

Original Research Article
**AWARENESS AND PRACTICE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL CORE VALUES
AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study determined the students' awareness and practice of the public school Core values of *maka-Diyos (Godly)*, *makatao (person-oriented)*, *makakalikasan (environmental)*, and *makabansa (nationalistic)* in a component city of Northern Negros Occidental.

Study design: The study utilized a quantitative research design, particularly the descriptive-comparative and correlational approaches.

Place and Duration of Study: This study assessed the students' level of awareness and extent of practice of core values of *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa* of junior high school students in a public school in Negros Occidental, Philippines, during 2021-2022 when taken as a whole and grouped according to sex, religion, and family structure.

Methodology: Using the descriptive-comparative and correlational design, the study was assessed by 221 junior high school students during the school year 2021-2022. It employed a researchers' validated and reliability-tested core value awareness and practice questionnaires. In data analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Kruskal Wallis, and Spearman Rank Correlation were used.

Results: As a whole, the level of awareness is very high. All core values were rated very high, with *makabansa* as the highest and *makakalikasan* as the lowest. The extent of practice is very great. All core values were rated very great extent with *makabansa* as the highest and *makatao* and *makakalikasan* as the lowest. It is also showed that there were no significant differences in terms of religion and family structure. Meanwhile, in terms of sex, there was a significant difference in the students' awareness while there was no significant difference in the extent of practice when grouped according to sex, religion, and family structure. In terms of correlation, there was a significant relationship between the awareness and practice of public school core values.

Conclusion: The core value awareness and practice of *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa* is sustainably established among the students when the public school strongly implements and promotes this Department of Education (DepEd) mandate. Making these values visible in the school environment can help the learners recognize their importance.

Keywords: Core Values, Awareness, Practice, Descriptive-Comparative and Correlational, Philippine Public School

1. INTRODUCTION

Core values play an essential role in establishing the relationship between the students and the teachers [1]. Moreover, they also guide the conduct of the school activities in achieving its educational objectives [2]. With this, the achievement of these objectives is determined by how these core values are reflected in the various services [3]. Thus, there is a need to cultivate core value awareness among school members, especially the students [4].

The schools' core value awareness helps the learners identify themselves through various perspectives on behaving with their social beliefs and norms [5]. In fact, they are ideal institutions for honing the students' disposition toward learning the curricular subjects [6]. With this, the teachers have an embedded duty of guiding them to be aware of these core values and practice them sustainably [7]. Thus, it is essential to strongly establish among students their knowledge of the core values to demonstrate them unreservedly [8].

In Philippine public schools, issues with the sustainable implementation of these core values compromise the students' practice [9]. Most students do not understand these core values due to their academic demands and responsibilities [10]. Likewise, most are influenced by secularistic, modernistic, and materialistic mindsets, which slowly depreciate their values [11,12,13]. Further, the new learning mode amid the pandemic compromises the sustainable core value awareness and practice due to the teacher-student limited contact [14]. Not to mention, the pandemic has affected most learners to engage with their gadgets and modules leaving these core values unincorporated and unsupervised [15].

Several studies were conducted on core values internationally: on a matrix of basic education in Oman [1], on work in academia [16], on mindful self-compassion to ethics and mindfulness-based interventions [17] and five core values of Columban College [18]. Likewise, there were also studies in the Philippines: students' core values in an outcomes-based education platform [19], Department of Education (DepEd) core values in the teaching-learning process [20], moral reasoning and political leader preference [21], and students' awareness and practice of the university core values [22]. Given the available studies, there is a dearth of literature on students' awareness and practice of core values, especially in public secondary schools. This is the research gap that this study would like to fill in.

1.1 Research Problem

This study assessed the students' level of awareness and extent of practice of core values of *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa* of junior high school students in a public school in Negros Occidental, Philippines, during the school year 2021-2022 when taken as a whole and grouped according to sex, religion, and family structure. Also, it compared the difference in their awareness and practice when grouped according to these demographics. Lastly, it investigated the correlation between these two variables.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The paper postulated that the students' awareness influences their core value practice. This study intended to establish the awareness and practice of the students. This study was anchored on the concept of the public-school core values as stipulated in the Department of Education [23], where the basic principles *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa* serve as a moral and ethical guide in achieving the learners' holistic development [23]. This was anchored on Knowledge-Awareness-Practice (KAP) Model. This principle holds that the practice of individuals is rooted in their high level of awareness. In this study, this theory has something to do with the students' awareness and practice of the core values. When highly aware of these values, they can eventually demonstrate them [24]. The findings are significant in formulating values formation activities to continuously improve the students' core value awareness and practice in the public school.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative research design, particularly the descriptive-comparative and correlational approaches. The descriptive approach described the students' core value awareness and practice. The comparative approach investigated the difference in the awareness and practice of core values when grouped according to the demographics. Lastly, the correlational approach associated the students' core value awareness and practice.

