deselection injury, and free choice while factors related to adaptation to transitions during retirement were developmental experiences, and self-identity perceptions of control

(Kadlcik & Flemr, 2008). Cosh et al. (2015) viewed that a broader socio-cultural context in which athletes retired and experienced post-retirement distress affected their psychological well-being at the individual level. The mental, spiritual, physical, moral, intellectual and emotional condition of athletes prior to retirement had great influence on the retired athlete's status (Maiano et al., 2008). There were specific instances that happened to athletes prior to retirement that must be given attention. Li et al. (2016) noted that injuries negatively influenced Chinese athletes' career development and transformation. McMillan (2016) also studied that high regard for oneself or central narcissisms in elite athletes had impact on retirement experience and attainable healing throughout the transition process. Mohamed (2017) observed significant statistical differences in self-physical composition between practitioners and non-practitioners of physical activity and sports in secondary education. The sports practitioners enjoyed the benefits of physical force, fitness, sports competence, exterior body, and the value of the physical self. O'Brien & Eller (2016) emphasized that by better understanding athletes and by delivery of perceived security, lawyers who represented current and former athletes could better understand and relate to these clients because of improved attorney-client relationship, increased trust, and overall improvement in the athlete's legal situation. Daigle (2016) found that there was no difference in the depressive and stress symptoms between those who had 1 or more previous concussions and those with no history of physician-diagnosed concussions or physical injury. Thus, there was value in combining academic/vocational career during the active years in sports because it gave a sense of financial and non-financial security (Villanova & Puig, 2014). The training of retired athletes in social communication, working ability, learning knowledge and other skills were also advantageous for the athletes before and after retirement (Li, 2017). McKnight et al. (2009) found that counselors were effective in helping athletes to engage in life after sport by helping them realize the advantages of the skills they had learned in sports to be successful in different aspects of their lives. These research results did not establish the effect of physical inventory on suffering. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated.

***H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between physical self-inventory and the experiencing of human suffering.***

***H<sub>03</sub>: Physical self-inventory has no mediation effect on the influence of years of retirement and experiencing of human suffering.***

Debois et al. (2014) stated that the time to develop elements most frequently evoked to describe the course of life during athletic career referred mainly to the athletic domain, but also in a concurrent way to family life, psychosocial relationships as well as educative/vocational domains. These various elements were experienced in turn as factors facilitating as well as constraining the course of life of athletes depending on the stage of the career. Tshube & Feltz (2015) reasoned out that the commitment to reach and stay at the top required elite athletes and those around them to invest on multiple levels in the physical, social, and financial aspects during a long period of time.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study was a mixed method descriptive research. This research combined rank correlations and qualitative perceptions of athletes obtained from the survey and interview to describe the finding. Since the research focused on understanding retired amateur or professional athletes, it made use of descriptive narratives, quotations and participant observations to explain the findings.

### **Research Approach**

Data were gathered through survey questionnaires interviews of selected respondents, and participant observations. The Likert scale and a set of open-ended questions were the research instruments.

### **Research Participants/Respondents**

This research gathered data from a purposive sample of 34 retired athletes based in Metro Manila, Philippines. Considered in the selection of the athlete participants was recognition gained for contribution to success gained in the NCAA, UAAP, and other national sports competitions.

### **Measurement and Instrumentation**

The Likert Scale on physical self-inventory described confidence on the following factors: sport competence (SC: athletic ability, ability to learn sports, etc.), physical condition (PC: stamina, fitness, etc.), physical attractiveness (PA: physical attractiveness, ability to maintain an attractive body over time, etc.), and physical strength (PS: perceived strength, muscle development, etc.) (Maiano et al., 2008).

The research instruments were pre-tested for reliability prior to data gathering and analysis. The measurements were reliable. Measurement items of Physical Self-Inventory (PSI) had rigorous internal consistency

with Cronbach's alpha which is within .75 to .95 (Wessa, 2017). Cronbach's alpha of measurement items for PSI (physical self-inventory) is .87. Similarly, the measurement items of Human Suffering (HS) had .85 which is .75 to .95 this indicated internal consistency (Wessa, 2017).

### Data Analysis/Analytical Tools

Considering that purposive sampling was made, Spearman rank correlation and partial correlation analysis was applied for quantitative analyses (Wessa, 2017; Miller, 2014; Anderson et al., 2015). Narratives, tabular presentation, and descriptions were utilized to communicate the qualitative analysis of the study (De Bosscher et al., 2010).

### Results and Discussions

Thirty-four (34) retired athletes from UAAP, NCAA, and national teams participated in this research. Majority of these respondents have retired for 6 or more years now.

**Table 2.** *Descriptive statistics of variables: RFS, PSI and HS*

Variables	Unit	Number of Respondents	Mean	Std. Dev.	Confidence Interval at 95%	Mode
RFS-Retirement from Sports (years)	7-Point Likert Scale (corresponds to 6.01 year or more years of retirement)	34	4.44 (3.01 to 4.00 years)	2.29	+- .80	7 (6.01 years or more years of retirement)
PSI-Physical Self-Inventory	7-Point Likert Scale (7 corresponds to strongly agree regarding best condition)	34	5.45 (somewhat agree)	.85	+- .30	5.32 (somewhat agree)
HS-Human Suffering	7-Points Likert Scale (7 corresponds to strongly agree regarding satisfaction on accomplishments)	34	5.62 (agree)	.85	+- .30	6.33 (agree)

Majority somewhat agreed to favorable current physical self-inventory conditions. However, majority of the respondents agreed that they were satisfied with the current status and accomplishments that signified the benefits of being formerly active athletes, as shown in Table 2.

### **What are the influences of the years of retirement on physical self-inventory and experienced human suffering?**

**Table 3.**

*The Influence of Retirement from Sports on Physical Self-Inventory*

<b>Factor (Independent Variable)</b>	<b>Effect (Dependent Variable)</b>	<b>Spearman Rho</b>	<b>p-value of t-test</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Retirement from Sports (years after)	Physical Self-Inventory (PSI)	0.157	0.3763	There is very weak positive influence but is not significant, at 0.5 significance level.
Retirements from Sports (years after)	Human Suffering (HS)	0.243	0.1667	There is weak positive influence but is not significant at 0.5 significance level.

Years of retirement from sports had no significant influenced on physical self-inventory and experienced human suffering as confirmed in the statistical tests this is shown in Table 3.

Since the Spearman rho of .157 denotes very weak rank correlation, and the p-value is at  $>0.05$  significance level, the 1<sup>st</sup> null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between years of retirement as athletes and physical self-inventory. Physical self-inventory was built over time and was preferred to be developed before retirement. The presence of social/emotional support, financial support, pre-retirement planning, openness to experience and implicit theories of ability were more observable than the association of the years of retirement as a factor, as also highlighted by Park & Lavalley (2015), Emile et al. (2013) and Koonce (2013). Years of retirement of athletes have negligible influence on PSI and HS because it could be too late to respond to changes in activities and lifestyle. As a matter of fact, the 44% selected retired athletes had no recall of memorable experiences after retirement.

DosSantos et al. (2016), Koonce (2013) and Kadlcik & Flemr (2008) were right in emphasizing the importance of the period prior to retirement.

### **What are the influences of physical self-inventory on experienced human suffering?**

**Table 4.**

*The influence of physical self-inventory on human suffering of retired athletes*

<b>Factor (Independent Variable)</b>	<b>Effect (Dependent Variable)</b>	<b>Spearman Rho</b>	<b>p-value of t-test</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Physical Self- Inventory	Human Suffering	0.849	0.0000	There is very strong influence at 5% significance level.

Physical self-inventory had significant influence on experienced human suffering but did not mediate the lack of significant influence of years of retirement on human suffering.

*H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between physical self-inventory and experiencing of human suffering.*

Since Spearman rho of .849 denoted very strong rank correlation, and p-value is at <0.05 significance level, the 1<sup>st</sup> null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between physical self-inventory and experiencing human suffering, as shown in Table 4.

Cosh et al. (2012) was right in claiming that lowering the psychological distress and clinical concerns that emerged among many athletes in the transition out of elite sport offered favorable post-retirement experience. Given that majority of the respondents had favorable post-retirement experiences, the antecedents mentioned by Kadlcik & Flemr (2008) on positive adaptation to athletic retirement and the antecedents constraining the transitional processes such as age, deselection injury, free choice, the importance of developmental experiences, and self-identity perceptions of control in status transition held true. While Cosh, Crabb & Tully (2015) viewed that broader socio-cultural contexts in which athletes retired and experienced post-retirement distress affected their psychological well-being at the individual level, the results indicated that the mental, spiritual, physical, moral, intellectual and

emotional condition of athletes prior to retirement had great influence on the retired athlete's status (Maiano et al., 2008), along with confidence and a sense of security, as also viewed by O'Brien & Eller (2016). Based on the interviews, academic and career achievements influenced favorable conditions, experiences and satisfaction among retired athletes because of felt financial and non-financial security, as also mentioned by Villanova & Puig (2014).

***H<sub>03</sub>: Physical self-inventory has no mediation effect on the influence of years of retirement and experiencing of human suffering.***

**Table 5.**

*The mediation effect of physical self-inventory on years of retirement and human suffering*

<b>Factor (Independent Variable)</b>	<b>Effect (Dependent Variable)</b>	<b>Mediator/ Controlled Variable</b>	<b>Partial Correlation</b>	<b>p- value of F- test</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Retirement from Sports (years after)	Human Suffering	Physical Self- Inventory	0.105	0.5616	There is no significant mediation effect

Since partial correlation coefficient indicated no mediation effect because the value is not equal or close to 0, and the p-value of the F-test is at  $>0.05$  significance level, the 3<sup>rd</sup> null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, physical self-inventory had no indication of mediation effect on the influence of years of retirement and experiencing of human suffering, as shown in Table 5. Work, career and activities influenced perceived post-retirement status among the retired athletes and not the length of period of retirement as also viewed by Beehr & Bennett (2015). Financial status and recognitions were extrinsic motivators that could demotivate retired athletes. Whereas, development of most of the intrinsic motivators related to physical and social aspects were foundations to satisfy retired athletes, as also noted by Tshube & Feltz (2015).

Again, to overcome human suffering by lowering expectations set for individual benefits, stewardship behavior involved selfless desire, not to live with achievements, "in serving and connecting followers' sense of identity and self to the collective identity of the organization through transformational leadership behavior among other things" (Effelsberg et al., 2014, p.139).

## What are the fulfillment and the glory enjoyed by the retired athletes?

**Table 6.**

*Fulfillment and the glory enjoyed by the retired athletes*

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Not happy with educational status	15%
Explored career other than sports	70%
No career after retirement	1%
Not in good health condition	9%
Voluntary retirement	56%
Not happy with their sports achievements	12%
Satisfied with what they achieved	65%
In control of their current lives	85%
Had pre-retirement plans	68%
Satisfied after-retirement	65%

The experiences of fulfillment and of glory and the lack of these are shown in Table 6.

## What are the detailed conditions and their influences relation to human suffering at the post-retirement stage of the said athletes?

**Table 7.**

*Modal responses and quotations from retired athletes, selected from among the 34 who participated in the research.*

### **Quotations and qualitative responses**

#### **Financial status**

“ I can get by.” “ I can get through.” “ I can get by.” “ Maybe.” “Yes, I am satisfied with my financial status because I have the supportive parents to everything.” “My parents provide me allowance as well as my employer.” “I am thankful for the blessings.” “ I have good salary and allowance.” “ I am stable financially.” “ I have good financial status.”

