

The Religious Practices of Youth and Its Relation to their Attitude on Same-Sex Marriage

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Abstract –*This study intended to identify the relationship of religious practices of college students from sectarian and non-sectarian sector, and their attitude towards same-sex marriage. The issue of same-sex marriage is considered as one of the sensitive concerns in the Philippines society since it is a Catholic influenced country. The respondents in this study were total of 781 college students from 385 samples of Adamson University and 396 samples of Polytechnic University of the Philippines who were selected through stratified sampling method. In addition, data were gathered for the entire month of September 2015 through online and self-administered surveys. The results revealed that college students from both sectors have different general attitudes toward same-sex marriage despite of being highly involved to their religious practices. Respondents from Adamson University, sectarian sector, opposed to the issue, while college students from PUP, non-sectarian sector, supported same-sex marriage. Further, this study found out that spiritual association of an educational institution plays a small but a significant role in explaining attitude towards same-sex marriage.*

Keywords: *religious practices, attitude, same-sex marriage, sectarian sector, non-sectarian sector, college students*

INTRODUCTION

Generally, religion was a vague term, which resulted for different applications in life. However, theorists emphasized that religions provide meaning in the face of a meaningless world. It was believed that religions offer people a sense of identity and a place in the world from where to act [1]. Further, religions typically prescribe an ethical life for people through teachings in able to identify what is right or wrong [2]. In order for people to recognize the importance of religion, religious practices play an important role [3].

Under religious practices, there lies the essence of religious experience, which provides basis for a permanent attitude of an individual [4]. Further, religious values, beliefs and practices not only affect economic life, it also influences social relationships at family, community and societal levels [5]. In society, social problems were omnipresent; from neighborhood crimes to national interest up to global concerns. Religious communities were increasingly

reclaiming some of the functions to social issues that state cannot adequately provide. Thus, in public consciousness, religion has a role to social matters [6].

One of the sensitive issues in the society today was the debate over same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriage was a much newer issue to most people and still evokes as much uncertainty and anxiety [7]. With the outgrowing number of gays and lesbians, people have become more familiar and aware on the immense range of rights, protections, benefits and obligations of homosexuals. Some were sympathizers, but growing numbers of people are deeply offended, even outraged, by injustices [7].

Legalizing same-sex marriage leads to several debates and controversies. Various principles and beliefs of different parties are still proving each one's point towards the issue. In a landmark view, a divided Supreme Court ruled on June 26th that states cannot ban same-sex marriage [8]. The U.S. is now the 21st country to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide. Married same-sex couples will now enjoy the same

legal rights and benefits as married heterosexual couples and will be recognized on official documents such as birth and death certificates.

The latest legalization of same-sex marriage in U.S. drew so much attention that leads to diverse opinions all over the world. On this era, where people can freely and clearly state what they believe in, such group discussions and debates are obviously seen on the landscape.

In the Philippines, the government had a fierce debate on the issue of same-sex unions. Though, some organizations such as Communist Party and Metropolitan Community Church of the Philippines were conducting same-sex marriages in the country. Identifying that it is a Catholic country, the Roman Catholic Church opposes to this issue and the government did not recognize such unification rendering on the constitution [9].

The Philippines is one of the Catholic influenced country in the world. It has always been in keeping the laws of God. Many Filipino homosexuals have been protesting their freedom rights to consider the union between same sex relationships. Until now, the government has no grant given for this plea.

Referring to the study conducted by Philippines Social Science Center, great number of Filipino youth has a strong believe in existence of God, in the concept of sin, in the idea of heaven, and principle of resurrection. Furthermore, majority of them are actively involved in religious services and regularly praying for their faith [10].

Nonetheless, a survey conducted by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the main broadsheet providers in the country, indicated that the young Filipinos did not completely follow all the teachings of their religion in conveying their opinions on moral issues. This includes the concern on divorce, abortion, homosexuality, use of contraceptives, and premarital sex. The youth found the views of the church outdated regarding such issues [10].

Hence, this study seeks to recognize the views of the college students as representation of Filipino youth on the issue of same-sex marriage. Polytechnic University of the Philippines-Mabini Campus (PUP) was one of the state universities that have a large population of college students in Manila. Most of their students belong to the usual economic class of families in the social order, which has the possibilities to be highly exposed and well aware of the current and significant concerns of their society. The state

university is considered as a non-sectarian school since it does not being owned by any sector or group. In contrast, Adamson University (AdU) is a Catholic Vincentian educational institution which is located in Ermita, Manila. The sectarian university is known for about more than eighty years of providing for quality education for young Filipinos.

