

Perspectives on Kabanalan (Holiness) among Filipino Young Professionals: Implications in Theology and Catholic Education

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Adrian Cueto¹, Fides del Castillo (EdD)², and John Alexis Lago³

De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

adrian_cueto@dlsu.edu.ph¹, fides.delcastillo@dlsu.edu.ph²,

john_alexis_lago@dlsu.edu.ph³

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Abstract – This study aimed at understanding the concept of holiness (kabanalan in Filipino) from the perspective of 50 selected Filipino young professionals along with the contributing factors which helped them in obtaining such understanding through a simple qualitative research. This research also aimed at exploring whether the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) definitions of kabanalan still persist at present. From the data gathered, it was discovered that four out of the six definitions of kabanalan from the CBCP are still persisting today. The data implies that kabanalan is manifested in three distinct yet interrelated aspects namely, nakatuon sa Diyos (directed towards God), pagpapakatao (being human) and aspetong panrelihiyon (religious aspect). In addition, the participants were able to identify that aside from their education (kahalagahan ng edukasyon) other contributing factors which helped them understand kabanalan, were, buhay pamilya (family life), aspetong panrelihiyon (religious aspect), and sariling paglinang (self-enlightenment). Moreover, this implies that Filipino young professionals adhere to the Filipino way of theologizing by rooting from their personal experiences in the family, education, religion and personal quest in understanding the faith.

Keywords – Catholic education, Filipino young professionals, Holiness, Kabanalan

INTRODUCTION

Young professionals

Young professionals are an inevitable part and component of every generation as Kish [1] puts it they “are not only the future of the field, but they also represent who “we” are now (p.33)”. But who are these young professionals? How do they shape the present and the future situation of the times? According to the Department for Professional Employees of America [2] young professionals are individuals ages 20 to 34 years old “working in a professional and technical occupation (p.1).” In fact Philippine statistics shows that in 2014 there were about “4,711 employed individuals ages 20 to 24 and 10, 199 employed individuals ages 25 to 34” [3, p. 31]. Additionally, most of them belong to the “millennial generation” [4, p. 45]. They are usually characterized by being “well-driven” in establishing themselves professionally and immediately as possible [4, p.45]-[1]. They also have the inclination to transfer from one job to another because for them this kind of attitude builds their professional capabilities [4]. One of their truly recognizable characteristic is their knowledge and skills with regards to the advancement of technology and social communications [4],[1],[5]. Such

characteristic also contributes to their instant decision making attitude as they experience fast-pacing changes in society through different technologies [4]. Furthermore, being involved in highly technological social communications which enables them to establish different connections and relationships to other people, young professionals today are more engaged to different volunteer works and are actively participating in professional organizations and societies compared to their older counterparts [4]. Moreover, young professionals also give importance to work and life balance because they want to stay “healthy”, they do not want to be “guilty” of too much work and for them it is an important aspect of being “successful” in their chosen field of endeavor [6, pp. 47-48]”.

All that was stated earlier are of the extrinsic characteristics of young professionals but how about the intrinsic one? Something that revolves within their interior life. Within this aspect the notion of the transcendent can be discussed. When it comes to the transcendent or the divine the aspect of faith is always encountered, for it represents the individual's relationship and connection to the divine [7]. In line with

this James Fowler [7] theorized that a human person also undergoes different “stages of faith development”. In his theory young professionals can be considered to be in the fourth stage which he labeled as the “individuating-reflective faith (p.174)” or the stage “most appropriately takes form in young adulthood [7, p. 182]”. It is the stage where the individual is commonly deviating from his/her conventional belief systems gained from his/her environment such as his/her family and peers [7]. This occurs because in this stage the individual is establishing his/her own belief system by critically analyzing everything that is around him/her [7]. In short the primary authority regarding one’s belief system is the “self” [7, p. 179]. On the other hand it does not directly mean that the individual will not seek guidance and help from others or his/her significant circle instead s/he will not just automatically adopt what s/he observes and learned from them in terms of belief systems because s/he wants to critically reflect and analyze what belief system conforms and affirms his/her own identity [7]. For these reasons individuals in this stage does not immediately accept the use of religious symbols without being critically knowledgeable about their meanings [7].

When it comes to studies dealing with this intrinsic attribute of young professionals regarding faith and the transcendent the main focus of scholars is their spirituality. In the study of Chakraborty and Chatterjee [8] in India, they have concluded that if employers give importance and contribute to the spirituality of their young professionals they would be more productive and committed in doing their jobs. Furthermore, among young professional women enrolled in a graduate school from a Canadian University, Livingston and Cummings [9] discovered that for them spirituality entails their relationship and connection to the transcendent or a higher being. In addition, such relationship is present in their moments of solitude like “prayer, meditation and even listening to music (p.231)” which in effect also helped them in their age of transition [9]. These same findings was also present in the study of Miller and Sheppard [10] as psychotherapy graduate students in the United States attribute spirituality as an empowering aspect in their lives because for them it is their “personal (p.302)” relationship to the divine which gives them a sense of “meaning and direction (p.302)”.