“ I earn from coaching and marketing.” (55%)

#### **Educational status**

“ I am satisfied.” “I graduated and was a regular student.” “ I studied in a university.” “ I am happy with my school and course.” “ I learned a lot and experience a lot.” “ I’m satisfied with what I achieved in my education.” “My grades were good.” “ I learned a lot about strategies and skills in teaching.” “ I continue to take Doctoral degree.” “ Yes, because studying was my major priority.” (70%)

**Table 7.***Continued*

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**Career other than sports**

“Sports is not a lifetime work or job.” “I perform well at work.” “I’m doing good in my career.” “I teach and coach.” “I entered other sports.” “I have a decent job.” “Career is most important and inspiring.” “There is more money from career.” “I execute and plan well at work.” “I am satisfied with what I am doing right now.” “I did my best.” “I am accomplishing in the other things that I do.” “I am already a teacher, today.” “I am coaching little children.” “I can do what others can do.” “I am coaching in Senior High School (70%)

**Post-retirement**

“Good enough.” “I will continue with what I have now.” “Yes because I felt that God never left my side. I have so many blessings.” “I am currently a national athlete in other sports and I am planning to coach..” “People have known me as champion.” “I love what I am doing.” “Yes, because I was able to share my skills and knowledge to others.” “Because, I am proud of what I’ve done.” “I’m ok to be back to normal life.” “I enjoy activities with family.” “I was recognized as a model to others.” (47%)

**Voluntariness on retirement decision**

“I have no regret.” “I can do seminars and workshops, if kaya pa.” “I can do something for the community.” “Because I did my best..” “I did what I want.” “I’ve done my part for our country as an athlete.” “I made my decisions because of priorities.” “I am happy with my achievements.” “I have new life to improve.” “I have nothing to prove.” “Yes, if I can’t do well anymore in sports.” “Yes, because serving others give fulfillment in a different way.” (56%)

**Health conditions**

“I am in good health.” “I am healthy for now and still kicking.” “Yes, for now, I healthy body.” “I am healthy with no condition. Sometimes, I experience sickness because of lack of rest.” “I am healthy.” “I have no problem with my health condition.” “I am still physically fit..” “I’m in good health.” “I have improved my health with the help of sports.” “Being a former athlete helped me maintain my fitness. Exercises are done everyday.” “Health benefits from the university helped me keep my good health.” “I can do all I want. But I ensure that I am healthy.” “I have no unnecessary and doubtful feelings.” “Because I am trying to be healthy even at this age.” (85%)

**Sports career achievement**

“I have enough recognition.” “For now, some of my achievements are there. But I wish I can do more and more.” “Superb, I’ve done my part as an athlete, and I did my best for my country.” “I did my best.” “I achieve my goals in my career.” “The sports program was excellent.” “Yes, I gave my all in every game and I was proud of what I achieved.” “I feel good with my achievement.” “I brought my team to division level.” “I became productive athlete.” (65%)

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**Table 7.**  
*Continued*

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**Control of life**

“Things are well.” “I became strongly independent person. At the age of 16 years, I went to Manila to study and play sports.” “ Nobody dictates me and my family gave me freedom to decide.” “I’m happy.” “I had improvements in my life.” “I have plans for better life.” “As athletes, we have discipline.” “I do what I want and what I am able to do.” “I am in control of my decision.” “I learned a lot of lessons in life through sports.” “I learned a lot of principles in sports and applied it in my life.” “I can do all my activities with my salary.” “I can control myself.” “I do the life control.” “I am in control with my family’s situation.” “I am receiving good pension.” “Planning is the key.” (85%)

**Changes in lifestyle and routines**

“I accept change.” “There are changes in decisions, working and time management.” “I’m happy.” “I focused on my studies and then on my job.” “I can wake up late.” “I don’t have training and exercises anymore.” “I gave full attention to my family.” “I became contented.” “I’m open for chances.” “My routines were lessened.” “I can rest more.” “I’m not an athlete anymore. I can do what I want with my body.” “Yes, because I will change my lifestyle.” “I can go to different places, now.” “I am satisfied now because I am a professional teach and coach as well.” Yes, challenges are always there and we can always act right to it. Positivity is a key.” (59%)

**Pre-retirement planning**

“I have good plans.” “Before my retirement, everything was settled for me and for my next chapter.” “I plan to have business.” “I’m thankful to those who helped.” “I focused to my future job.” “I had goals to chase.” “I got the opportunity to teach.” “I knew that doing other tasks would help me.” “I already fixed my benefits.” “..so that I already knew what to do before I retired.” “I travelled abroad.” “I bought house for my retirement.” “I conducted seminar to them.” “It’s fun at retirement and it is hard to keep being an athlete.” “I pursued SEA Games and won bronze medal after retirement from national competitions as 3-time gold medalist.” (68%)

**Support from colleagues and family**

“I am well supported by my family.” “My family gives big impact to my life by helping me complete my studies, molding me as a person, and teaching me how to become independent. My family is my inspiration as I face the challenges of life.” “I am super satisfied because they supported me all the way.” (88%)

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As shown in Table 7, majority of the retired athletes were happy with their finances but 44% were not satisfied with their financial status. 53% were not fully satisfied with their post-retirement athletic identity. 38% felt doubtful in their decisions to have voluntarily retired.

Debois et al. (2014) findings agree with the current research result that the post-retirement satisfaction of athletes was within individual control, and was related to family life, and psychosocial relationships as well as with educative/vocational domains that were noticeably influential depending on the stage of the career. Tshube & Feltz (2015) explained that the commitment to reach and stay at the top required elite athletes and those around them to invest at different levels in the physical, social, and financial aspects during a long period of time prior to retirement.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the data analyses this research concludes the following:

1. Years of post-retirement as athlete did not influence physical self-inventory, although investment in the period prior to retirement indicated benefits.
2. Physical self-inventory influenced favorable experience against human suffering. The mindset on voluntary retirement, commitment, expectations, achievements, recognitions, identity and financial status were vital to favorable post-retirement conditions and prevented the experience of human sufferings,
3. However, physical self-inventory did not mediate between the influence of years of retirement and experience of human suffering because length of time after retirement was not a significant factor in implementing proactive intervention aimed at managing the sufferings of athletes after retirement.
4. Post-retirement athletic identity, financial status and decisions to voluntary retire reflected the most prevalent human suffering experienced by the retired athletes.
5. However, the retired athletes enjoyed the experiences relating to their educational status, career other than sports, strong health conditions, control of current lives, management of transitions and lifestyle changes, and most of all, the warm support of their families and colleagues.

## **Recommendation for Stakeholders**

As good stewards, the university and sports stakeholders have the responsibility to prepare athletes to life after a highly competitive sports career. Different forms of support such as academic, financial, social, moral, and physical must be identified and implemented under the accountability of the government and other stakeholders. Among these is the National Sports Association (NSA's), a government organization which offers scholastic and professional programs for Fitness and Sports Program Specialist in community sports and wellness; Strength and Conditioning Specialist; Corporate and Commercial Fitness Practitioners; Fitness, Sports and Recreation Entrepreneur/Leader/Consultant; Sports, Fitness and Recreational Manager; Sports Tourism Officer and other trainings and seminars. Moreover, retired athletes need financial support, recognition, and a warm relationship with families and sports communities. These would encourage athlete to remain in sports which is one of the noblest professions a person can achieve. These ensure self-esteem and a feeling of security among current athletes to perform with greater excellence.

## **Recommendations for future Research**

Academic institutions and educational agencies are encouraged to consider the dimensions of physical self-inventory, and the orientation on decision-making to retire as antecedents of either the human suffering or the satisfaction of athletes, in anticipation of their retirement. Physical self-inventory is an effective guide to develop pre-retirement interventions toward favorable conditions for athletes after retirement. Further quantitative analysis with a sufficient number of respondents is encouraged for future research. Comparison of the points of views of 35 year-olds or older to those of younger retired athletes are also worthwhile investigating. This research offers research themes and measurement items for human suffering, such as voluntary retirement, commitment, expectations, achievements, recognition, identity and financial status for further analyses, as listed in the qualitative responses gathered.

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# **Correlation of Spiritual Care and Quality of Life among Institutionalized Older People**

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## **Abstract**

Ensuring that Older People have good quality of life is one of the major goals of any caregiver. Caregivers, which includes nurses, must be holistic in their provision of care to meet such a goal. Since one of the dimensions of quality of life is spirituality, these researchers sought to describe if any relationship exists between the caregivers' spiritual care practices and the quality of life of the older people in their care. Institutionalized older people were surveyed using the Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutics scale and WHO Quality of Life for Filipino Older People to measure the spiritual care practices of caregivers and the quality of life of Older People, respectively. Results show no significant relationship between the two variables, which may be due to the fact that quality of life is composed of several dimensions, in which spirituality is only one, and is multi-factorial in nature; suggesting that quality of life is influenced by several factors and how these factors interplay ultimately determine the quality of life of Older People. The researchers recommend that a mixed-method approach be used to further understand the lack of direct relationship between the two variables.

**Keywords:** Elderly, Older People, Quality of Life, Spiritual Care

## Introduction

As health sciences progress, there are more Older People now than ever before with the previous century seen as a period of increasing life expectancy (Crimmins, 2015). It is estimated that there will be 1.2 billion people aged 60 or older by 2025, and considering that this is a global trend, it requires a change in focus towards the promotive/preventive aspects of healthcare and medical needs of Older People (Shrivastava, Shrivastava, and Ramasamy, 2013). One such focus is improving their quality of life.

Quality of life takes into consideration the well-being of a person, and its improvement or maintenance is no doubt the “ultimate goal” of care (Jacobs, 2009). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines it as “individual perception of his or her living situation, understood in a cultural context, value system and in relation to the objectives, expectations and standards of a given society.” A person’s health or well-being goes beyond the physical and includes other dimensions such as psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual with each having its own peculiar needs (Berman and Snyder, 2012). Compared to patients of a different age group, older adults (60 years of age and above) have a particular set of spiritual needs. They may be especially concerned about living a life with purpose or meaning, avoiding social isolation through maintaining relationships, and preparing for a good death (Berman and Snyder, 2012).

Quality of life is not only about the physical aspect of health but also includes other factors (Khaje-Bishak, Y., Payahoo1, L., Pourghasem, B., and Jafarabadi, M.A., 2014) like emotional, social, and spiritual. Spirituality is concerned with the person’s view of life, his recognition and achievement of his life’s mission, and/or belief in a higher power; it is a core human experience (Berman and Snyder, 2012). It is “that most human of experiences that seeks to transcend self and find meaning and purpose through connection with others, nature, and/or a Supreme Being, which may or may not involve religious structures of traditions” (Buck, 2006, as cited by Berman and Snyder, 2012).

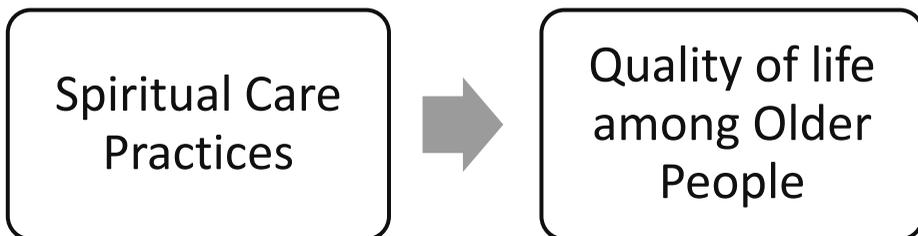
Addressing spiritual needs is an important part of care; in fact, several studies, such as that of Chen, Lin, Yan, Wu, and Hu (2018), urge health professionals to provide spiritual care to clients. Spiritual care is considered vital in improving certain aspects of quality of life (Sahir and Ozdemir, 2016). It is not prescriptive, but rather descriptive (Berman and

Snyder, 2012), and focuses on interactions and relationships (Daaleman et al, 2008). Such care is said to be effective; in fact, a study by Walker and Breitmaster (2017) showed that spiritual care that is provided by nurses improves the psychosocial aspect of health among patients; a finding supported by another study by Matos et al (2017).