The hopes for this study are to discover such information related on religious practices and same-sex marriage. Moreover, be able to tabulate answers without unbiased conclusions. The religious practices of PUP-Manila and Adamson University students are significant in such way to know if it influences their attitude on same-sex marriage. Also, the views of these college students aims to generate new findings related to issues of this moral concern.

Along these lines, this study is worth pursuing because everyone is involved on this matter. Homosexuals have been emerging its number for the past years and being a part of the picture is necessary and inevitable. With the news and information that were casted around, opinions and attitudes were being formed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to find out the relationship of religious practices and generalized attitude on same-sex marriage of the college students from sectarian and non-sectarian universities based on their level of involvement to their religious practices and level of attitude towards same-sex marriage. In terms of level of involvement on religious practices, college students affiliated from different religions are substantial to evaluate in able to distinguish the difference of commitments of the respondents to their religious practices. Finally, for their level of attitude, they were requested to impart their opinion on same-sex marriage in different circumstances.

METHODS

This study was conducted to determine the relationship of the religious practices of the college students and their attitude towards same-sex marriage. The survey research method was applied in the study. Likewise, the study was descriptive in nature. Descriptive research gathers quantifiable information that can be used for statistical inference on your target audience through data analysis [11]. Further, the target audiences of this study are youth affiliated to sectarian sector and non-sectarian sector within

Manila area. The researchers selected the college students from Polytechnic University of the Philippines and Adamson University as the appropriate respondents since both of the institution operate on same months for their academic year.

The respondents involved in the study were total of 781 college students from Adamson University and Polytechnic University of the Philippines, who were selected through stratified sampling with the inclusion of these concerns: (a) a representative from a college of both university; and (b) division of sexuality of male and female. Their rights and inscrutability was respected. The purpose of the study was fully explained in the instrument for the respondents to understand. The informed consent was established with the respondents and the confidentiality of the results was fully assured and was taken with consideration.

Matrix 1. Scale and Description for Level of Religious Practices

Verbal	Scale	Description
Highly Involve	10.00-7.76	Excellent Involvement
10		
9		
8		
7	7.75-5.51	Good Involvement
6		
5	5.50-3.26	Fair Involvement
4		
3	3.25-1.00	Poor Involvement
2		
1		
Barely Involve		

Matrix 2. Scale and Description for Attitude on Same-Sex Marriage

Verbal Interpretation	Scale	Description
Strongly Agree	10.00-7.76	Extremely Negative On Same-Sex Marriage
10		
9		
8		
7	7.75-5.51	Negative On Same-Sex Marriage
6		
5	5.50-3.26	Positive On Same-Sex Marriage
4		
3	3.25-1.00	Extremely Positive On Same-Sex Marriage
2		
1		
Strongly Disagree		

The different parts of the research instrument were based on the objectives of the study. In addition,

the instrument was validated by professionals on the fields of moral theology and statistics to certify the practicability of results. Furthermore, the researchers utilized Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) in analyzing the data being gathered. Arbitrary scaling verbal descriptions were being provided with the use of Likert scaling by means of 10 to 1 ratings with the corresponding verbal interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This presents the result of the survey conducted by the researchers together with the presentation of the table based on the objectives of the study.

A. Level of Religious Practices of the Students

The religiosity of the youth ground their measurements on practices such as praying, attending worship services, and moving to a pilgrimage [12].

Table 1. Level of religious practices among catholic students

	Sectarian		Non-sectarian	
	\bar{X}	VI	\bar{X}	VI
Praying	8.06	Excellent	9.37	Excellent
Reading the Bible	6.88	Good	8.29	Excellent
Confession	8.60	Excellent	9.12	Excellent
Praying the Rosary	6.46	Good	7.08	Good
Lighting of Church Candle	6.47	Good	6.76	Good
Receiving of Communion	7.57	Good	8.04	Excellent
Fasting	5.80	Good	8.04	Excellent
Partaking on Processions	6.69	Good	7.16	Good
Participating in Religious Activities during Holy Days	7.05	Good	7.18	Good
Celebration of Feast Day	7.50	Good	7.63	Good
Monetary Donation	6.60	Good	7.12	Good
Choir Rehearsal	4.69	Fair	5.84	Good
Youth Ministries	6.54	Good	6.94	Good
Group Bible Studies/Devotion	6.29	Good	6.80	Good
Total	6.801	Good Involvement	7.526	Good Involvement

Both sectarian and non-sectarian students obtained Good Involvement as their level of involvement on religious practices. Minimal differences occurred only on the religious practices Reading the Bible, Receiving of Communion/Eucharist, Fasting and Choir Rehearsal but these were all differ by one scale.