Holiness

In a more specific manner when it comes to faith and spirituality another term which can be discussed particularly in biblical terms is the topic of holiness [11]. For holiness is grounded in one’s spirituality [11]. At

present there is a dearth of studies regarding such topic in relation to young professionals but different books, initiatives and scholarly articles had been written about holiness itself. Within these available writings it is inevitable for an author to discuss holiness in the context of religion and in particular Christianity [12]. In understanding holiness in the context of the Gospel of Mark, De Valliers [13] commented that holiness as presented in the Gospel is a way of life, particularly, a life that seeks the presence of the God in its very mystery even in the unlikely situations of life. From another aspect Houck [14] remarked that humor helps a person encounter the holy or God naturally, as one elicits joy authentically and be one of the agents for a person’s “self-transcendence” (p.7); as he stated citing Hurley (2011) that humor may actually be from the very beginning, an implication of holiness, as an expression of joy as one encounters the holy. Holiness can also be connected to one’s identity as Harrison [15] analyzed Hans Urs Von Balthazar’s “phenomenology of human holiness (p.424)”. She stated that Balthazar’s understanding of holiness can be explained in the context of human development, that as a person develops holistically towards his/her own identity so does his/her journey of holiness because s/he discovers in the process God’s purpose for his/her life through his/her personal experiences and such purpose is to be holy. Furthermore, holiness can also be present in the political realm or which Sobrino [16] categorized as political holiness. Through the inspiration of liberation theology and St. Oscar Romero and other martyrs of El Salvador, Sobrino [16] discusses political holiness as the imitation of God’s incarnation through Jesus Christ in His solidarity with the “poor and the oppressed (p.83)” actualized in the present situation as one opposes the systems that suppresses the marginalized sector of society. Moreover, even in the event of a mental disease holiness can still be found, this was the case of St. Louis Martin, the father of St. Therese of Lisieux. Even though he was diagnosed of having “cerebral arteriosclerosis (p.173)” the saint did not exhibit any unusual behavior instead portrayed holiness and sense of spirituality amidst life’s challenges as he humbly accepted God’s will with an open heart [17].

Holiness according to the Catholic Church in the Philippines

In specific terms, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines was able to present definitions of holiness according to the Filipino context, stated in their pastoral letter about Filipino spirituality entitled: *Landas*

ng *pagpapakabanal* (the path to holiness) issued on the year 1999. These definitions were divided by the bishops into six categories namely: “*Loob, kalooban* (Will, Inner core/heart); *Banal* (holy), *mahal* (precious, beloved); *Awa ng Diyos* (In God’s mercy); *Mabuting hangin* (Good air); *Ang tamang Daan* (The right path); *Pagpapakabanal, pagpapakatao* (To be holy is to be human) [18]”.

The “*Loob, kalooban* (Will, Inner core/heart)” category in defining holiness pertains to the intrinsic desire of a person to conform one’s will to God [18]. It is characterized by a person who is holy not only in terms of his/her external attributes but more importantly in the goodness of his/her heart [18]. It is not enough for the Filipino to call a person holy with his/her observance of religious practices but always asks if such holiness that the person exhibits comes from his very heart/core [18]. “The Filipino has this keen intuition that can detect whether a person’s holiness is only superficial or real”, if a person does really have this certain desire to conform one’s will to God or s/he only wants praise from others [18]. As the bishops [18] assert “this is the reason why the Filipinos can easily understand Jesus’ teaching that the publican pleased God rather than the Pharisee in Lk. 18: 9-14”. In short the Filipinos understand holiness as a holistic reality that comes from the heart/inner core/will which radiates and manifests itself through action. Thus, in this category Filipinos identify holiness in terms of “altruism, honesty, compassion and humility [18]”.

The second category is “*Banal* (Holy), *mahal* (Precious, beloved)”. For the Filipino something or someone who/that is holy (*banal*) can also be considered precious and beloved (*mahal*) [18]. The word *mahal* in the Filipino context may pertain to something that is precious and extraordinary like jewelry or expensive materials/things [18]. Moreover, the word *mahal* in the Filipino context can also mean beloved [18]. With this it can be associated with the act of love or *pagmamahal* in Filipino. Patterned “to the *pagmamahal* of Christ on the cross to His *mahal*, the whole of humanity [18]”.