One barrier to providing spiritual care would be its performance by healthcare professionals. Provision of spiritual care depends on the healthcare provider's knowledge and preparation (Sahir and Ozdemir, 2016), and attitude and personal spirituality (Vance, 2001). Spiritual care practices therefore differ from one healthcare professional to another.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of literature that directly correlates spiritual care practices of caregivers and the quality of life of Older People. This study is significant in that regard, in the sense that this study may be the first that will try to see a direct relationship between spiritual care practices and the quality of life of Older People. This is why the researchers chose to test the null hypothesis: there is no relationship between spiritual care practices of the caregivers and the overall quality of life of Older People who are living in an institution.

### **Conceptual Framework**



*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework

In this study, the researchers considered the level of Spiritual Care Practices as the independent variable and the Quality of Life among Older People as the dependent variable. The researchers analyzed if such a relationship exists between the two variables.

Spiritual care is an expression of self (Berman and Snyder, 2012); in this case, it is the nurses or caregivers expressing themselves toward the Older People in their care. Spiritual care seeks to provide fulfillment of the spiritual needs of the Older People. The researchers assumed that when spiritual care practices are rendered, the spiritual needs of the Older People are addressed; subsequently, the patients' overall quality of life improves.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is guided also by Parse's Human Becoming Theory (Parse, 1999). There are three assumptions about human becoming (Berman and Snyder, 2012):

1. It is freely choosing personal meaning in situations in the intersubjective process of relating value priorities. This means that people deliberately determine the meaning of their experience based on their actions.
2. Cocreating rhythmic patterns or relating in mutual process with the universe is human becoming. This pertains to a person's adaptation to the environment; and
3. It is cotranscending multidimensionally with the emerging possibles.

Choosing personal meaning pertains to the patients' deliberate desire to determine the meaning of their experiences. Cocreating rhythmic patterns pertain to a person's adaptation to the environment. Cotranscending is the process that pertains to the act of human becoming of the person in relation to the universe or environment (Parse, 1999, as cited by Berman and Snyder, 2012).

Simply put, the assumptions focus on meaning, rhythmicity, and cotranscendence. Meaning comes from the individual's interrelationship with the world or environment. Rhythmicity is shifting towards greater diversity of each person. Cotranscendence is reaching out beyond the self's previous capabilities. Parse believes that the clients, not the nurses,

are the authority and the central figures or decision makers (Berman and Snyder, 2012). The nurses' role is to assist the clients in choosing how to change his or her health processes by illuminating meaning for the clients, synchronizing rhythms, and mobilizing transcendence. Thus, the goal of nursing from the human becoming perspective is quality of life (Parse 2006, as cited by Berman and Snyder, 2012).

For this study, finding the meaning of life is part of someone's spirituality, and assisting in illuminating these meanings would be the nurses' job. In this case, we consider these tasks as spiritual care practices. While the goal of Parse's Human Becoming Theory for nursing is the quality of life, here, it is the dependent variable (Berman and Snyder, 2012).

### **Methodology**

The researchers used descriptive correlational design using a survey method approach. Descriptive correlational research seeks to describe the relationship that exists between variables, but not to explain or understand the underlying causes of the variables (Polit and Beck, 2014). Although quality of life has many dimensions (Garcia and Navarro, 2018) and thus may be affected by a multitude of factors, only the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was analyzed by the researchers.

Data gathering for this study is cross-sectional. Cross-sectional designs are studies that collect data at one point in time (Polit and Beck, 2014).

The target population for this study was Older People at a certain institution. Purposive sampling, a method in which the researchers handpick the participants they deem to be knowledgeable (Polit and Beck, 2014), was used.

Participants were selected using the following inclusion criteria:

1. Must be 60 years old and above;
2. Must be able to read and understand Filipino and English; and
3. Must be able to perform activities of daily living without assistance, institutionalized or is living in a nursing home for at least a year.

Exclusion criteria include:

1. Presence of cognitive impairment or mental disorders
2. Presence of obvious disability (e.g. blind, crippled, etc.);
3. Inability to read both Filipino and English.

All twenty-six participants in the chosen institution matched the criteria and were thus included in this study therefore, the researchers did not need to determine the sample size.

The researchers used two instruments to measure the variables: the Nurse Spiritual Care Therapeutics Scale (NSCTS) by Mamier and Taylor (2014) to assess the spiritual care practices rendered to the participants, and the WHOQOL-BREF Fil OP, the Quality of Life instrument developed by WHO specifically for Filipino Older People.

The researchers requested permission from Dr. Elizabeth Taylor to use the NSCTS instrument. Permission was granted via email, and the researchers were given a copy of the instrument. Conditions for permission included proper citation of the authors and the non-alteration of the instrument.

The NSCTS instrument has 17 items written in a 5-point Likert scale format. This tool was used to rate the spiritual care practices rendered by caregivers to the Older People as perceived by the Older People. Psychometric properties show that the tool is valid and reliable (Mamier, I. & Taylor, E. J., 2015). Potential score ranges from 17 (lowest) to 85 (highest). High scores indicate frequent nursing therapeutics or activities supporting patient spiritual integration and low scores indicate nurse to infrequently provide spiritual care.

The WHOQOL-BREF Fil OP is an instrument to measure the quality of life of Older People. It was adapted for Filipinos and translated into the Filipino language. The researchers requested permission from the World Health Organization (WHO) via their website. WHO emailed the researchers a contract, which the latter signed and sent back to WHO. After some time, WHO emailed the researchers a copy of the instrument and a manual on how to use it. The tool is composed of 27 items in a 5-point Likert scale type of questionnaire. Items 3, 4, and 26 are reversed then total score will be computed. The higher the score, the better the overall quality of life.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Arellano University Ethics Committee. A copy of the proposal was sent to the ethics committee, and after two weeks, an expedited review was rendered, and then the approval was given.

Officials of the institution where the study took place allowed the researchers to gather data on the condition that the institution, its employees, and its patients remain anonymous. The institution's staff assisted the researchers regarding patient schedules and availability. The staff also helped in identifying and screening of participants.

The participants were informed of the study's objectives and the potential risks and benefits of participation. They were given an opportunity to clarify matters or ask questions pertaining to the study. Securing verbal and written consent from the participants was done prior to data gathering. Participants were made aware that they could refuse to continue with their involvement at any time. Codes were used to conceal the identity of the participants. Participants were informed of the researchers' plan to disseminate and publish the study.

Data gathering took place from February 25 to 28, 2019. The researchers were supervised by the institution's staff. The caregivers were advised of the scheduled survey to ensure that the data gathering would not interfere with nursing care. Each participant took at most about 20 minutes, to answer both questionnaires. No participant dropped out during the conduct of the study.

Data gathered are confidential and are intended for use only in this study. No other person aside from the researchers have access to the collected data. Paper files, like documents and questionnaires, will be destroyed or shredded after 5 years, at most.

Data were collated and encoded immediately. Microsoft Excel was used to organize the collated data. No identifiers were encoded in the spreadsheet.

To analyze the relationship between the two variables, the researchers used inferential statistics. Specifically, Pearson  $r$  was used to determine if there was a significant relationship in the spirituality of the caregivers and the quality of life of the Older People. Jamovi 0.9.5.15 statistical software was used for data analysis. The  $p$  value was analyzed.

A p value of less than 0.05 would indicate a significant relationship between the variables. However, the analysis showed a value greater than 0.05, which means no significant relationship that exists between the variables.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1.**

*Spiritual Care of caregivers and Quality of Life of Older People*

Variable	Mean
Spiritual Care	4.13
Quality of life	3.71

Table 1 presents the mean values of the spiritual care of the caregivers and the quality of life of Older People. As evaluated by the participants, the spiritual care of the caregivers averaged a score of 4.13, and the Older People's quality of life averaged 3.62.

Results of the Pearson correlation indicate no significant association between Spiritual Care and quality of Life of Older People, ( $r(26) = -.29, p = .151$ ). Pearson r analysis yields a p value of 0.151 which signifies that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Discussion

Quality of life is composed of several elements (Bai and Lazenby, 2015), of which spirituality is only one. Physical, social, emotional, psychological, and environmental elements or dimensions also exist (Bai and Lazenby, 2015). Literature suggests that any of these elements may influence each other and the overall quality of life, including spirituality and quality of life (Sawatzky, Ratner, and Chiu, 2005). The influence of the dimensions to each other and the overall quality of Life then implies that if a person's spirituality is high, the quality of life can be expected to be high as well.

Certain studies show that caregivers or nurses can affect their patients' level of spirituality depending on their own level of spirituality and on how they attend to the spiritual needs of their patients (Carpenter,

Girvin, Kitner, and Ruth-Sahd, 2008). If the caregivers' spirituality is high, then their spiritual care practices must also be high (Carpenter et al, 2008). In simple terms, the better the spiritual care practices rendered by the caregivers, the higher the patients' own level of spirituality as well, which in theory should increase the overall quality of life of the patients. This claim is supported by a meta-analysis done by Sawatzky, Ratner, and Chiu (2005), who found a correlation between the person's spirituality and overall quality of life to a varying degree, meaning the strength of relationship is not consistently high or low. Their study also found out that age, gender, ethnicity, and religious affinity may moderate the relationship of the two, though not much is known about how these exactly affect the relationship. This only shows that overall quality of life is can be influenced by many factors.

However, the results of this study did not show any significant relationship between the spirituality of the caregivers and the quality of life of Older People. It may be possible that the influence of the caregivers' spirituality is not enough to elevate the overall quality of life of the Older People because the quality of life of Older People is influenced more by other factors.

Quality of life is multi-factorial and multi-dimensional (Garcia and Navarro, 2018), with many variables that may improve or worsen it depending on the traits of an individual. De Araujo, Barbosa, Menezes, Medeiros, de Araujo, and Medeiros (2015) identified factors that negatively influence the quality of life of institutionalized Older People. In their study, Depression was identified as the major factor; low socioeconomic conditions, unsatisfactory family assistance, and occurrence of comorbidities also decreased the quality of life of the Older People. The participants of their research scored low on the questions related to health, indicating they had multiple visits to a healthcare provider for the past two weeks due to health concerns.

These findings are also supported by the study of Khaje-Bishak, Payahoo, Pourghasem, and Jafarabadi (2014), who noted a significant decrease in quality of life in Older People who had cardiovascular, respiratory, and gastrointestinal diseases, as well as sensory deficiencies. The researchers made illnesses part of the exclusion criteria to decrease the extraneous variables affecting the study results.

Of all the factors and different aspects that may be considered, the health aspect of quality of life also seems to have a greater impact on institutionalized Older People, along with other factors such as the ability to perform daily activities and family and social network (Fernandez-Mayoralas, et al., 2015). Pinkas et al. (2016) noted a similar decrease in quality of life when the Older Person was sick or had decreased social interaction. On top of that, chronic pain can also decrease the quality of life (Pinkas et al, 2016).

Age and gender do not seem to affect the overall quality of life of Older People (Khaje-Bishak, Payahoo, Pourghasem, and Jafarabadi, 2014), although age may affect the social aspect of the quality of life (Alemida-Brasil, et al., 2017). To a certain degree, age and gender can be considered as moderators of the relationship between spirituality and quality of life (Sawatzky, Ratner, and Chiu, 2005).

It appears that spirituality is a distinct dimension of quality of life that is separate from the physical, social, emotional, and functional (pertains to everyday activities). Although many studies show a positive correlation between spirituality and quality of life, spirituality is only one of the factors that influence quality of life (Bai and Lazenby, 2015). The association is relative and not absolute; hence, high spiritual care does not necessarily translate into a high overall quality of life (Chen, Lin, Chuang, and Chen, 2017), particularly on institutionalized Older People.

Spirituality is also personal, suggesting that one's own disposition and other internal factors affect one's spirituality rather than other people's. For example, a person's faith indirectly influences the functional (pertains to everyday activities) quality of life (Canada, Murphy, Fitchett, and Stein, 2015), but faith is a personal trait. Although some authors cite a strong correlation between high quality nurse-patient interaction and spirituality of institutionalized Older People (Haugan, 2013), the exact reason for the correlation is not identified. And despite these interactions, there is a discrepancy between how the patients assess themselves and how health providers assess their patients (Jacobs, 2009).