According to the National Filipino Catholic Youth Study of 2013, 50% of Filipino youth go to confession

a few times in a year. Moreover, Catholic youth in the country pray the rosary, visit Blessed Sacrament, attend Bible studies and join prayer meetings at least thrice a month. Hence, these practices indicate that the Filipino Catholic youths are nevertheless tightly engage in the Catholic traditions and that the Church continues to provide values to young beings. Meanwhile, Agoncillo (2015) pointed out that religiosity, which contains of religious practices, beliefs and attitudes, is a significant predictor of psychosocial attributes, cultural belief and sociopolitical participation. This implies that the role of the Filipino youth in the life of the Catholic Church is cannot beundervalued [19].

Table 2. Level of religious practices among non-catholic students

Religious Practices	Sectarian		Non-Sectarian	
	\bar{x}	VI	\bar{x}	VI
Praying	9.38	Excellent	9.21	Excellent
Reading the Bible	7.50	Good	8.16	Excellent
Asking God for Forgiveness	6.75	Excellent	9.15	Excellent
Midweek Services	7.00	Good	6.04	Good
Group Bible Studies	5.88	Good	7.35	Good
Soul winning/ Visitation	6.13	Good	5.02	Excellent
Sunday School	6.25	Good	8.15	Excellent
Children Outreaches	6.00	Good	7.23	Good
Youth Ministries	5.75	Good	6.28	Good
Monetary Donation	4.75	Good	8.63	Good
Evangelistic Crusade	3.13	Good	7.22	Good
Choir Rehearsal	5.88	Fair	8.84	Good
Fasting	4.63	Good	4.14	Good
Lord's Supper	3.75	Good	5.40	Good
Total	5.913	Good	7.414	Good

Similar to the data results of the Roman Catholic respondents, the gathered data implied no huge difference between the level of involvement of the sectarian and non-sectarian students which were Non-Catholics. The non-catholic respondents are the students who are Iglesiasni Cristo, Mormons, Baptist, Islam, and Methodist by religious affiliation. Both schools obtained Good Involvement as their level of involvement on religious practices.

The data reflected to the research of International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology. According to the reviewed study, the Filipino youth were religious in general. Similar to the Non-Catholics students of Adamson University and Polytechnic University of the Philippines, it also showed that young Filipinos have a high involvement in private and public religious practices[13].

B. Attitude on Same-Sex Marriage

Table 3.1 Attitude on same-sex marriage

	Sectarian		Non-Sectarian	
	\bar{x}	VI	\bar{x}	VI
Same-sex marriage is a sin.	7.94	Extremely Negative	5.60	Negative
Same-sex marriage is not an important political issue.	7.78	Extremely Negative	5.61	Negative
Same-sex marriage is immoral.	8.14	Extremely Negative	6.02	Negative
Same-sex marriage is unnatural.	6.97	Negative	6.14	Negative

Sectarian and non-sectarian students mutually agreed that same-sex marriage is a sin, an unimportant political issue, immoral and unnatural which resulted to a negative attitude. It can also be observed that sectarian students have more negative attitude on same-sex marriage compared to non-sectarian students.

The data both corresponded to the study of Woodford, Walls, and Levy among selected college students in America. Concerning the denominational teachings about homosexuality, two thirds of the sample reported that their religion teaches that same-sex marriage was a sin [14].

Table 3.2 Attitude on same-sex marriage

	Sectarian		Non-Sectarian	
	\bar{x}	VI	\bar{x}	VI
Same-sex marriage is a taboo.	4.69	Positive	4.84	Positive

Respondents mutually disagreed that same-sex marriage is a taboo which tells us that they believe that it is an acceptable topic to be discussed both public and private. It denoted a positive attitude on same-sex marriage.

Sectarian and non-sectarian students disagreed on more than half of all the statements provided about same-sex marriage. Sectarian students showed a positive attitude about same-sex marriage while non-sectarian students are negative about it.

The data mutually agreed and disagreed to the longitudinal study of Pew Research Center about same-sex marriage. Since 2003 up to the present year, American youth or considered as the Millennials (Americans who were born from 1981) had a positive attitude towards same-sex marriage. From 51% who favored same-sex marriage in 2003, the young generation of America expressed higher level of support for same-sex marriage in the present year with 70%[15].