The third is “*Awa ng Diyos*” (In God’s mercy). This phrase is often mentioned by Filipinos as “a gesture of thanking God and His mercy for a good state of life” and as a “sign of hope in depressing situations as one clings to God’s mercy for help [18]”.

The same is for holiness, because for the Filipinos a holy person is a person who imitates God’s mercy towards a sinner through the act of forgiveness and exhibits compassion to those who are suffering [18].

Such “example of understanding of holiness was portrayed in the stories of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-37) and the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11-32) [18]”. In addition, for the Filipino a holy person “does not only ask for mercy” but also cooperates with the mercy shown to him/her through the life s/he lives [18].

Fourth is “*Mabuting hangin* (Good air)”. This is often used as a form of Filipino idiomatic expression [18]. Air or *hangin* in the Filipino context generally means the atmosphere or the characteristic of a certain situation [18]. *Mabuti* on the other hand means something that is good [18]. In a way, for the Filipino something or someone who is “holy is like a *mabuting hangin* bringing an atmosphere of order that diminishes any discord” [18]. This was likened by the bishops [18] to the work of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost as the Holy Spirit empowered the Apostles towards order in the proclamation of the Gospel (Acts 2:2).

The fifth category is “*Ang tamang daan* (right path)”. “For the Filipino life is a journey, it has something to do with one’s seeking of the right path” against the illusions of the wrong path [19]. The same is with holiness for “it is the process of seeking the right path or *tamang daan* [18]”. Additionally, within this path, the Filipino considers acts of holiness such as “acknowledging the past, one’s humble beginnings, the people who helped the individual along the way” as of vital importance; because “for the Filipino one cannot reach his/her destination if s/he does not acknowledge his/her very foundations which can be found in his/her past” [18]. This trait is found in the Filipino word “*utang na loob*” or debt of gratitude [18]. In a way holiness is seeking the right path and seeking it in the right manner by the very attitude of acknowledging its very pillars found in the past through an act of humility [18]. Moreover, according to the bishops [18] “this is the very meaning of Jesus’ message in the Holy Eucharist “do this in memory of me (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11: 24-25)”.

The last category is “*Pagpapakabanal, pagpapakatao* (To be holy is to be human)”. “For the Filipino to be holy or to be God fearing is to be a true human in its very essence [18]”. For this reason the Filipino categorized that “a human person can be a person but not human by acting like an animal [18]”. Another famous phrase of the Filipino is that “it is easy to be human but it is difficult to act like a human [18]”. With this, holiness, is equated to humanness in the Filipino thought. Furthermore, being both human and holy is characterized by

selflessness, generosity, willingness to serve, to love and to offer one's life for a certain goal like what the Lord Jesus Christ did for humanity on the cross [19]. Thus, holiness for the Filipino entails being fully human by treating the other as an equal human being with the dignity of being a human (*pakikipagkapwa* in Filipino) grounded in love [18].

Theology

Such understanding and definitions of holiness can be stated as a form of theology. For theology is "faith seeking understanding" [19] where God is the primary focus [20], and this was evident from the discussed literatures, for these are all attempts to understand the faith one believes in, with regards to holiness. Hence, the Filipino understanding of holiness presented by the CBCP is a form of theology for it attempted to understand the Catholic faith about holiness using the Filipino context. This was affirmed by Dr. Jose de Mesa [21, Chapter 1, pp. 1-21] because for him what sets apart Filipino theology or "Mabathalang Pag-aaral" (p.13) as he calls it, from its Western counterparts is that it is a kind of theology that starts from one's life experiences of God which is geared to a both intellectual and affective engagement of understanding of the faith, rather than reason first as practiced by the West.

Catholic education

These theologies in turn as a content are being transmitted through Catholic education, more specifically in the instrumentality of religious education [19]-[22]; and even though it was mentioned earlier that conventional belief systems are not directly influential to young professionals [7] in which educational systems can be included, in the Philippines it may not be totally the case. Catholic educational institutions have been and are still educating many Filipinos for centuries, starting from the Augustinian missionaries who arrived in the country in the year 1565 [23] until the present. As a foundational part of the Filipino society it is inevitable for Catholic educational institutions to have different contributions in the country even in the professional field, as Archbishop Palma [23] remarked:

Advanced studies and researches are pursued again at the expense of these same schools, thereby contributing to the advancement of society. In fact, Catholic schools have been a major contributor to the professional sector of our country. It is not altogether surprising then that quality education is almost always appended to Catholic schools (pp.4-5).