2.2 Respondents

The respondents were the 221 public junior high school students in Negros Occidental, Philippines during the school year 2021-2022. To determine the actual respondents, stratified random sampling and the fishbowl technique were employed.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	f	%
Sex		
Male	91	41.2
Female	130	58.8
Religion		
Catholic	184	83.3
Non-Catholic	37	16.7
Family Structure		
Nuclear	150	67.9
Extended	54	24.4
Single Parent	17	7.7
Whole	221	100.0

2.3 Research Instrument

In assessing the study, the validated and reliability-tested core value awareness and practice questionnaires were used. The 18-item awareness questionnaire has a valid score of 0.96 and a reliable rating of 0.781. This was rated using 1-very low, 2-low, 3-moderate, 4-high, and 5-very high. Meanwhile, the 20-item practice questionnaire has a valid score of 0.96 and a reliable rating of 0.816. This was rated using 1-very low extent, 2-low extent, 3-moderate extent, 4-great extent, and 5-very great extent.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis used mean and standard deviation to determine the students' core value awareness and practice. Meanwhile, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov to test the normality, the Awareness [KS=0.096, p=0.000] and Practice [KS=0.120, p=0.000] were not normally distributed. Hence, the use of non-parametric statistical tools. Mann Whitney U-Test and Kruskal Wallis were employed to analyze the difference in awareness and practice. Lastly, the Spearman rank correlation was utilized in correlating the students' awareness with their core value practice.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Level of Awareness of the Students on the Public School Core Values

The students' awareness of core values refers to their recognition of the values of *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa* as principles that they should embody as learners under the Department of Education [25]. Table 2 presents the students' level of awareness of core values in a public school in Negros Occidental, Philippines. Generally, the level of awareness ($M=4.38$, $SD= 0.40$) is very high. Particularly, all core values of *maka-Diyos* ($M=4.43$; $SD=0.50$), *makatao* ($M=4.32$; $SD=0.52$), *makakalikasan* ($M=4.25$, $SD= 0.57$), and *makabansa* ($M=4.54$, $SD= 0.45$) were rated very high.

Generally, the very high rating indicates that the students have an exceptional core value awareness of *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa*. It means they completely recognize these values as principles they should exemplify [23]. Their exceptional awareness rating could be influenced by the DepEd mandate focusing on implementing these core values among public schools in the country [25, 26]. As part of the implementation, the public schools are encouraged to present these core values in their school buildings along with the vision-mission statement, which probably influenced the students' very high awareness [27]. Not to mention, the teachers' induction of these values to be effectively relayed to students regardless of modular instruction helps make the learners aware of the core values [28]. Hence, these signify the essentials of strengthening the core value visibility in a public school and the sustainable teacher orientation to maintain their students' very high awareness.

Meanwhile, the *maka-Diyos* result indicates that they highly recognize the importance of having a spiritual belief despite their public school instruction. Further, they also completely realize the need to respect others' spiritual beliefs [25]. The rating could be influenced by the students' high religious rating among public schools in Negros Occidental, Philippines [11]. Also, this could be ascribed to the large number of students who are Catholic in public schools. In support, Scheper [29] perceives that the students remain connected with their faith regardless of what schools they are into. Not to mention, their religious upbringing was influenced by their faith devotee parents, which affected the assessment [11]. Hence, these findings encourage the public school to maximize the students' faith membership in maintaining their awareness of *maka-Diyos*.

Moreover, the *makatao* result indicates that they fully recognize the value of their personhood and humanity [25]. The rating could be influenced by the DepEd's efforts to promote the students' well-being and values through instructional integration [30]. The exceptional awareness could also be affected by values education subjects in public schools that taught them to become value-oriented [31]. Not to mention, the DepEd's [32] promotion of Gender and Development (GAD) among public schools serves as a venue for students to recognize the essentials of respecting individual differences, as supported by Talon et al. [33]. Hence, the findings signify promoting students' person-oriented activities to facilitate their core value awareness.

The *makabansa* rating indicates that the students are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities as Filipino citizens. Additionally, they realize the significance of nationalism and patriotism for the country [25]. The very high result could be influenced by the social studies subject, which is given much attention among students. In this subject, they are introduced to the social concerns that need their critical reaction and analysis [34,35]. They are well-exposed to social media of the different socio-political issues, which greatly affect

their sense of *makabansa* [36]. Hence, the findings signify the need for a public school to use social studies and media to strengthen the students' core value awareness.