Despite the identified factors that directly affect quality of life being unmodifiable to a great extent, healthcare providers cannot underestimate their impact on the patients they care for because they are part of the environment the patients are in. One of the least satisfied aspects of quality of life among institutionalized Older People is the

environment, signaling the need for caregivers to focus on this as well (Moreira, Roriz, Mello, and Ramos, 2015).

Almeida-Brasil et al. (2017) noted that Older People who live in a community had lower quality of life (environment dimension) than those residing in an institution. Their study noted that Older people's environmental aspect of quality of life is lower due to social and health related factors. Nurses and other caregivers are primarily involved in this area of care, their role cannot be undervalued.

It is not appropriate to separate spiritual care from other forms of nursing (e.g., physical, social, and psychological) (Goldberg, 2002). It is part of their duty that they provide nursing care, regardless of their own spiritual care practices or level of spirituality.

### **Conclusions**

The researchers conclude that the spiritual care rendered by caregivers has no direct relationship on the overall quality of life of Older People. Because quality of life is multi-factorial; other factors need to be analyzed as well.

The researchers recommend that future researchers use a mixed-method approach, specifically sequential explanatory design, to explain the lack of direct relationship between the spiritual care rendered by caregivers and the quality of life of Older People. This is because of the dearth of information on the connection between the two variables.

Spiritual Care is part of holistic nursing care and despite the absence of correlation between Spiritual Care Practices and overall quality of Life, nurses and caregivers cannot ignore the importance of Spiritual Care Practices.

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# **Contextualizing *Laudato si* in the Philippines: Environmental Problem in Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal**

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## **Abstract**

*Laudato si* (2015) is a landmark encyclical in the teachings of the Catholic Church concerning the environment. While the Church has issued encyclicals before on social teaching, and briefly mentioned the environment in previous encyclicals, this is the first time that social teaching has been put deeply into the context of an encyclical devoted primarily to the environment. This calls for a reassessment of the peoples' perceptions on how they care for the environment in the Philippine context. A case study was conducted in a rural area near Metro Manila in the Province of Rizal. This paper reports the views of 47 respondents (N=47) from *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines*, aged from 18 to 60 years old. The Descriptive results of statistics and thematic analyses of respondents' responses were based on the Care for the Environment Scale (CES) developed by the researcher in this study. The CES revealed significant differences in the perceptions of the respondents about how they care for their environment. This case study illustrates how this research can be used to inform all the people to initiate programs based on the ethics of care and the encyclical *Laudato si*.

**Keywords:** *Laudato Si*, environment, care, CES.

## Introduction

Environmental issues present serious moral problems. Environmental pollution is a global issue and is causing widespread problems around the world. This study with regard to the current situation, intends to provide solutions to existing problems. For this purpose, the research has been carried out with the aim of investigating the care for the environment in *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal*.

Ethics of Care refer to the “approaches to moral life and community that are grounded in virtues, practices, and knowledge associated with caring and caretaking of self and others” (Whyte and Cuomo, 2017, p.234). The ethics of care as an approach will be utilized in this study together with the recent encyclical of Pope Francis *Laudato Si* (2015). Pope Francis was overturning long established beliefs that the earth was to be subdued, rather than nurtured and cultivated. He is a new standard bearer for some—in the preface to a compendium of articles on integral ecology, John B. Cobb, Jr. says:

The pope’s primary audience was not the elite in the church or in the wider world. He addressed the world’s people. And millions have resonated [with] Francis’ call. Before then, we had scores of leaders working for rational change, and therefore, effectively, no leader at all. Now the cause of LIFE has a champion who cannot be ignored. (Cobb & Castuera, 2015: iv–v)

*Laudato si’* comes at a time of rethinking about global development. The United Nations’ (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000-2015) have now run their course, achieving moderate success. With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN has established the development path for the next 15 years. Today, the world’s people are facing complex and interrelated problems: long-term problems never resolved and mounting, such as the rise of new threats connected to biotechnologies, genetics, Internet and modern communication devices; and old and new health threats that often catch us unaware and inadequately prepared. As Pope Francis explains in his Encyclical letter *Laudato si’*, everything is deeply interrelated. It underlines that everyone can do something for our common home. In response to this call, each diocese of the church in the Philippines, in collaboration with other faiths and civil society organizations like the NGO’s, and the different Institutional Community Involvement Center

(ICIC) of schools, colleges, and universities can plan to educate and mobilize communities to protect the environment and the threatened resources and species in the area.

Over the last years, there has been a growing interest in issues related to the care of the environment. To sustain this commitment as citizens, therefore, necessitates a spirituality that inspires, nurtures, and provides ultimate meaning to our personal and communal acts. Though *Laudato si'* explicitly speaks of spirituality only in the last chapter, the whole encyclical is distinctively about an integrative eco-spirituality based on an integral ecology that links labor and technological and social development with care for creation and the diversity of life forms and cultures, and with a special concern for the poor and the vulnerable.

As will be explained in the Theoretical Background section below, research on *Laudato si'* and the environment has focused on a variety of topics. However, missing from the literature are investigations designed to understand the relationship between *Laudato si'* and its concrete application to a specific community in the Philippines. This research seeks to investigate the water problem in *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga*, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal juxtaposed with the recent encyclical *Laudato si'*.

This research utilized a self-made questionnaire using mixed-method approach, both qualitative and quantitative, to understand the ecological problems in Taytay, Rizal. Thus, the research gap revealed that the Filipino view on the environment in relation to the ecological ethics has been rarely investigated in the Philippines.

### **Statement of Research Problem:**

How do the people of *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga*, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal care for their environment, specifically on the water?

**Statement of Specific Objectives:**

The researcher aims to propose an environmental program for the local community in *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga*, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal. This will include the following:

1. To find out the various efforts that they are doing related to caring for their environment;
2. To examine their environmental programs based on their answers, and to find their relationship based on *Laudato Si*;
3. To analyze the challenges and difficulties that they encounter in caring for the environment; and
4. To find out what other courses of actions can be done to care for the environment.

**Conceptual Framework**

To achieve its objectives and address the questions raised by this proposed study, it will appropriate Bernard Lonergan's *Transcendental Method of Doing Theology* (1992). Lonergan's Transcendental Method consists of four basics but closely related patterns of operations, namely: (1) The Empirical, where the theologian senses, perceives, imagines, feels, speaks and moves, whether externally or internally. Thus, he asks the question "What is it?" to gather data; (2) the Intellectual, where the theologian asks the questions what, why, how and what for. Thus, he asks the question "Why is It?" to establish its intelligibility; (3) the Rational, where the theologian reflects, presents pieces of evidence, passes judgment on the truth or falsity, certainty or probability of his statements while attempting to resolve the issue. Thus, he asks the question "Is It so?" to establish the truth; and, (4) the Responsible, where the theologian focuses on himself, his own operations and his in goals to decide what course of action should be undertaken. Thus, he asks the question "Is it valuable?" to arrive at what is good. This process may be expressed in the table presented below:

## Methodology

Mixed-method research design and the convenient sampling technique were employed in this study. Forty-seven (47) research participants were sampled. A Personal Information Sheet (PIS) was used to obtain personal data from the participants.

They were determined using the purposive sampling technique (Sarantakos, 2013). The data were gathered using an unstructured interview. The interview was individually done to validate the perspectives, practices, and problems relevant to the environmental problems from the participants. The use of in-depth interview facilitated the gathering of detailed and useful information to provide the context to the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Guided by the interview protocol, the participants were oriented on the purpose of the study, duration of the interview, the interview approach, content, confidentiality, consent, and recording methods, and the use of the data.

For the quantitative part of the present research, the researcher used two sets of questionnaires. The first questionnaire was the Personal Information Sheet (PIS). It was used to obtain the demographic data of the participants. The second questionnaire was the Care for the Environment Scale (CES). It was used to obtain the participant's perception about caring for the environment.

The CES was developed by the researcher. It is composed of 20 items. The scale is divided into 4 dimensions. The response format is as follows: 5-Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Uncertain, 2-Disagree, and 1-Strongly Disagree. The scores are determined by computing the mean of all the items per dimension. A computed value greater than 3 may suggest high score while a score lower than 3 may suggest low score.

Consciousness Level	What I Want	Question	Task as A Knower
Empirical Level	Data	What is it?	Be Attentive
Understanding Level	Intelligibility	Why is it?	Be Intelligent
Reflecting Level	Truth	Is it so?	Be Reasonable
Responsibility Level	Good	Is it valuable?	Be Responsible

*Figure 1: The Bernard Lonergan Method of Theology*

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1.**  
*Participants' Demographics (Frequency and Percentage Distribution)*

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Age</i>	Undisclosed	3	6.4
	18 – 35 (Early adulthood)	27	60
	36 – 60 (Middle age)	<u>17</u>	<u>32.2</u>
	<i>Total</i>	47	100
<i>Sex</i>	Undisclosed	2	4.3
	Male	22	46.8
	Female	<u>23</u>	<u>48.9</u>
	<i>Total</i>	47	100
<i>Religion</i>	Catholic	13	27.7
	Christian/Born Again	30	63.8
	<i>Iglesia Ni Cristo</i>	1	2.1
	Other	<u>3</u>	<u>6.4</u>
	<i>Total</i>	47	100
<i>Occupation</i>	Undisclosed	8	17
	Accounting Staff	8	17
	Civil Engineer	1	2.1
	Construction Worker	1	2.1
	Driver	1	2.1
	Family Driver	2	4.3
	HDC	1	2.1
	Housewife	1	2.1
	Maintenance	14	29.8
	Midwifery	2	4.3
	Painter	1	2.1
	Plumbing	1	2.1
	Production Worker	1	2.1
	Radio Operator	1	2.1
	Sale Staff	1	2.1
	School Maintenance	1	2.1

**Table 1.**

*Continued*

Demographic	Categories	<i>f</i>	%
	Service Crew	1	2.1
	Student	1	2.1
	Teacher	5	10.6
	Welder	<u>1</u>	<u>2.1</u>
	<i>Total</i>	47	100

Table 1 shows that there are 47 respondents. In terms of age, six-point four percent (6.4 %) gave no answer, fifty-seven point four (57.4 %) are 18 – 35 which, means they belong to Early adulthood; thirty-two-point two percent (32.2 %) are from the Middle age bracket 36 – 60. With reference to Havinghurst’s human life stages, most of the participants belong to early adulthood. In terms of sex, forty-six-point eight percent (46.8 %) are male; forty-eight-point nine percent (48.9 %) are female; and four-point three percent (4.3 %) gave no answer. In terms of religion, most of the participants are Born Again Christian, with sixty-three point eight percent (63.8 %); followed by Roman Catholic with twenty-seven point seven percent (27.7 %). However, there are two or six point four percent (6.4 %) with undisclosed religion. All the respondents are from *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Brgy. Dolores, Taytay, Rizal*.