Table 3.3 Attitude on same-sex marriage

	Sectarian		Non-Sectarian	
	\bar{x}	VI	\bar{x}	VI
Same-sex marriage jeopardizes the institution of marriage.	8.71	Extremely Negative	4.92	Positive
Same-sex marriage upholds equality.	7.62	Negative	4.87	Positive
Same-sex marriage is an expression of love.	7.92	Extremely Negative	4.77	Positive
Same-sex marriage is not for the Filipino culture.	7.90	Extremely Negative	4.53	Positive
Same-sex marriage is for free-thinking individuals only.	8.48	Extremely Negative	4.89	Extremely Positive
Learning from my religious doctrines, I have come to know that marriage is for a man and a woman.	6.65	Negative	4.30	Extremely Positive
I will never attend a same-sex marriage ceremony because it is against my religious practices.	7.04	Negative	3.33	Positive
I believe that same-sex marriage could materialize in my religion if most of the members will support it.	6.70	Negative	2.66	Positive
I agree that same-sex partners who have a strong faith in their religion will gain blessing from their God.	7.31	Negative	4.41	Positive
I consider that whenever the religious minister of my religion or his/her relative is gay or lesbian, he/she can be considered for same-sex marriage freely in my religion.	6.59	Positive	6.47	Negative
From what I've learned during our church sermon, there's nothing wrong being in a same-sex marriage as long as you're both serving the Lord.	7.22	Negative	4.78	Positive

The negative attitude of students from the sectarian sector opposed the poll survey by the Washington Post-ABC News, while the positive attitude from the non-sectarian sector supported it. It showed that a decrease in age directly corresponded to an increase in acceptance of same-sex marriage [16]. The survey showed that among ages to 18-29 years old, sixty-five percent (65%) accepted same-sex marriage while the percentage of acceptance from the adults is forty-seven percent (47%). Hence, the negative attitude of Adamson University students on same-sex marriage differed from the reviewed studies, whereas these empirical data corresponded to the

positive attitude of Polytechnic University of the Philippines students towards same-sex marriage.

Table 3.4 shows the attitude on same-sex marriage. It can be observed that non-sectarian students mostly showed positive attitude on the statements mentioned above. However, same-sex marriage is acceptable to them as long as the ceremony will not be held on the church they're worshipping.

Moreover, both sectarian and non-sectarian students are not willing to change their religious affiliation to another which would allow them to have same-sex marriage.

Table 3.4 Attitude on same-sex marriage

	Sectarian		Non-Sectarian	
	\bar{x}	VI	\bar{x}	VI
I do not see myself worshipping in a house of God that allows same-sex marriage.	6.27	Negative	3.65	Negative
I believe that same-sex partners who give more donations/financial support to their religious institution can be considered for same-sex marriage.	6.55	Negative	7.20	Negative
Same-sex marriage is acceptable to me as long as the ceremony will not be held on the church I'm worshipping.	5.22	Negative	8.17	Extremely Negative
I am willing to change my religion to another which would allow me to have same-sex marriage.	8.48	Extremely Negative	7.76	Extremely Negative
I do not see myself worshipping in a house of God that allows same-sex marriage.	6.27	Negative	3.65	Negative

Table 3.5 Attitude on same-sex marriage

	Sectarian		Non-Sectarian	
	\bar{x}	VI	\bar{x}	VI
Total	7.21	Negative	5.25	Positive

In general, sectarian students showed negative attitude on same-sex marriage while non-sectarian students demonstrated a positive attitude.

C. Religious Practices of the Students as to their Sex and Type of School

Table 4.Independent Sample T-Test of religious practices and sex

	\bar{x}		p-value	Remarks
	Male	Female		
Catholics	5.2495	7.2176	.000	Significant Different
Non-Catholics	6.0584	7.4747	.006	Significantly Different

In order to know if there is a significant difference among variables, the researchers utilized the SPSS Program by Independent Sample T-Test and it revealed that there is a significant difference on the level of religious practices between male and female both Catholic and Non-Catholic respondents. It denoted that female respondents were more involved in religious practices compared to male respondents regardless of their religious affiliation.

According to the report of Philippines Social Science Council in 2003, gender is the most significant variable in determining the youth's religiosity, for surveys on the religiosity of youth noted that female adolescents were more religious than their male counterparts [10]. Hence, female students from both Adamson University and Polytechnic University of the Philippines were more involved in religious practices compare to male students.

Table 5.Independent Sample T-Test of religious practices and type of school

	\bar{x}		p-value	Remarks
	Sectarian	Non-Sectarian		
Catholics	6.8007	7.5260	.000	Significant Different
Non-Catholics	5.9129	7.4143	.006	Significantly Different

There is a significant difference on the level of involvement on religious practices between sectarian

and non-sectarian, both catholic and non-catholic respondents. Non-sectarian respondents are more involved in religious practices than sectarian respondents regardless of religious affiliation.