As stated, it can be remarked that Catholic education have an inevitable link with young professionals. Moreover, it can also be said that this link is not only in the professional field but may also extend to their understanding of holiness as the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines [24] asserts the importance of Christ (the model of holiness [25]) in the realm of Catholic educational institutions.

Conceptual framework

For the reason that CBCP's [18] pastoral letter is the only present document that offers a specific definition/theology of holiness according to the Filipino context, it was used by the researchers as a guide in their goal of discovering how Filipino Catholic young professionals understand and form a theology of holiness. Thus, its six definitions of holiness were adopted. Furthermore, it was assumed that Catholic education had a significant contribution in the understanding/theology of Filipino Catholic young professionals of holiness; given the fact of their 400 years of influence to the country [23] and it was through them that most of this age group of professionals was formally educated.

In summary, this study was guided by the idea that Filipino Catholic young professionals understanding/theology of *kabanalan* (holiness) can be found in the six categories of "*Loob, kalooban* (Will, Inner core/heart); *Banal* (holy), *mahal* (precious, beloved); *Awa ng Diyos* (In God's mercy); *Mabuting hangin* (Good air); *Ang tamang Daan* (The right path); and *Pagpapakabanal, pagpapakatao* (To be holy is to be human) [18]". And this was largely due to their Catholic education.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper was a simple qualitative study using an online survey essay questionnaire.

Participants

Purposive sampling was utilized in this research. It is a kind of sampling where the participants that will be selected correspond to a criterion which reflects the objectives or purpose of the study [26]. The researchers were able to gather 50 participants who correspond to following set criteria:

1. A Filipino Catholic young professional ages 20 to 34 years old.
2. Have studied or graduated in a Catholic school, either in elementary, secondary, collegiate or in the graduate level.

Data Gathering procedure

To gather data the researchers used an internet-based free tool known as “Google forms” [27]. The main content of the Google form was an informed consent and the essay survey questionnaire proper. For the main data gathering procedure itself the researchers have done the following:

1. First, the researchers invited their selected participants through Facebook messenger.
2. After a participant agreed s/he was given the necessary instructions together with the link of the Google forms.
3. Because the survey is an essay type, the researchers reminded the participants that answering the survey requires an ample time. In line with this the researchers gave a reasonable deadline for the submission of the survey.
4. Lastly, after the desired number of participants and responses were collected the researchers printed each answered survey form for analysis.

Instrument

The survey questionnaire itself was comprised of four open-ended questions and one closed ended question in relation to the objectives of the study. These questions were validated by two experts in the field of religious education and one young professional working in a human resources company before data gathering. The questions were in Filipino for the conceptual framework is from the Filipino culture; and in order for the participants to express themselves freely in relation to the topic of each question.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis in order to analyze the gathered data. Specifically, the principles from the model of Braun & Clarke [28] were adopted. A validation process from Miles & Hubberman [29] for thematic analysis was also done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Young professionals’ understanding of kabanalan

1. *Nakatuon sa Diyos (directed towards God)*

From the conceptual framework this major theme relates to the first category mentioned by the Bishops namely in the “*loob, kalooban*”. As this category emphasizes an interior-based description of holiness by aligning oneself to the will of God [18] which implicates the centrality of God, so does this major theme. This is for the reason that this major theme with its sub-theme *ugnayan sa Diyos* emphasizes a holiness manifested

through one’s interior relationship with God leading to one’s obedience to Him as entailed in the sub-theme *pagtalima sa Diyos*, which also manifests the alignment of one’s will to God as required in the said category. This major theme and its sub-themes also reflects the teaching of the Catholic Church about holiness as a whole, that holiness is always fueled by the grace of God and it is only possible through His initiative and in cooperation with Him as portrayed by the Blessed Mother and the saints [25, para. 1717, 2016, 2683, 2684]. In relation to other Christian sects this major theme and its sub-themes are also in congruence to what the Pentecostal author Judson Cornwall [30] stated, that holiness is openness to God, the source of holiness; along with this Packer [31] from an Anglican perspective also indicated that holiness is allowing the self to please God. Moreover, the God-centeredness of this major theme and its sub-themes can also reflect the Filipino anthropology and sociology of spirituality, because Covar (1998) and Aquino (1999) as cited in Yabut [32] stated “that Filipinos in their spirituality seeks for the things that leads them to the wisdom of God rather than the wisdom of man (p.45)”. This is for the reason that “for the Filipino life begins and ends with God Who willed it’s very existence” [33, p.15], hence, for the participants the same is with holiness.