**Table 2.**

*Participants’ Responses: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Dimensions and Items of the Care for Environment Scale (CES)*

Dimensions/Items	Mean	SD
<b>A. Pananaw Tungkol sa Basura</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>1.29</b>
1. Itinatapon ko basura sa tamang lalagyan.	4.49	0.72
2. Nagsesegregate ako ng basura.	3.57	1.02
3. Naglilinis ako ng kapaligiran.	4.4	0.71
4. Gumagamit ako ng recyclable.	4.06	0.87
5. Nagtatapon ako sa ilog.	2.15	1.38
<b>B. Pananaw Tungkol sa Ilog</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>1.52</b>
1. Mahalaga ang ilog sa pamumuhay namin.	4.47	0.65
2. Mahalaga ang ilog sa aming pamayanan.	4.47	0.69
3. Sa ilog kami kumukuha ng aming makakain.	1.98	1.03
4. Kung wala ang ilog hindi kami mabubuhay.	2.55	1.16
5. Sa ilog kami nagtatapon ng mga basura.	1.74	1.05

**Table 2.**  
*Continued*

	<b>Dimensions/Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>C. Pananaw Tungkol sa Kalamidad</b>		<b>4.24</b>	<b>0.99</b>
1.	Ang kalamidad ay sanhi ng tao.	4.35	0.92
2.	Nakatira ako sa mabababang lugar (malapit sa ilog)	4.36	0.96
3.	Madalas ang pagbaha sa aming lugar.	3.64	1.03
4.	Nakahanda ang aming pamayanan sa posibleng paglikas.	4.28	0.95
5.	Nakahanda ako sa posibleng pag-apaw ng ilog.	4.57	0.83
<b>D. Pananaw Tungkol sa mga Dapat Gawin para sa Pangangalaga sa Kalikasan</b>		<b>4.50</b>	<b>0.98</b>
1.	Ang kalikasan ay dapat pangalagaan.	4.83	0.38
2.	Ang kalikasan ay likha ng Diyos.	4.91	0.28
3.	Ang kalikasan ay pinagkukunan ng likas na yaman.	4.81	0.40
4.	May mga programa ang aming pamayanan tungkol sa pangangalaga sa ilog.	3.42	1.55
5.	Ang ilog ay nagbibigay-buhay.	4.43	0.88

Table 2 presents the participants' responses on the five dimensions and items of the self-administered scale. It provides information regarding their perceptions about caring for the environment. A score of 3 and above per dimensions would indicate favorable or positive attitude towards caring for the environment. Looking at the mean scores of the five dimensions of the scale, the participants did not get a mean score lower than 3. This would give us an overall impression that most of the participants are aware of the importance of ecological balance to people's lives. Moreover, they are aware on how to properly care for the environment.

The highest mean score fall under dimension C (*Pananaw Tungkol sa Kalamidad*), this would suggest that most of the participants were aware about the causes of natural calamities. They also believed that calamities were sometimes due to people's neglect of their duties to protect the environment. They were aware that floods were caused by irresponsible act of throwing garbage at the river.

The lowest mean score fall under dimension B (*Pananaw tungkol sa Ilog*). Although this dimension got the lowest mean score, the score itself was still considered favorable since it did not fall below 3. This means that they were aware of the importance of keeping the bodies of water clean. They were aware that rivers were sources of food and livelihood.

**The Case of Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal**



*Figure 1. Study Area*

**Study Area.** The study's subject is Barangay Dolores (Poblacion) of Taytay, Rizal Philippines. Total population is 61,115 as of May 2015. Taytay is the third most populous municipality in the country, after Rodriguez and Cainta.



*Figure 2. Picture of the river in Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal*

Water is an essential necessity of human existence and industrial development, and it is one the most delicate component of the environment (Das and Acharya, 2003; Yisa and Jimoh, 2010; Yu and Salvador, 2005). Rivers supply more than 90% of water supply-which originate from highland forest and catchments areas. River is source of life, providing freshwater for human consumption, irrigation for agriculture, as a means of transportation, a source of food in fisheries, hydroelectric power and water use for industries. Therefore, monitoring its water quality has become necessary initiative, especially for rivers affected by urban effluents. “Furthermore, the poor quality of water is compounding the problems of scarcity. More than half of the world’s lakes and rivers are seriously polluted, and half the world’s wetlands have disappeared in the last century.

**Table 3.**

*Tabulated Results from the Survey Instrument*

<b>Statements concerning environment</b>	<b>Superordinate Themes</b>	<b>Subordinate Themes</b>	<b>Implications</b>
A1-A5	The Problem of Garbage	Segregation/ Disposal	Water Pollution
B1-B5	Importance of the River	Community	Care for the Water
C1-C5	Disaster Preparedness	Calamities	Disaster-related issues
D1-D5	Caring the Environment	the Life-giving	Sustainability

The results are discussed based on levels of river pollution and issues relating to environmental problem in a local community. Local authority councils generally manage committees made up of barangay officials and local authority officials and make policies under the full council meeting. The Barangay Council officials provides for the powers of local authorities to function as local planning authorities. Based on the discussion above, this study examines the extent environmental ethics principles manifest in the management of urban river, especially about the problem of garbage in *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga*, Brgy. Dolores, Taytay, Rizal, the importance of the river to the local community, the disaster preparedness is in full effect and caring the environment in coordination between agencies involved in river management.

### The Church in the Modern World

The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1945) exhorts that “one of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith that many profess and the practice of their daily lives.” To find the repercussions of these challenges, the *Laudato Si* encyclical of Pope Francis in the context of caring and conserving will be used as a model in *Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga*, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis calls for people to recognize the value of the environment and everything in it. He said, “it is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves (LS33)”.



Figure 3. The local community in Purok 1A, Hapay na Mangga

Pope Francis also affirmed this by calling all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action" on “care of our human home. This could be done by uniting the government agencies, church leaders, educational institution, respective communities and even the basic unit of society, which is the family to work together in strengthening educational and informational campaign on the care of the environment.

In response to this call, each diocese of the church in the Philippines, in collaboration with other faiths and civil society organizations like the NGO’s, can plan to educate and mobilize communities to protect the environment and the threatened resources and species in the area. Some researchers applied Pope Francis’ encyclical with implications for businesses and organizational managers (Urick

et.al, 2017). However, missing from the literature are investigations designed to understand the relationship between *Laudato si* and its implication to a specific local community in the Philippines.

### **The Call of Francis' *Laudato Si***

Pope Francis insists that to care for the natural world and for society at large, and for the weaker sections in particular, “is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us” (*Laudato si*, 231) The Pope writes:

In this way, the world, and the quality of life of the poorest, are cared for, with a sense of solidarity which is at the same time aware that we live in a common home which God has entrusted to us. These community actions, when they express self-giving love, can also become intense spiritual experiences (Pope Francis 2015a, par. 232).

While the ecological crisis affects our common home and its common household, its deleterious impacts will befall mainly on the poor and the most vulnerable sections of our society. The ecological crisis is brewed within the crucible of inequality. The injustices brewed by the contemporary ecological crisis are conspicuously manifest in the case of climate change, the greatest of the ecological challenges facing humanity. There is no dearth of assessments, which emphasize the fact that the impacts of climate change are falling first and most heavily on the ‘poorest and most vulnerable people around the world’ (Cuomo 2011, p. 693).

Robert Henson (2006, p. 13) expresses well the tragic irony of an ecological problem like climate change that will affect the poor most, yet they have contributed least to its underlying causes.

Pope Francis writes in the encyclical, citing Pope Benedict, “only when ‘the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are recognized with transparency and fully borne by those who incur them, not by other peoples or future generations,’ (Pope Benedict XVI 2009, p. 686) can those actions be considered ethical” (Pope Francis 2015a, par. 195).

Moral justice is primarily about concern for the poor and vulnerable members of our common household, “whose life on this earth is brief and who cannot keep on waiting” (Pope Francis 2015a, par. 162). Hence, there is “an urgent moral need for a renewed sense of intra generational solidarity” (Pope Benedict XVI 2010, p. 45; see also: Pope Francis 2015a, par. 162).

## Conclusion

The research revealed significant differences in perceptions respondents about how they care their environment. This study provides some insights on the participation of the local community in the pollution of the river. This study suggests how the factors can be used to inform all the people to initiate programs based on the encyclical *Laudato Si* by doing a social analysis.

The research suggested that local people, authorities involved in the river water management were less aware of the water ethics. Many of them had shown tendencies to approach water issues from a technical perspective; they were less cognizant to the socioeconomic and social justice perspectives and the importance of the river in their lives. Disaster preparedness and awareness among stakeholders, implementers and enforces is still significantly lacking and should be enforced. Even though there are many legislations and guidance, there exists a gap in the implementation and action as seen on the figure 1.

Effective public education and outreach efforts through ICIC, San Beda Outreach Programs can be valuable tools for encouraging constructive public participation and building strong communities. A strengthened information, education, and communication (IEC) component through an enriched content and rationalized delivery can help in counteracting the problem of pollution and garbage in the area. *Laudato si* suggests that people must focus on wide-ranging information on ecology, environmental conservation and management, and population education and must be disseminated to a more diversified community.

To contextualize the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are in order: (a) revisit the of the community service programs of the university through the alignment of its programs and activities to the vision, mission, goals, and objectives; (b) strengthen the community-building with special focus on sustainable environment; (c) re-tool the faculty and non-teaching personnel on the nature and purpose of community service programs such as immersions, outreach, and advocacies on environmental protection; and (d) re-assess the environmental protection policies suggested by *Laudato si* for a comprehensive assessment in caring for the environment.

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# **A Church's Response to the Earth's Healing in the Face of Ecological Crisis**

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## **Abstract**

The Roman Catholic Church, thru the Supreme Pontiff, prides herself in her prophetic vocation. Just like the prophets of old, the Church speaks whenever there are social issues that threatens the people of God. Currently, all people are facing the ecological crisis as characterized by unprecedented natural weather patterns (climate change), loss of species of both flora and fauna, desertification and the like. As a crisis, it needs an immediate response. This response is the main focus of this research. Hence, this research aimed to fulfill the following objectives: to describe the current ecological crisis; to identify the Church's traditional and scriptural basis in responding to the challenges of the ecological crisis; to examine the different Church's encyclical and teachings as responses to ecological crisis; and to propose recommendations to alleviate the present ecological crisis. The social action cycle of *Mater et Magistra* was used as framework in identifying the origins of the crisis (context), followed by identifying diachronically the response of the Church drawing from the scripture, tradition (conscience), and examining synchronically the response of the Church's encyclical with special emphasis on *Laudato Si*, concluding with concrete recommendations (consciousness) to help alleviate the present ecological crisis. Thus, the result showed that the current ecological crisis is characterized by 'excessive anthropocentrism' which is a clear misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the human and

nature relationships. Moreover, a clear interpretation of the Biblical truth must be preserved. Lastly, the Catholic Social Teachings, specifically the *Laudato Si*, indicated that there is a need for a “*Dialogue*”, among various sciences, to respond effectively to the ecological crisis.

**Keywords:** Ecological Crisis, Laudato Si, Earth’s Healing, Care for the Environment, Social Action Cycle/Spiral

## Introduction

The 'environmental holocaust' (Josol, 1991) is upon us. McDonagh (198) charged the Church for being silent about the ecological crisis. As 'the people of God,' we cannot afford to remain 'muted'. Discussing the ecological "status" today is of significant importance. This was made evident in the urgent call made by the Church's hierarchy.

On the address of Pope Francis I (2015b), he stated:

A second key area where you are called to make contribution is in showing concern for the environment. This is not only because this country, more than many others, is likely to be seriously affected by climate change. You are called to care for creation not only as responsible citizens, but also as followers of Christ!

Remarkably, Pope Benedict XVI (2010) uttered a related statement on the role of the Church amid the ecological crisis which is pressing the world. He said:

The Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction.

Hence, it is a very serious duty of the Church and its members to protect and preserve creation in its public mission. In the past years, Pope John Paul II, now a saint, consistently reminded the members of the Church of an urgent need to respond to this Ecological crisis.

The ecological crisis reveals the urgent moral need for a new solidarity, especially in relation between the developing nations and those that are highly industrialized. When the ecological crisis is set within the broader context of the search for peace within society, we can understand better the importance of giving attention to what the earth and its atmosphere are telling us: namely, that there is an order in the universe which must be respected, and that the human person, endowed with the capability of choosing freely, has a grave responsibility to preserve this order for the well-being of future generations. I wish to repeat that the ecological crisis is a moral issue (Pope John Paul II, 1990b).