Lastly, the *makakalikasan* rating indicates that they fully recognize the need to care for and preserve the environment [25]. The DepEd mandate could influence the rating among public schools that encourage students to engage in environmental activities in and out of the school like coastal cleanups, etc. [37,38,39,40]. Not to mention, most students with their parents were into taking care of plants and animals at home during the pandemic lockdown, which probably influenced their awareness [41]. Hence, the findings signify the need for a public school to encourage their students to strengthen their environmental awareness that is not only limited at school but even at home.

Table 2. Level of Awareness of the JHS Students on the Core Values

Variable	Maka-Diyos			Maka-tao			Makakalikasan			Makabansa			Core Values		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Sex															
Male	4.25	0.55	VH	4.24	0.48	VH	4.16	0.59	Hi	4.47	0.50	VH	4.29	0.41	VH
Female	4.56	0.42	VH	4.37	0.54	VH	4.30	0.55	VH	4.59	0.40	VH	4.45	0.38	VH
Religion															
Catholic	4.39	0.51	VH	4.32	0.51	VH	4.24	0.58	VH	4.53	0.45	VH	4.37	0.41	VH
Non-Catholic	4.62	0.38	VH	4.32	0.57	VH	4.24	0.54	VH	4.61	0.41	VH	4.43	0.38	VH
Family Structure															
Nuclear	4.47	0.47	VH	4.34	0.53	VH	4.25	0.55	VH	4.54	0.46	VH	4.39	0.41	VH
Extended	4.44	0.48	VH	4.28	0.46	VH	4.29	0.50	VH	4.58	0.38	VH	4.39	0.35	VH
Single Parent	4.08	0.66	Hi	4.25	0.63	VH	3.99	0.84	Hi	4.48	0.53	VH	4.23	0.48	VH
Whole	4.43	0.50	VH	4.32	0.52	VH	4.24	0.57	VH	4.54	0.45	VH	4.38	0.40	VH

Note: 3.41 – 4.20=High(Hi), 4.21 – 5.00=Very High(VH)

3.2 Extent of practice of the junior high school students on public school core values

The students' practice of core values refers to their demonstration of the values of *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa* as principles that they should embody as learners under the Department of Education [25]. Table 3 presents the students' extent of practice of core values in a public school in Negros Occidental, Philippines. Generally, the extent of practice (M=4.38, SD= 0.41) was rated very great extent. Particularly, all core values of *maka-Diyos* (M=4.39; SD=0.55), *makatao* (M=4.31, SD= 0.49), *makakalikasan* (M=4.31, SD= 0.57), and *makabansa* (M=4.54, SD= 0.46) were rated very great extent.

The overall rating indicates that the students always practice the core values. This would mean that despite the pandemic, they demonstrate respect for spiritual beliefs, recognize differences, care for the environment, and show pride in being Filipinos given distance learning [25]. The result could be influenced by the students' very high core value awareness, as supported by Kwol et al. [42]. Gallinero and Otig [22] believe that when the students have a high awareness of core values, they can exceptionally practice them. Also, the strict implementation of these core values among public schools, even before the pandemic, encouraged the students to adapt and perform even at home, as supported by Lapitan et al. [43]. Hence, establishing awareness is critical in advancing their core value practice.

Meanwhile, the *maka-Diyos* rating indicates that the students engage well in worthwhile spiritual activities [25]. The exceptional core value practice could be influenced by their strong faith affiliation, especially during a crisis like a pandemic [11]. With a large number of Catholic students in this study, their religious upbringing strongly impacted their practicing of faith during this pandemic which probably influenced the assessment [44]. Hence, the findings signify the need for public schools to encourage their students to engage in faith-related activities despite their public school choice to establish their sustainable practice of the *maka-Diyos*.

Moreover, the *makatao* result indicates that public school students value and respect their personhood and others [25]. The rating could be influenced by the person-oriented values like *bayanihan* and *pagkakaisa* shown by these students during the pandemic by helping others to survive lockdown, as supported by Cena and Bual [11]. Not to mention the practice of the Three Acts of Goodness, where public school students are expected to speak good words, think good thoughts, and do good deeds, which also impacted their sense of humanity and compassion towards others [45]. Hence, these findings signify the need for continuous demonstration of these person-oriented values in and out of the school to guarantee the excellent practice of *makatao*.