2. *Pagpapakatao (Being human)*

This major theme directly corresponds to the “*pagpapakabanal, pagpapakatao*” (To be holy is to be human) category mentioned in the conceptual framework. Like what this category entails this major theme emphasizes that holiness attributed to God is always manifested in one’s humanity. As De Mesa (2010 as cited in [32]) in relation to Filipino spirituality emphasized that “it is in one’s humanity that one’s relationship to God is reflected (p.45)”. He called this “*pangangatawan*” wherein something that is within the heart or “*loob*” (which can now refer to the intrinsic relationship to God as the participants emphasized) is concretely expressed “in the whole aspect of one’s humanity” [33, pp. 84, 91]. Furthermore, although described by the participant’s as a distinct manifestation of holiness, for them this major theme is also inevitably connected to God, and such an understanding can be related to Martin Buber’s philosophical idea of I-thou relationship. He states that when humans relate with each other as human beings (I-thou), that said relationship has the tendency to manifest one’s relationship to God (Eternal thou) [34]. In addition, both Buber (in terms of relationship) and the participants (in terms of holiness)

agree that such connection between God and humanity is because of God's initiative [34]. Moreover, this major theme can also be correlated to the psychological term of self-actualization by Abraham Maslow because like the participants' understanding, that holiness is innate and the purest aspect of being human, a person who is self-actualized is "fully human and acts naturally" in his/her dealings of everyday life [35, p.284]. In a word, as one of the participants mentioned, "holiness manifested in one's humanity is self-actualization".

The sub-theme *pakikipagkapwa* is also directly corresponding to the conceptual category *pagpapakabanal*, *pagpapakatao* because it both emphasizes (by using the same term) that to be human is to treat the other as equal, as fellow a human being with equal dignity [18] manifested in good works. According to de Mesa [33] all are *kapwa* (the root word of *pakikipagkapwa*) because each and everyone's existence is willed by the same one God. This sub-theme also indicates that the participants are still aware of their Filipino values because *pakikipagkapwa* as stated earlier is rooted from the Filipino value of *kapwa* and is considered to be the heart of the Filipino personality as discovered by Enriquez [36]. It is grounded in the belief that all are equal despite of diversity because all shares the same humanity [37]. Thus, "for the Filipino to be human is to exercise *pakikipagkapwa* [32, p.54]- [18]". In addition, Yabut [32] emphasized that for the Filipino one's relationship to God is always connected to the *kapwa* through *pakikipagkapwa*, because for the Filipino "*pakikipagkapwa* serves as a form of spirituality which in effect actualizes holiness (p.51)".

This finding may also indicate that the notion that young professionals are highly engaged with building professional and non-professional relationships with other people [4] may be due to their *kapwa* value when it comes to Filipinos; and can be an avenue to express *kabanalan*. The second sub-theme *pangkarawang kabanalan* (holiness in the ordinary) serves as an extension of the theoretical category of *pagpapakabanal*, *pagpapakatao* because in the theoretical category holiness in the ordinary was not emphasized. This sub-theme also negates the category *banal* (Holy), *Mahal* (Precious, beloved) idea that holiness is found in the extraordinary [18]. Hence, it promotes the universal call to holiness by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* [38]. In relation to being Filipino such belief of holiness in the ordinary can be traced back to indigenous understanding of "the image of God" wherein Mercado (1992 as cited in [32]) remarked "that the image of God was very personal for the early Filipinos to the extent that they

associate it with everyday life (p.45)". Furthermore, with regards to the link between one's directedness to God and this sub-theme Kreeft [39] remarked that God's presence can be possible by making the ordinary experiences of life as obedience to His will. Moreover, Pope Francis [40] also recognized this manifestation of holiness, in the person of parents who are working for the good of the family and even in the simple smile of nuns who are advanced in age, and even borrowed the term "the middle class of holiness (p.4)" from Malegue (1958) to emphasize such kind of holiness. The last sub-theme *pagpupursigi* (persistence) affirms what was entailed in the category *pagpapakabanal*, *pagpapakatao* that "it is easy to be human but it is difficult to act like a human" for in this sub-theme the participants acknowledged that holiness is not easily achieved because it is a continuing process in particular due to one's weakness, which in turn is conquered through persistence. Hence, the essentiality of the cross (in this case one's weaknesses) in holiness as entailed in the Catechism [25, para.2014, 2015, 2016] relates to this sub-theme. Pope Francis [40] also confirmed this "our path towards holiness is a constant battle (p.81)" and reminded the importance of God's grace in such reality, "holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace (p.17)". Moreover, this sub-theme also indicates that young professionals also exhibit their being "well-driven" [4, p. 45]-[1] not only in their professional careers but also in the sphere of holiness and in this case they are not rushing because for them it is a process that requires persistence.