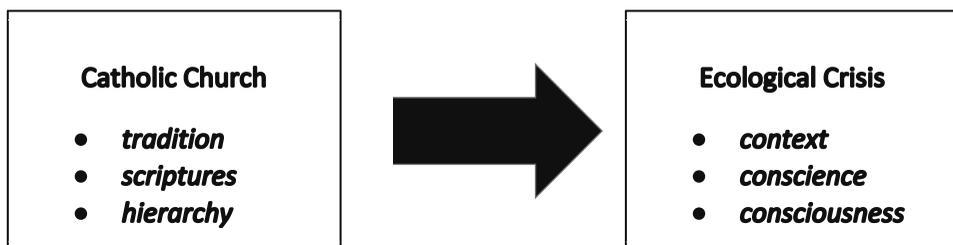
O'Brien (2010) mentioned about ecological crisis as a moral issue that calls for "changes in the ways we think and act toward the variety of life, beginning with the premise that the decline in the variety of life on our planet can be halted only by significant changes in human behavior". This same thought is of equal significance to the responses or action needed to answer the ecological crisis that we have today. Between, 1988 to 2015, several documents were actually issued and produced not only from the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences but also from other Religious Traditions. Different voices warned of ecological crisis in many forms, i.e., legal international treatises, publications of experts about the issue (Rozzi, *et al.*, 2015), and community outcry for help.

According to Jenkins (2008), "environmental problems are a crisis in Christian identity". Hence, the ecological problem and environmental degradation is to some extent a religious problem also, which indeed needs a religious response. Sincerely, we cannot separate our 'being' Christian into our 'becoming' Christian. What we do reflects the very essence of our identity as creatures 'created in the image and likeness of God'.

Hence in this study, the Encyclicals are our consideration of the response of the Church to ecological crisis. Moreover, in proposing a responsible solution to the current ecological crisis, Jenkins' (2008) environmental ethics is used to further analyze and clarify our research endeavor.

### Operational Framework

This research will follow the framework presented in Figure 1.



*Figure 1:* The Framework of the Catholic Church Response to Ecological Crisis

The research framework illustrates the process of analyzing problems and issues which confronts the community on ecological crisis. The Catholic Church through its tradition, scriptures and hierarchy, with emphasis on its theological assertions, has taken steps toward in understanding and interpreting the ecological crisis and the “preempted” responses to this problem; social action response to ecological Crisis. The pillar of a sound theological interpretation is rooted in these elements. ‘Ecological awareness’ and ecological integrity began in some of the public messages of Pope John Paul II in the early 1990s. Recently, this was emphasized by Pope Francis I in his encyclical *Laudato Si*. Hence, the study proceeds using as a framework- the social action cycle of *Mater et Magistra*, in identifying the origins of the crisis (context), followed by identifying diachronically the response of the Church drawing from the scripture and tradition (conscience), and examining synchronically the response of the Church’s encyclical with special emphasis on *Laudato Si*, concluding with concrete recommendations (consciousness) to help alleviate the present ecological crisis.

### Methodology

This research used the descriptive approach in describing the current ecological crisis and presenting the Church’s traditions, scripture, and encyclicals as a way of responding to the ecological crisis. This research followed the four ‘stages’ of the social action cycle. The four stage cycle of social action consists of the following: (1) Observe Social Reality and Identify needs; (2) Social Analysis to Identify Social Causes; (3) Theological Reflection in the light of Scripture and Catholic Social Thought; and, (4) Social Action to Change Sinful Social Structures. This is based on *Mater et Magistra* as reformulated by Hornsby-Smith (2006).

The *diachronic and synchronic approaches* are used to reflect on, evaluate and propose responses echoed in the history of the Church. In Greek, ‘*dia*’ means “through” while ‘*kronos*’ refers to “time.” So, diachronic means “through time”. For synchronic ‘*syn*’ means “same and ‘*kronos*’ is “time”. The technique ‘synchronic’ then refers to “present time”. Thus, this research examined how the issue of ecological crisis has developed ‘historically’ up to the ‘present time.’

Hence, from the teachings and promulgation of the Church which can be read in reports, write-ups, documents, and books, a diachronic historical approach was applied. On the other hand, the synchronic approach was done in an attempt to understand and gain knowledge from present phenomena.

This research used the Social Framework Analysis, as a scientific observation of the ecological crisis. To deepen the research endeavor, the use of social analysis thru the Ideological-Political Apparatus (IPA CODE) was observed. The IPA CODE was utilized primarily to see how the social reality operates through understanding of the different social classes --- the dominant class, auxiliary, and dominated classes.

## Results and Discussion

### The Context: The Current Ecological Crisis

White (1967) p.1203 stated that “the history of ecologic change is still so rudimentary that we know little about what really happened, or what the results were”. The word “ecology” first appeared in the English language in 1873 (White, 1967) p.1203. But the ecological changes were then observed already in the gradual extinction of creatures like the European Aurochs in the late 1627 (White, 1967, p.1203).

The *locus theologicus* of this research is ‘the current ecological crisis’. The researchers aimed to ‘describe’ the current state of ‘our common home’ as to whether we take good care of Mother Nature and preserve its pristine beginnings. We, humans, are mandated to “have dominion” over the earth and to “till it and keep it” (Pope Francis, 2015).

Most of us, if not all, experience the crisis thru the air that we breathe, the water that we drink, the extreme heat or cold we bear depending on our location on Earth, the unprecedented weather conditions like super typhoons, massive flooding, heavy rainfall, and the like. Pope John Paul II (1990b) described concretely the ecological crisis in terms of:

The gradual depletion of the ozone layer and the related "greenhouse effect" has now reached crisis proportions as a consequence of industrial growth, massive urban concentrations and vastly increased energy needs. Industrial waste, the burning of fossil fuels, unrestricted deforestation, the use of certain types of herbicides, coolants and propellants: all of these are known to harm the atmosphere and environment. The resulting meteorological and atmospheric changes range from damage to health to the possible future submersion of low-lying lands.

This observation was gradually noticed and responded to. Christiansen and Grazer (1996) reported the U.S. Catholic bishops' statement in a 1991 pastoral letter, "Renewing the Earth, was a call to theologians and ethicists to explore, deepen and advance the insights of Catholic tradition and its relations to the environment". Moreover, White (1967) asserts that the Judeo-Christian anthropocentrism is a dominant cause for mankind's impact on the environment. "She argues that the idea of an old agriculture model brought man closer to nature but modern agriculture brings about alienation and disruption. She also did not believe that democracy is capable of dealing with environmental crisis and does not foresee less forms of anthropocentric exploitation in the future" (White, 1967, p.1207).

Pope Paul VI (1971) offered a guidepost to the Christian community as regards what to do primarily when the Christians face a crisis. Hence, "*It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church*" (Pope Paul VI, 1971, p. 2).

Pope Francis (2015) believed that the root cause of the present crisis points to human beings. He writes, "It would hardly be helpful to describe symptoms without acknowledging the human origins of the ecological crisis".

White (1967, p. 1207) wrote that "Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of the natural objects". Such comment buttresses his thesis that "the roots of our troubles are so largely religious; the remedy must also be essentially religious".

Admittedly, Pope Francis has neither written about the religious roots of ecological crisis nor has he contradicted that the causes are 'largely religious. However, Pope Francis has acknowledged that human beings as such, mandated to have dominion and "to till and keep the garden", did overextend its understanding of their place in the schemes of the material universe; consequently, leading to 'excessive anthropocentrism'. This excessive anthropocentrism could be the culprit of the mismanagement of our common home --- the cosmos.

White (1967, p. 1203) and Pope Francis both pointed out that the 'marriage' of science and technology vis-a-vis the ecological crisis would seem to be a marriage 'made in hell'. Though both acknowledged the

positive contributions of science and technology to the cosmos, most especially to human beings; both also admitted the misgivings of science and technology.

White (1967, p. 1204) reiterated that “science was traditionally aristocratic, speculative, intellectual in intent; technology was lower class, empirical, action-oriented”. The fusion of the two has united the head and the hands. Their combination has not always brought about a positive consequence to the world.

Pope Francis (2015, p. 75) believes that, like everyone else, “We are the beneficiaries of two centuries of enormous waves of change: the steam engines, railways, telegraph, electricity, automobiles, airplanes, chemical industries, modern medicine, information technology and, more recently, the digital revolution, robotics, biotechnologies, and nanotechnologies”.

“Techno science, when well directed, can produce important means of improving the quality of human life, from useful domestic appliances to great transportation systems, bridges, buildings and public spaces (Pope Francis, 2015, p.76)”.

So, if indeed, ‘human life and activity have gone awry,’ what are the kinds of ecological crises that we face today?

According to Pope Francis (2015) pollution was brought about by a wasteful lifestyle and a throwaway culture. No country is not guilty of this. Sadly, the most advanced and rich countries are considered as the earth’s most polluters.

Further, climate change has been manifested in tremendous extreme weather patterns which were unprecedented historically. There have been massive flooding, hurricanes, and tsunamis. There had been ultra-high temperatures which produced heat waves; even in the cooler countries and ultra-low temperature in like Oymyakon, Siberia. Oymyakon is “one of the coldest permanently inhabited locales on Earth”.

Pope Francis (2015) included on the list, deforestation and the overharvesting of fish from rivers, seas, and oceans. The world’s water supply gets more and more polluted while droughts are experienced in sub-Saharan Africa.

Pollution is in the air; especially in Metro Manila. Per the report of the United Nations in the past, Manila has already been deemed as inhabitable due to air pollution.

Also, inescapable are global warming and the loss of biodiversity. The quality of human life has declined, and the society has started to crumble (Pope Francis, 2015).

Other examples could be added to the list like, the degradation *ecosystem services* wherein several human activities resulted to the destroying of the ecosystem. Another is the *desertification* wherein land degradation makes a relatively dry area of land increasingly arid that it typically loses its bodies of water, vegetation, and wildlife. It is caused by a variety of factors such as climate change and the overexploitation of soil. Moreover, the *invasive species* happens when a specie which is not native to a specific location tends to cause and spread damage to the environment, human health, and local economy.

There are pluralities of opinions as to the roots of the ecological crisis. Here we see how environmental deterioration and human and ethical degradation are closely linked by religions (White, 1967) or by excessive anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism views that the sole purpose of the material universe is to become mere instruments or tools to serve humans; denying the intrinsic values of the material universe.

At the end of the day, it all boils down to humans as the main culprit for the ecological crisis. Humans have done malpractices on the created world. "Here we see how environmental deterioration and human and ethical degradation are closely linked (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 41)".

Indeed, "the intrinsic dignity of the world" is thus compromised. When human beings fail to find their true place in this world, they misunderstand themselves and end up acting against themselves. "Not only has God given the earth to man, who must use it with respect for the original good purpose for which it was given, but, man too is God's gift to man. He must therefore respect the natural and moral structure with which he has been endowed (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 86)".

### **The Conscience: Church's *Traditional and Scriptural* Basis in Response to the Challenges of Ecological Crisis**

The challenges brought out by the present ecological crisis remind us to examine the foundations of our beliefs and values inscribed in the Word of God (*recursus ad fontes*) as handed on from one generation to another (*traditio*) while consistently (*regula fidei*) trying to keep it alive

thru the interpretation (*critical exegesis - hermeneutics*) of its content, to determine whether or not such still makes sense over the years as believers continue their journey on earth (*ecclesia on via non in patria*).

The main content of this section of the research deals with the identification of foundations, i.e., the ‘basis’ or ‘root’ as we respond to ecological crisis. “The Christian will draw from the sources of his faith and the Church’s teaching the necessary principle and suitable criteria . . . to commit himself to serving his brothers” from among the many possible ideological options “the specific character of the Christian contribution for a positive transformation of society” i.e., to alleviate, if not overcome, the crisis at hand (Pope Paul VI, 1971).