Furthermore, the *makakalikasan* rating indicates that the students exceptionally practice environmental care [25]. The result could be influenced by the lockdown, which detained most students at home with opportunities to care for plants and pets in conquering the circumstance [46]. Also, this has something to do with the strong DepEd implementation of reduce, reuse, and recycle mechanism and solid waste management, which encouraged the students to participate even before the pandemic. This probably influenced their core value practice, as Vidanes [47] supported. Hence, they imply the need for a public school to strengthen the promotion of these environmental activities among students to ensure their continuous practice of *makakalikasan*.

Lastly, the *makabansa* rating indicates that the students acknowledge themselves as Filipinos with pride. Also, they demonstrate nationalism and patriotism [25]. The result could be influenced by the student's adherence to the government's policies and regulations amid pandemic circumstances that engage them to follow health protocols, etc., as supported by Baker et al. [44]. Also, most students during this circumstance displayed *pakikisama*, *pakikiramay*, and *pagkakaisa* in fighting against the global crisis, which strongly impacted their nationalism and patriotism, as supported by Galang et al. [48]. In fact, Verdejo [9] perceived that being *makabansa* as a core value is developed when they are given the opportunities to help other people. Hence, these findings signify the need for a public school to provide varied activities that elicit students' strong sense of help and concern towards other citizens.

Variable	Maka-Diyos			Maka-tao			Makakalikasan			Makabansa			Core Values		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Sex															
Male	4.26	0.65	VG	4.26	0.49	VG	4.27	0.61	VG	4.48	0.52	VG	4.32	0.44	VG
Female	4.48	0.45	VG	4.35	0.48	VG	4.34	0.54	VG	4.59	0.40	VG	4.43	0.38	VG
Religion															
Catholic	4.37	0.56	VG	4.30	0.49	VG	4.30	0.58	VG	4.53	0.47	VG	4.37	0.42	VG
Non-Catholic	4.52	0.53	VG	4.34	0.45	VG	4.38	0.54	VG	4.63	0.40	VG	4.45	0.37	VG
Family Structure															
Nuclear	4.43	0.55	VG	4.34	0.49	VG	4.35	0.53	VG	4.55	0.47	VG	4.41	0.41	VG
Extended	4.36	0.55	VG	4.27	0.49	VG	4.28	0.52	VG	4.49	0.42	VG	4.34	0.40	VG
Single Parent	4.16	0.55	GR	4.14	0.39	GR	4.03	0.92	GR	4.64	0.48	VG	4.24	0.43	VG
Whole	4.39	0.55	VG	4.31	0.49	VG	4.31	0.57	VG	4.54	0.46	VG	4.38	0.41	VG

Note: 3.41 – 4.20=Great (Gr), 4.21 – 5.00=Very Great (VG)

3.3 Difference in the awareness of the JHS students on the public school core values

Table 4 presents the difference in the students' level of awareness of public school core values. Using Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallis, the results showed that there were no significant differences in religion [$U=2967.0$, $p=0.323$] and family structure [$\chi^2(2)=1.798$, $p=0.407$]. Hence, the hypotheses are accepted. Meanwhile, in sex [$U=4553.5$, $p=0.004$], there was a significant difference in the students' awareness. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

The no difference in religion and family structure indicates that regardless of whether they are Catholic or not and come from a nuclear, extended, or single-parent family. They share the same perception of the core value awareness. This means that these variables do not influence their awareness of core values. The ratings are congruent with Kuyateh [49], claiming that the students' core value awareness does not vary according to religious affiliation. Meanwhile, Ayo-Vaughan et al. [50] also support that the students' core value awareness does not differ in family structure. The results could be influenced by the fact that the development of students' core value awareness is primarily facilitated by the school and not by the church or at home. This means that their awareness is concretely established through school instruction, as Scheper [29] supports. Hence, these findings signify the need for a public school to provide activities that promote the students' core value awareness inviting the church and the family to participate.

Meanwhile, the difference in the students' sex reveals that this variable affects their core value awareness. This result is supported by Sulistiani [51], claiming that the students' awareness differs according to their sex. The rating could be influenced by the students' varied disposition toward recognizing the core values, as argued by Bayrak and Ecerkale [52]. One factor that probably affected the assessment is the outnumbering of female students in this study. Studies show that girls are normally more value-oriented than boys [53]. Also, it is argued by Madrigal et al. [54] that the individual's religiosity affects their values. In this study, female students are more religious than their counterparts, as

supported by Penny and Robbins [55]. Hence, the findings imply the need for a public school to strengthen their students' religiosity and values formation to sustainably maintain their core value awareness.