The results adopt the culture of religions within the premises of both Adamson University and Polytechnic University of the Philippines. PUP, a non-sectarian university, deals with various religious organizations to promote spiritual growth to their students. According to the official list of student organizations of the university in the academic year of 2011-2012, 21% of the student organizations or 26 out of 122 were recognized as religious organizations [17]. Moreover, these organizations stimulate such religious activities, including prayer meetings, cell groups, etc. that feasibly reflected the high involvement of PUP students in religious practices. However, Adamson University, sectarian institution, has a Campus Ministry Office in providing the spiritual care of their students. It offers programs that promote values formation, holistic development, and faith formation which signified the high involvement of respondents from this sector to religious practices.

D. Religious Practices and Attitude on Same-Sex Marriage

Table 6. Pearson's Correlation of religious practices and same-sex marriage among catholic respondents

	r	p-value	Remarks
Sectarian	.108*	.036	Significant, Positively Very Weak
Non-Sectarian	.102	0.058	Not Significant

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The decision is to reject the hypothesis if the computed p-value is less than or equal to the 0.05 level of significance, otherwise, if the p-value is greater than the level of significance, accept the hypothesis. The relationship of sectarian respondents' level of religious practices and attitude on same-sex marriage is positively very weak. This shows that the more the respondents being involved on religious practices, the more they will disagree on same-sex marriage while on the non-sectarian respondents are not significant at all.

Table 7 shows the Pearson's Correlation of religious practices and same-sex marriage among non-catholic respondents

Table 7. Pearson’s Correlation of religious practices and same-sex marriage among non-catholic respondents

	r	p-value	Remarks
Sectarian	.811*	.015	Significant, Positively Very Strong
Non-Sectarian	.004	.979	Not Significant

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Similar to the data obtained by catholic students, the relationship of non-catholic sectarian respondent's level of religious practices and attitude on same-sex marriage is positively very strong. This shows that the more the respondents being involved on religious practices, the more they will disagree on same-sex marriage while on the non-sectarian respondents are not significant since the obtained p-value is .979.

The data mutually resembled and conflicted to the studies on the subject of same-sex marriage published abroad. The involvement on religious practices and attitude of same-sex marriage of Adamson University students corresponds to the study of Woodford, Walls, and Levy (2012), religion variables have consistently been found to be some of the strongest predictors of opinions about same-sex marriage. Moreover, adopted from the results of the scholarly article of Olson, Cadge, and Harrison (2006), individuals who participate actively in religious life are more likely to oppose unions among same-sex.

Thus, the high involvement of sectarian respondents on religious practices causes their negative attitude towards same-sex marriage and the viewpoint of several Christian affiliated religions on this issue reflected from this particular result. In the rationalization of the result from the Adamson University, students enrolled in sectarian university were required to take courses about supplementary religion of the institution.

However, the attitudes of Non-Catholic students from Polytechnic University of the Philippines, whom have a higher involvement on religious practices, diverge to the results of the empirical studies. As a university in a non-sectarian model, the religious knowledge and commitments of students play no role in the way the university organizes its core activities. Furthermore, non-sectarian universities were more guided by the rules focus on the good order, respect for racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, and freedom of speech [18]. Hence, there is no relationship between

the high involvement of PUP students on their religious practices and their positive attitude towards same-sex marriage.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results showed that both sectarian and non-sectarian students have good involvement on their religious practices. However, females are more religious than male as to their involvement on religious practices regardless of their religious affiliation. The results also showed that type of school is not an indicator to know if you are religious or not.

As to their attitude towards same-sex marriage, sectarian students have a negative attitude while non-sectarian are positive about it. Results implied that among sectarian students, the more they became involved in religious practices, the more they became negative on same-sex marriage.

With this, the researchers recommend the concerned sectors especially the religious sectors to prolong programs and activities that will guide the spirituality of the Filipino youth. Also, administrations of different schools and universities must take part in enhancing the knowledge of the students towards gender sensitive issues without any biased intentions. In particular, the researchers propose gender sensitivity trainings for faculty staffs and regular discussions for students concerning topics about religion and gender matters.

This research was limited to study the attitudes of college students from Adamson University and Polytechnic University of the Philippines. The future scholars can improve this study through extending the communication factors that influence the opinion of youth on same-sex marriage such as family and friends relationships, and political relations. Also, include other universities from both sectarian and non-sectarian sectors for enriched results of this topic. Lastly, a comparative analysis between rural and urban areas is a potential angle in measuring the differences of their religious practices and attitude on social issues.

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