It should be noted at the onset that responding to ecological crisis is a universal human undertaking; whether we like it or not. Even with such an urgent milieu, we must keep in mind that the principles and criteria drawn from Judeo-Christian Tradition cannot be universalized. “In the face of such widely varying situations it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity (Pope Paul VI, 1971)”.

All cultures in the face of the Earth have their own *creation* account. For instance, divided by seas and islands, the Philippines is inhabited by Filipinos who have varied *creation* accounts of *Malakas at Maganda*.

### ***Biblical Tradition***

All sacred texts are attempts at articulating ultimate truth and archetype, values, approximations that require interpretation in each new cultural epoch. This means that: (a) The sacred story is our primary channel for accessing the Divine and the ultimate of life; (b) Sacred texts (the Bible) which seek to safeguard the story need to be interpreted afresh in each new age if they are to preserve the ever new challenge and inspired inspiration of the sacred story; (c) Creation itself, and not we human, is the primary narrator of the sacred story; we humans should be the supreme listeners; and, (d) Both the contemplation and narration of the sacred story require symbol and ritual if we are to engage meaningfully with the deep mythic and eschatological significance (O’Murchu, 2004).

The most influential of all *creation* accounts is the one embodied in the Bible. What makes it so is the fact that it is believed by billions belonging to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Judeo-Christian

Tradition). People get 'inspired' because it contains the Divine Revelation.

The Bible says, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work (2Tim 3:16-17, NRSV)".

Among the other key traits of the Bible, is that it is 'a source of information about life.' Life began when God created the universe (Gen 1-2, NRSV). Both accounts show the 'performative speech' of God . . . when God says something, something comes about even out of nothing. Thus, believers have professed that God creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). God is the ground of all that is. The culmination of these accounts is the creation of human beings; gifted with dignity and given a responsibility as well. Human existence is both a gift and a task.

"The great biblical narratives" talk about the relationship of human beings with the world. In the first creation account in the Book of Genesis, God's plan included creating humanity. After the creation of man and woman, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen 1:31, NRSV). The Bible teaches that every man and woman is created out of love and is made in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26, NRSV). This shows us the immense dignity of each person "who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering communion with other persons (Pope Francis, 2015).

"The book of Genesis contains, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. It suggests that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is *sin*. The harmony among the Creator, humanity, and creation has been disrupted by our presumption to take the place of God and our refusal to acknowledge our creaturely limitations. This in turn has distorted our mandate to "have dominion" over the earth (Gen 1:28 NRSV) as well as to "till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15 NRSV).

The wisdom and insight of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans (Romans 8:18-25 NRSV) has prefigured of what is happening now: that the Earth faces the 'ultimate life issue', not only human life but the life of all animate created beings and even inanimate entities existing in the planet face a possible destruction. He offered hope, however, that not

everything is in vain, for salvation was promised. This passage completed the creation-redemption paradigm which is the ultimate purpose of God's manifestation or revelation of Himself: the truth of our salvation (Concilium, 1991).

To St. Paul, 'the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. This Pauline prophecy has come about in what John writes at the last chapter of the New Testament: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Rev 21:1, NRSV).

Finally, St. Paul added to the hope and assurance that in the end 'everything will be well'. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith[a] our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible (Heb 11:1-3, NRSV).

There are many more biblical wisdom and insights that can motivate a Christian believer to respond to ecological crisis. What we have pointed out are just the 'tip of the iceberg'. But the words of James ought to remind a Christian believer that faith should always be accompanied with action. According to St. James, faith without action is dead (James 2;14-17, NRSV).

### ***The Fathers of the Church***

Both St. Augustine and of St. Thomas Aquinas were the epitome of a Christian believer and scholar during their time. Their insights have outlived them and have remained important today especially those on ecological crisis.

St. Augustine of Hippo and St Thomas Aquinas cannot be avoided in matters of discussing the essential link between the human person and the ecology: "Their premodern worldviews diverge sharply from what modern science describes of our universe, notably the 14-billion-year history of the cosmos, in which the story of the Earth occupies a minimal part; and the evolutionary development of life, in which humanity emerges from a common stream of life forms. They exhibited and indeed helped establish the anthropocentric orientation of most Catholic theology, so their basic worldview clearly limited the common good to the human community (Schneid, 1996, p. 1)". Their thoughts "nuanced and thoroughly theocentric understandings of creation offer a rich model of humanity's relationship to the cosmos and to the Earth that emphasizes

the creatureliness and interconnectedness of all beings (Schneid, 1996, p. 1)".

These holy men can certainly enlighten any Christian believer today to take up the challenge in combatting and overcoming the present ecological crisis. As Schneid writes, "I turn to them both in order to demonstrate how a Catholic cosmic common good has roots in the tradition's understanding of creation, and also to offer an alternative account for the facets of the cosmic common good".

The reflection on and exposition of "the theologies of creation" of St. Augustine and St. Thomas suggest "a fivefold dimension to a Catholic cosmic common good: (1) the ultimate good of creation to glorify God; (2) the good of individual creatures pursuing their own perfections; (3) the good of creatures for other creatures; (4) the good of a diversity of creatures; and (5) the good of the order of creatures (Schneid, 1996)".

Such perspectives can certainly correct the misunderstanding about the places of all creatures in the order of all created realities. We all come from God as He is the Creator of all. His design is for all to achieve fullest development or potential possible whoever they are. However, human beings have the sole responsibility vis-a-vis the present time to create the conditions *sine qua non* for all to exactly arrive at their goal or purpose, teleologically. Their insights furthermore overcome the long debate about values and beliefs that humans are using the lesser creatures as their instruments, i.e., for their own selfish end. All creatures have their own instrumental and intrinsic values. All creatures are in the process of becoming like-God or '*theosis*'. . . being each the image of God . . . eventually all will be one with God. We will all be united in God, at the end of the day.

In concluding this part, "a human being to grow in her likeness to God, must not safeguard merely the human common good but the common good of all, and of all creatures, even beyond her own species. Unless she chooses on behalf of the common good, she is not properly conforming her will to the divine will. Promoting the earth's flourishing is not only integral to the human common good, but it is humanity's participation in the cosmic common good. Thus, Augustine and Aquinas offer not only content for a Catholic cosmic common good but a cautionary reminder as well: the more we as individuals, or species, prefer our own good to the good of the whole, the more we deviate from God's purposes for the creation (Schneid, 1996).

## **The Consciousness: The Church's Encyclical and Teachings as Responses to Ecological Crisis**

The modern social encyclicals which contained the corpus and content of the Catholic Social Teaching and Theology have been in circulation in the publication of *Rerum Novarum* (Pope Leo XIII, 1891). This landmark document has veered away from the sporadic, bits-and-pieces approach, in speaking about the social issues at hand. As such, it is the most celebrated among the social encyclicals in the more than 100 years (1891-2015) tradition. The pillars of the encyclical since its inchoate stages until today are anchored on the *creation* accounts in Genesis 1-2: Human Dignity, Rights, and Human Responsibility.

Whenever these pillars are under attack in many and various forms, the Church, through its Prophetic vocation, will come to the fore and speak against those who would want to jeopardize human dignity, rights, and human responsibility.

Hence, for the most part, even if the roots of these pillars are found in the narratives of *creation*, it took the Church more than a century to speak about the plight of 'our common home' thru *Laudato Si* (2015). For the foremost eco-theologians this encyclical marks the first time social and environmental concerns were brought together.

Encyclicals give the Christian believers insights on how to respond to any social concern. It also gives the wisdom to guide Christians and all people of goodwill to actively engage and respond to the crisis that has involved just about everyone and everything, living and non-living alike. However, it is not enough to recall principles, state intentions, point to crying injustice and utter prophetic denunciations; it needs personal responsibility and effective action (Pope Paul VI, 1971).

St. James' message, considered scandalous by some Christian denominations, finds its concrete expression in this encyclical, rightly entitled 'Call to Action'. That 'faith without action is dead' can only be practiced by anyone, believers and people of goodwill. That is, it should be grounded in experience; a "personal conversion is needed first (Pope Paul VI, 1971, p. 18)".

Before going into the 'concrete actions' or 'real response' mode that Catholics must undertake in the light of ecological crisis, let us survey briefly the background of the hierarchy's pronouncement as embodied in pre-*Laudato Si* publication. Dorr (2013, p. 414) explores the

links between “the integral humanistic perspective that had developed in the Catholic Social Teaching and its teaching on ecological issues”. He began by tracing the development of that teaching in the post-Vatican II period. Below is a summary of his points:

1. *Gaudium et spes* gives the human person so central a role that, as Curran (2002) believes, it treats other created realities “only as instrumental with regard to the human person”. The most authoritative document in the Canon of the Encyclicals simply missed the point but continued the ‘excessive anthropocentrism (Pope Francis, 2015)’.

2. *Octogesima Adveniens* mentions the risk associated with ‘an ill-considered exploitation of nature (Pope Paul VI, 1971)’.

3. *Justice in the World* (2006) points out that it is not possible for all parts of the world to have the kind of ‘development’ that has occurred in the wealthy countries. Therefore, it calls on the rich ‘to accept a less material way of life, with less waste, to avoid the destruction of the heritage which they are obliged by absolute justice to share with all other members of humanity. This was the first to ‘emphasize the close link between ecology and justice’.

4. *Redemptor Hominis* (1979c) mentions of ‘the visible world which God created for man’. The document goes on to refer to the treatment of polluting the natural environment’ and the fact that humans frequently look on the natural environment only insofar as it serves them ‘for immediate consumption’. It insists that ‘man should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble ‘master’ and ‘guardian,’ and not as a heedless ‘exploiter and destroyer’.

5. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* returns to the issue of ecology in a passage where he referred to ‘the limits of available resources’ (Pope John Paul II, 1987a) and a later passage where he again noted that ‘natural resources are limited’ (Pope John Paul II, 1987a). In the first of these passages, ‘the integrity and cycles of nature’ (Pope John Paul II, 1987a) are referred to. Pope John Paul II (PJP II) uses here the word ‘integrity of creation’ that has already been accepted by the World Council of Churches (Dorr 1991). PJP II has given a brief account of what is meant by ‘integrity of creation in an ordered system, which is precisely the cosmos’. Moreover, the encyclical explains that the task of men and women is to cultivate the garden in accordance with divine law.

6. *Centesimus Annus* (Pope John Paul II, 1991d) shifts from the longstanding anthropocentric perspective to more of a ‘democracy of all

creatures;’ as what White has dubbed. The CA echoes a new voice as it states that “Equally worrying is the ecological question which accompanies the problem of consumerism and which is closely connected to it. In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way. At the root of the senseless destruction of the natural environment lies an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day”.

7. In the Foreign Visits of Pope John Paul II, he stresses the vital relationship that exists between indigenous peoples and their land:

- 1980, address to the people of the Amazon region of Brazil;
- 1983, address to the indigenous people of Guatemala;
- 1984, address to the indigenous people of Canada;
- 1985, address to the indigenous people of Ecuador and to the indigenous people of Peruvian Amazon;
- 1986, address to the indigenous people of Australia;
- 1987, address to the Native Americans.

8. In the Conference of the Food and Agricultural Organization (Session xxv, Nov. 1989), Pope John Paul II spelled out the need for nations and enterprises of all kinds to build the ecological protection cost of any project into the financial estimates of that enterprise.

9. Pope John Paul II (1990b) also had many positive appreciations especially respect for life: “the most profound and serious indication of the moral implications underlying the ecological problem is the lack of *respect for life* evident in many of the patterns of environmental pollution”. “*The defense of life*” and the consequent promotion of health, especially among very poor and developing peoples will be simultaneously *the measure and the basic criterion of the ecological horizon* at both the regional and world level (Pope John Paul II, 1987a).

The encyclical *Justice in the World* loudly echoes this social concern ministry of the hierarchy: “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, of the Church's

mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation”.