3. *Aspetong panrelihiyon (religious aspect)*

This major theme indicates that one's religiosity is a specific expression of holiness. From the conceptual framework this thought was reflected in the "*loob, kalooban*" category, wherein it was acknowledged that one's religiosity can be a form of holiness but with the premise that it must be coming from the heart [18]. Moreover, in the light of Filipino spirituality and psychology according to Yabut [32] "it is not uncommon for the Filipinos to relate spirituality with religion because it serves as a medium of its expression (p.52)". Hence, the participants are being true to their identity as Filipinos because they regard that holiness is distinctly expressed through one's religiosity.

The sub-theme *buhay sakramental* (sacramental life) in its emphasis on the Mass corresponds to the theoretical category of "*ang tamang daan*" (the right path) because as it implies that the Eucharist is a form of

going back to God in Jesus Christ [18], it can be remarked that the participants truly regard the Mass as a specific expression and the *tamang daan* of their directedness towards God, for they can go back to the very source of holiness. Such belief is also adjacent to the teaching of the Catholic Church as a whole, that holiness is visible in the Catholic faithfuls' participation in the sacraments in conformity to Christ [25, para. 2014]. The second sub-theme *kawangis ni Hesus* (Reflection of Jesus) can be connected to the three theoretical categories *banal, mahal; ang tamang daan; pagpapakabanal, pagpapakatao* because in all these three the example of Christ in His humanity was given as a manifestation of holiness. Thus, the sub-theme and the three theoretical categories affirm each other, that holiness in one's humanity must be specifically expressed in relation to Christ; as the Catechism emphasized that holiness is being like Jesus [25]. In addition according to de Mesa [33] the humanity of Jesus is very important for the faith because for the early Christians the humanity of Christ is their experience of God. Thus, "to experience Jesus is to experience God [33, p. 35]", hence, a person who is a reflection of Jesus, is a reflection of God, the source of holiness, "for Jesus is the face of the love of God [33, pp. 60, 102, 107]". Moreover, the combination of these two aspects corresponds to Bernard Cooke's theology in relation to psychology, that sacramental grace molds a person's personality to become Christ-like [41].

Factors affecting young professionals' understanding of kabanalan

1. Buhay pamilya (family life)

The participant's belief that the family is an important factor in their understanding of holiness reflects what the theoretical category *ang tamang daan* entails, of "acknowledging one's roots" [18] because from the data they were able to emphasize that it is in the family that their understanding of holiness started and grew. As Medina [42] stated, it is in the family that a person first learns to interact and at the same time where most of his/her interaction occurs in his/her lifetime, thus, there is no question for its influence to the individual. Moreover, this kind of emphasis on the family is also in congruence to what the Filipino Bishops teaches in the Catechism for Filipino Catholics [43] for it asserts that the family "serves as the school of Christian discipleship and virtue (para. 1054, p. 254)".

2. Kahalagahan ng edukasyon (importance of education)

Second to the family is the factor of Education, in particular Catholic education. This major theme affirms

and proves the legitimacy of the declaration of Second Plenary Council of the Philippines [24, para.623] that Catholic educational institutions have a crucial role in the evangelization of the country. More than this is the fact that it does not only pertain to the evangelization of the faith but the goal of the faith itself that is holiness. Furthermore, the sub-theme *edukasyong nagpapamulat* (education that awakens) which posits that Catholic education awakens both the mind and the heart also adheres to PCP II [24] as they emphasized that "Catholic institutions of learning should not only prepare for Christian community living (which may pertain to the academic aspect in relation to the participants' answers) but should already provide an experience of Christian community (para.636, p.215)". In addition, this corresponds to the study of Gutierrez [44] wherein the results showed that graduates from "Catholic higher educational institutions" stated that their catholic education contributed in their understanding of the faith and helped them become "practicing Catholics and responsible parents". This kind of response also indicates that participants were able to experience such type of education beyond the parameters of religion classes and implies the collaboration of the entire institution as it was entailed in the National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines [45] that every member of a Catholic institution must serve as educators of the faith (para. 462). The second sub-theme *edukasyong humuhubog* (Formative education) serves as a continuation of what Catholic education offers in relation to one's understanding of holiness. The indication that Catholic education is formative in nature implies that present day Catholic schools is actually responding to NCDP's [45] call for an education that accompanies the students towards their faith maturity (para.460). In addition, such process-based education also proves that present day Catholic education adheres to PCP II's [24] statement that Catholic educational institutions must instill to their students that graduation is not an end but the beginning of their mission (para. 640), that what they had began through their education is continued after graduation, that there is a continuing process. Moreover, this was attested in the study of Gutierrez [44] wherein graduates of "Catholic higher educational institutions" acknowledge that they witnessed "faith development and religious formation" in their schools.