Table 4. Difference in the Awareness of the JHS Students on the Core Values

Variable	U	z	p
Sex	4553.500*	-2.914	0.004
Religion	2967.000	-0.989	0.323
Variable	χ^2	df	p
Family Structure	1.798	2	0.407

Note: *the difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

3.4 Difference in the practice of the JHS students on the public school core values

Table 5 presents the difference in the students' extent of practice of core values. Using Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallis, the results showed that there was no significant difference in their core value practice when grouped to sex [U=5075.5, $p=0.072$], religion [U=2848.5, $p=0.184$], and family structure [$\chi^2(2)=3.253$, $p=0.197$]. Hence, the hypotheses are accepted.

The rating indicates that regardless of the students' religion, family structure, and sex, they share similar perceptions of the core value practice. Their core value practice does not vary according to these demographics, as supported by Shorofi and Arbon [56] and Moodley [57]. The very high awareness assessment could influence the practice rating, as manifested in the descriptive results. In other words, their practice is not dependent on whether they are Catholic or non-Catholic, male or female, or they come from extended, nuclear, or single-parent families but on their very high awareness level of these values. This means they practice these values exceptionally because they are completely aware of them [22]. Also, this could be influenced by the DepEd mandate encouraging the public school students to practice these core values as explicitly rated in their report cards [58]. Hence, these findings encourage the public school to primarily focus on establishing their students' awareness to ensure the quality practice of these core values. Also, the need to establish intrinsically among these learners these core values to ensure their sustainable practice.

Table 5. Difference in the Practice of the JHS Students on the Public School Core Values

Variable	U	z	p
Sex	5075.500	-1.796	0.072
Religion	2848.500	-1.328	0.184
Variable	χ^2	df	p
Family Structure	3.253	2	0.197

Note: the difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

3.5 Relationship between the students' awareness and practice of public school core values

Table 6 presents the relationship between the students' awareness and practice of public school core values. Using Spearman rank correlation, there was a significant relationship between the students' awareness and practice of core values [$\rho(219)=0.761$, $p=0.000$]. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The positive correlation is that the students' awareness strongly impacts their core value practice. This means that the higher their recognition of these values, the more they become demonstrative of them. This association is congruent with Kwol et al. [42], claiming that the individuals' awareness of values influences how they practice them. The result indicates that the public school should give a premium on sustainably establishing the students' awareness of these core values to expect a high performance of these values.

The correlation result could be influenced by the strong DepEd implementation and monitoring of these core values as initiated by the administrators and the teachers [25, 59]. Here, the role of administrators and teachers is essential in establishing both the students' core value awareness and practice of these core values, as supported by Rainbolt et al. [60]. In fact, Fisher and Frey [61] argue that teachers are potent instruments in engaging students to recognize and practice the core values. Hence, the findings imply the need to sustainably implement, supervise, and mobilize the teachers through their administrators in honing the students' core values to ensure quality awareness and practice.

Table 6. Relationship Between the Awareness and Practice of Public School Core Values

Variable	ρ	df	p
Awareness x Practice	0.761*	219	0.000

Note: *the relationship is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Theoretically, the study posited that the students' awareness influences their core value practice. Given the correlation result, the veracity of the Knowledge-Awareness-Practice (KAP) model is validated. It means that the public school's assurance that their students practice these core values is dependent on the kind of awareness they provide their learners. This means that they should sustainably provide activities that elicit a high level of student awareness, whether there is a pandemic or none, to engage their students to demonstrate them [24]. Hence, it signifies the need for the public school to exhaust means to strengthen and establish the students' core value awareness to expect the students' greater extent of performance of core values.

4.0 Conclusion

The core value awareness and practice of *maka-Diyos*, *makatao*, *makakalikasan*, and *makabansa* is sustainably established among the students when the public school strongly implements and promotes this DepEd mandate. Also, making these values visible in the school environment can help the learners recognize their importance. With these, the role of administrators is essential in mobilizing their teachers to incorporate them into their instruction and institutional programs. The teacher's induction of these core values is essential in the quality transfer of these principles among their students.

Additionally, providing students varied activities not limited to school but also at home, church, and community is significant in advancing sustainable core value awareness and practice. Further, strengthening values formation is also critical since this discipline is a potential avenue for these students to engage in these core values. Meanwhile, with the correlational result and the validation of the theory, it is critical to establish primarily the students' awareness to guarantee their unreserved practice of these core values. Lastly, given the study's limitation, further research is recommended by conducting similar pursuits on a larger scale employing other variables which were not covered to validate the claims.

CONSENT

As per a university's or international standard, written consent from respondents has been accepted as collected by the authors and kept safe.

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