This can be extended now to the topic at hand, i.e. the Catholic Church's main response to earth's healing, focusing on *Laudato Si* as to what concrete “lines of approach and action” can be undertaken as stipulated by His Holiness Pope Francis.

Pope Paul VI (1971, p. 8) enunciates the environment as a ‘new social problem.’ “While the horizon of man is thus being modified according to the images that are chosen for him, another transformation is making itself felt, one which is the dramatic and unexpected consequence of human activity. Man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation. Not only is the material environment becoming a permanent menace --- pollution and refuse, new illness and absolute destructive capacity --- but the human framework is no longer under man's control; thus, creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable. This is a wide-ranging social problem which concerns the entire human family”. However, the uniqueness of *Laudato Si* is its strong advocacy for our active engagement on how we can better take care of our common home. This is unprecedented because the past encyclicals, for the most part, only do offer a diagnosis of the problem. But, they do not offer a unified solution as to what to do concerning the problem that humanity faces. Pope Francis gives guidelines or a blueprint for action by the stakeholders which are virtually every human being.

Because the issue, i.e., ecological crisis is all-encompassing, the dialogue rightfully begins at the international arena. Here the major ‘characters’ are presumably the leaders of the states as they are the most powerful people that could “ensure that solutions are proposed from global perspectives, and not simply to defend the interest of a few countries”. This is a *sine qua non* so that “a global consensus is essential in confronting the problems which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 122)”.

The Pope believes that when a global consensus is arrived at thru such dialogue it “could lead, for example, to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water” (Pope Francis, 2015). Clearly, these basic

elements that need a global agreement are the very social problems which are enumerated in the beginning of the *Laudato Si*. These are inextricably intertwined with ecological crisis. However, this is not always happening. But at least, Pope Francis is clearly suggesting a better line of approach and action.

Even if the leaders of various countries could not arrive at any consensus or agreement due to their seemingly ‘non-negotiable interests,’ one should not feel dismayed as there are many advances taking place thru the various ‘ecological movements worldwide’ spearheaded by many concerned NGOs of civil society.

Among individual nations *ad intra*, Pope Francis has suggested that a dialogue ought to take place among ‘national and local policies’ for when nature or ecology flourishes everybody wins. Besides, when there is a consensus arrived at within a nation, especially when such is legislated, it can easily be enforced.

This is reminiscent of the clean-up drive of the Manila Bay where aside from the legislation, many people participated in such a meaningful undertaking. However, there are always opposing interest groups that would hinder such a development, but the state leaders of any country must flex its political muscle to make things happen. Enforcing a law needs a strong political will even if such laws are always geared towards, to borrow Daniel Schneid’s words: ‘the cosmic common good’.

We have mentioned that ‘interest groups’ sometimes are the reasons why nation states could not create laws to protect the integral ecology. Such is precisely because it goes contrary to the business interest of certain groups. They will certainly lobby so that any legislation that would jeopardize their interest will not see the day. That is why Pope Francis believes that such should be done in a transparent manner. There should be no cover-up, for example, when a certain business establishment applies for a license to operate or a permit for its business. If such business might bring harm to the integral ecology of a place, the decision of giving the permit or not should be transparent.

Like Boracay and many other tourist spots nationwide, many establishments admittedly wrought havoc to the natural world. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has done what it ought to do despite the criticisms from many quarters, mostly, again coming from different interest groups.

The goods of the earth belong to all such that these should be enjoyed by everyone and be allowed to take their natural course whatever

it is so that they could attend their designed *telos*. “A consensus should always be reached between the stakeholders who can offer a variety of approaches, solutions, and alternatives (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 122)”.

The greatest sin against the environment is its turn into a commodity or the so-called commodification of nature. Those who are responsible for these are those who hold both the ‘gold and guns:’ the economically powerful and politically influential. Pope Francis appeals to these stakeholders to sit and talk wholeheartedly to help make our common home a better place as well as to make it more habitable especially to those who have no money and no political power. A dialogue of this nature should aim at serving life, especially human life. It can then be extended to other forms of life as well. Commodification of nature certainly brings a lot of money, maximizes the profits among business people, and allows the powerful to continue holding on to power. It is about time to give nature a chance. Let us give life a chance to flourish for its own sake.

Compared to the ones mentioned above, the last frontiers of dialogue among the less influential people include the believers and those involved in science and technology. There have been various ecological movements that pressure influential entities to be mindful not only of their own interests but also of the detrimental effects of ecological degradation to others; and most especially, the integrity of the whole of creation.

In conclusion, Pope Francis writes that “the majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers”. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, building networks of respect, and invoking fraternity among the believers.

Dialogues among the various sciences are likewise needed. At present, each field tends to become so enclosed in its own language where its specialized know-how leads to a certain degree of isolation and to the absolutization of its own field of knowledge. Such phenomenon prevents us from confronting environmental problems effectively. An open and respectful dialogue is truly needed between the various ecological movements; among which ideological conflicts are not infrequently encountered.

Finally, the ultimate purpose of the encyclical, just like the rest for the past 100 years, is to promote the inherent dignity of all living creatures as they are the manifestation of the Creator. “The Glory of God

is life of all created realities lived to their fullness". This is the essence of Christianity, of what St. Irenaeus, the great second-century theologian, has expressed in the adage: "the glory of God is a human being fully alive!"

### **Conclusion:**

The responsive character of the Church to any social problem is a key to her identity as well as the identity of the people of God. This character originated from the Prophets, who were then the 'mouth-pieces' of God. It is thus passed on until today. Now that 'Our Common Home' is gravely threatened, the Church, thru the Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis speaks about this ecological crisis which is being considered as an ultimate life issue thru the encyclical *Laudato Si*. This is the first social encyclical that came out from Rome that integrates social justice with the environmental / ecological crisis.

Having examined the ecological crisis in this research using the social action spiral embodied in *Mater et Magistra*, the origin of the crisis boils down to 'excessive anthropocentrism' which is a clear misunderstanding of human and nature relationships. The Bible and theological tradition (Augustine and Aquinas) both promote the 'natural teleology' of all created order. As such, both (i.e. humankind and other kind) have their own instrumental and intrinsic values. Although previous encyclicals vacillate on these values that tend to favor the instrumental value of the created order to solely serve humans' needs, *Laudato Si* clearly corrected this and thus behooves all people of goodwill to help 'care for our common home'.

### **Recommendations: *Alleviating the Ecological Crisis***

A telling passage in the Book of Psalms is found in Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it". This certainly reminds all created realities, especially human beings, who are created by God to be stewards of God's creation.

Going back to where we started, White (1967) has claimed that the roots of our ecological crisis "are largely religious". He has accused that as far as the present ecological crisis is concerned, "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt". He has reiterated further that "Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of the natural objects" which, additionally, has buttressed his thesis that "the

roots of our troubles are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious . . .”

Tucker and Grim (*as cited in* Jenkins, 2008) offer a rebuttal to White by pointing out that, “Religions provide basic interpretive stories of who we are, what nature is, where we have come from, and where we are going’. This comprises a worldview of a society. Religions also suggest how we should treat other humans and how we should relate to nature. Religions thus generate worldviews and ethics which underlie fundamental attitudes and values of different cultures and societies.

‘Excessive anthropocentrism’ ought to be jettisoned. Human beings ought to be conscious about their place in the schemes of things (context). i.e. in the material universe. The misunderstanding of the mandate “to name all animals and plants in the garden and to have dominion over them” (Gen. 2, NRSV) resulted to excessive anthropocentrism. It has plagued humankind (Pope Francis, 2015).

To overcome such problem, there should be a clear recognition, in conscience, that “all that God had made are all very good” when God looked at them as they are the mirror-image of the Creator. As such, all possessed inherent dignity. Each has its purpose in the schemes of creation. This should warrant the rational creatures, otherwise known as human beings, to acknowledge that we must have a clear ‘solidarity’ in being responsible for all. We must respect the instrumental values and intrinsic values of all realities, animate, and inanimate.

There ought to be a shift in our values and beliefs. We ought to clearly recognize that we are all one in God; thus, the relational foundation is rooted in the love of God, humankind, and other kind. Thru this, the rapture that led to the disharmony of nature and human relationships will be overcome. Reconciliation could then ensue.

Overcoming the ‘indifference to the natural world’ could be achieved by “ecological conversion (Pope Francis, 2015)”. Presently, conversion is understood as a process of everyday commitment to one’s humanity in relation to God. It is at the heart of Christian life (O’Keefe, 1997). By analogy, ‘ecological conversion’ is an on-going commitment to really care for the environment and not to fall into the cultural trap. We ought to disdain those which promote materialism, consumerism, and a wasteful lifestyle. This is especially a challenge to young people.

“So where does a Christian start?” Other concrete recommendations to heal the planet include the following (Hornsby-Smith, 2006):

1. Cultivate a spirituality of justice-seeking: Spend some time each day reading scriptures and Catholic social thought with ‘new eyes.
2. Start in a small way of doing something: Living simply, ‘practicing responsible simplicity of life’ (Pope Francis, 2015), avoiding materialism and consumerism, not following the ‘throwaway culture,’ and educating oneself about the state of the planet . . .
3. Become an ethically conscious consumer: Boycott certain products (Pope Francis, 2015). Maybe eat less beef so that the demand for such product will decrease and in effect lessen deforestation and desertification for the raising of cows which is one of the major factors of the crises.
4. Develop a concern for the environment again: have an ‘ecological conversion’ and cultivate environmental virtues to protect the environment.
5. Join cause-oriented groups or organizations that protect the environment: The problems of injustice in the world cannot be solved on one’s own.

These practical recommendations could certainly alleviate and help us better take care of our common home better.

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# Guidelines for Authors

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The objective of the Bedan Research Journal (BERJ) is to publish empirical, theoretical, and policy-oriented researches on various fields of studies such as arts, business, economics, humanities, health, law, management, politics, psychology, sociology, theology, and technology for the advancement of knowledge and promote the common good of humanity and society towards a sustainable future. The BERJ also aims to reach scholars, students, policy-makers, and other researchers from various fields to use the information published in each of the BERJ issue and/or contribute relevant scholarly work that are worth publishing. Since the BERJ is the major academic journal of San Beda University, the articles published are expected to meet the standards and rigors of quality research. BERJ is a double-blind peer-reviewed multidisciplinary international journal published once a year, in April, both online and printed versions.

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In consonance with the objectives of the Bedan Research Journal, the following policies set:

1. Articles submitted must be the results of original research and should not have been previously published or considered for publication in any other journal.
2. Articles must be submitted with a cover letter to the Editor-in-Chief at [dedralin@sanbeda.edu.ph](mailto:dedralin@sanbeda.edu.ph) and to the Editorial Assistant at [rsalapong@sanbeda.edu.ph](mailto:rsalapong@sanbeda.edu.ph).
3. All submitted articles will be subjected to editor evaluation (which includes the scientific quality of the article content, completeness, and plagiarism) for the feasibility of the further peer-reviewing process.
4. It is the responsibility of the author/s to ensure that the article has good quality of English, copy-edited, and has undergone Research Ethics Review.
5. The final authority to determine the worthiness of the research for publication lies on the BERJ Editorial Board.

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1. A review manuscript should observe the guidelines in accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) edition (APA style and format guidelines).
2. The manuscript should contain 8000 to 10,000 words or should not exceed 25 pages, inclusive of text, tables, figures, references and appendices.
3. The manuscript should be typed with Times New Roman 12 pt. font, double-spaced, on 8x11 inch page size, with a margin of one inch on all sides. The left- and right-hand margin should have justified alignment.
4. All references and/or content notes must be placed at the end of the text.
5. Abstracts should be 250-300 words with 5 keywords.
6. The Editor-in-chief sends the research manuscripts to blind peer reviewer/s together with the official BERJ Research Evaluation Form.
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10. The author/s should also submit a short profile (50-100 words) for inclusion in the section "The Contributors". It should include the complete name of the author, academic and/or professional affiliations, and educational background.



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