Beyond the good remarks the participants were also able to frankly express the limitations of Catholic education as what was entailed in the sub-theme *hindi perpekto ngunit mahalga* (Not perfect yet important). As it was stated in the first two sub-themes Catholic

education had unquestionable contribution to the young professionals' understanding of holiness yet in this sub-theme it was indicated that it also has its imperfections such as not being realistic with what they teach, as remarked by one of the participants. This kind of imperfection was also acknowledged by PCP II [24] by indicating that many graduates seem to value their Catholic education just as an advantage to their professional career and not in life as a whole (para. 627). In addition, Gutierrez [44] affirmed this in her study stating that for the graduates of "Catholic higher educational institutions" some of their school's shortcomings are "outdated ethical principles, closed-mindedness, inflexible and unrealistic". This reality was also observed by Cornelio [46] and Lorenzo [47] wherein both recognized that Catholic education in particular through religious education gives more emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge than appreciating the faith in the light of needs of the students. In this regard, it can be remarked that the first two sub-themes already serve as proofs that somehow these problems are being addressed but even though this is the case the participants still believes that effort must be increased. As Cornelio [46] puts it there must be a certain kind of openness from religious educators themselves to hear the insights of the students regarding the faith; and in this manner it can be hoped that collaboration be possible between the two parties for the greater good.

3. *Aspetong panrelihiyon (religious aspect)*

Together with the understanding that holiness can be expressed in one's religiosity young professionals also believes that religion serves as a contributing force for such understanding. Yabut [32] indicated that Catholicism as a major religion in the country had an unquestionable influence to Filipinos and in their lives in general, thus this can explain the specific manner in which the participants described the contribution of religion with their understanding of holiness. Moreover, this also serves as a positive affirmation of the survey from the Social Weather Stations [48] which featured the importance of religion among Filipino adults (18 years old and above with the total of 1,200 respondents nationwide).

4. *Sariling paglinang (self-enlightenment)*

This major theme directly affirms Fowler's [7] individuative-reflective faith stage of faith development among young adults. For its main premise that young adults have the tendency to deviate from their traditional influential circles like family and peers in relation to the

establishment of their own belief system [7] is present in this major theme because the participants were able to identify that their understanding of holiness was also a result of one's initiative and personal quest. Furthermore, it is still incorrect to assume that the participants completely disregard their significant others because they also stated its importance in the categories of the family, education and religion. In such case Fowlers' [7] idea that in this stage a person does not totally disregard his/her significant circle it is just that s/he first critically analyses what they offer him/her before s/he accepts it as his/her belief system in relation to his/her identity, can be one of the reasons for the inclusion of the significant others in the contributing factors for the young professionals understanding of holiness. Moreover, another possible reason may be found in Markus and Kitayama's (1991 as cited in [49]) self-construal theory wherein they identified that non-Westerners such as Asians have "interdependent self-construals (p.290)" in which relationships are deeply valued for its contribution to the important aspects of the self, unlike that of the Westerners.

Summary Diagram

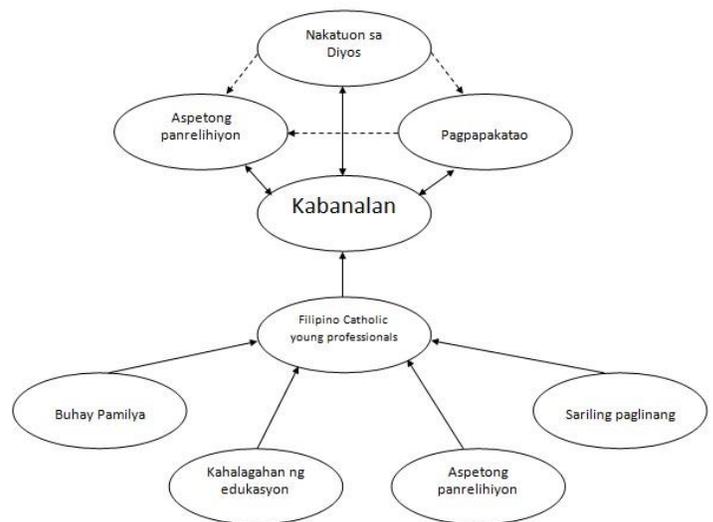


Fig. 1. Relationships of Major Themes

The diagram illustrates the relationship of all major themes answering the two objectives of the study. It portrays that young professionals' understanding/theology of *kabanalan* (holiness) is always and must be *nakatuon sa Diyos* (directed towards God) which is inevitably (because of God's graciousness) linked to and is also manifested in *pagpapakatao* (being human). Furthermore, these both two aspects are specifically

expressed in the *aspetong panrelihiyon* (religious aspect). In addition, each of these three aspects are recognized and understood by the participants as distinct manifestations of *kabanalan*, this explains the double headed arrows. It also indicates that there are four distinct factors affecting such understanding namely *buhay pamilya* (family life), *kahalagahan ng edukasyon* (importance of education), *aspetong panrelihiyon* (religious aspect), and *sariling paglinang* (self-enlightenment). For the participants the family transcends its nurturing aspect from earthly needs towards one's pursuit to holiness. As an extension of the family, the participants also believe that their Catholic education even though it has its limitations had unquestionable contribution in their understanding of holiness, for it awakened their intellect as well as the heart and continually formed them within their stay. Thirdly, the participants recognized that religiosity is not only a manifestation of holiness but is also a contributing force to broaden and specify one's understanding of it. Lastly, the participants also indicated that beyond their influential circle their understanding of holiness is a result of a personal quest and initiative, somehow indicating its personal importance to them.

CONCLUSION

From the data gathered and the analysis done this research paper presents several implications to theology. This study was able to discover a theology of holiness according to Filipino young professionals which entails that *kabanalan* is distinctly manifested in three aspects yet interrelated with each other. First, *kabanalan* is and always *nakatuon sa Diyos* (directedness towards God) characterized by one's intrinsic relationship with Him through obedience, for He is the source of *kabanalan*. Through God's graciousness and in one's relationship with Him, His *kabanalan* is then bestowed in one's *pagpapakatao* (being human) and is manifested by treating the other as equal, in the ordinary circumstances of life, and through one's persistence due to personal weaknesses. Moreover, they also believe that *kabanalan* is specifically expressed in *aspetong panrelihiyon* (religious aspect) wherein the aspect of *nakatuon sa Diyos* is specifically expressed through the sacramental life of the Church and the aspect of *pagpapakatao* is by being the reflection of Jesus.

From the six definitions of *kabanalan* of the CBCP [18] four definitions relates to the participants' understanding/theology of *kabanalan*. These are namely the *loob, kalooban* (will, inner core/heart), *banal* (holy), *mahal* (precious, beloved), ang *tamang daan* (the right

path) and *pagpapakabanal, pagpapakatao* (to be holy is to be human). It is also evident that out of these four, the *loob, kalooban* and *pagpapakabanal, pagpapakatao* categories dominates the theology of holiness according to Filipino Catholic young professionals.

Lastly, it can also be implied that such theology of *kabanalan* is anchored to the Filipino way of theologizing as proposed by Dr. de Mesa [21, Chapter 1, pp. 1-21] because the participants rooted their understanding of holiness from their personal experiences of family, education, religion and even personal quest. As Dr. de Mesa [21, Chapter 1] remarked "theologizing is geared towards one's engagement of understanding God's movement in life which in turn leads to the understanding of the faith (p.14)". It is also interesting to note that the participants describe their theology of holiness in a three yet interrelated manner, implicating a diverse yet united theology.

The study also shows its implication to Catholic education. Through the results it was discovered that aside from Catholic education (*kahalagahan ng edukasyon*) there are other three contributing factors which helped Filipino Catholic young professionals to have such understanding/ theology of *kabanalan*, namely, *buhay pamilya* (family life), *aspetong panrelihiyon* (religious aspect), and *sariling paglinang* (self-enlightenment).

With this, given the fact that one of the limitations of Catholic education that the participants mentioned was being unrealistic, Catholic schools can focus on the factors of the family, religion and the self (because these other three are significant realities for the participants as described in the results) in developing its curriculum for religious education. In particular by incorporating service learning, a learning process in which students are engaged to put into practice what they learn inside the classroom to the outside world through volunteer work [50]. In this way the openness that Cornelio [46] mentioned may be achieved, because instead of just imposing their preferred contents, religious educators are now considering the realities of their students. Moreover, with this it is hoped that *kabanalan* will become more real and comprehensible for the students.

In a specific manner due to the fact that the participants defined/theologized *kabanalan* in a relational way: *Nakatuon sa Diyos* (relationship to God), *pagpapakatao* (relationship to humanity), *aspetong panrelihiyon* (standard of relationship to God and humanity) the emphasis on relationships balanced with reason may be used as a context in the manner religious educators teach their lessons. Hence, the principle of

Mabathalang Pag-aaral (Filipino theology) in its focus both in the affect and intellect [21, Chapter 1, pp. 1-21] will be reflected in the religious education for Filipino students.

With this it can be implied that Filipino realities and values such as *loob*, *pagpapakatao*, and *kapwa* be incorporated as frequently as possible in all religious education subjects in all levels so that holiness can be really understood by students as *kabanalan*.

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