

Social Conscience Orientation of C. P. U. Students *

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This study is one of a series of investigations on the attitudes of Central Philippine University students in pursuance of one of the objectives of the University Research Center to undertake institutional research. ¹ This study aimed to investigate the moral concern of students about perceived social ills or what might be termed institutional wrongdoings. What, for instance, would their reaction or feeling be if they knew that one of their classmates is a "drug addict" or is "spending money for cigarettes but won't even buy their notebooks for school work?"

It is to be noted that commitment to an enlightened social conscience is one of the objectives of the general education program of the University. ² It is therefore planned to use the findings in these investigations as benchmark information against which to compare value changes in the students after a two-year period.

PROCEDURE

The procedure followed in this investigation is similar to the one in a previous report. ³ In fact, the data for this study were gathered from the same sample and the same questionnaire.

* This is the ninth of a series of Institutional Studies being conducted by the Research Center under Dr. Ruiz's direction.

¹ See Research Bulletins No. 6, 1974, No. 1, 1975, No. 2, 1975, for studies on students' attitudes and environmental perceptions.

² See "Objectives of Central Philippine University," Section 1.6.

³ See Research Bulletin No. 1, s. 1975, *ibid.*

The instrument. Part II of the research instrument consists of thirty statements of the Likert type, with four foils from which the respondent was asked to select one. These thirty items attempt to assess the student's religious orientation, social concern, and social conscience. Only the findings on social conscience are presented in this report.

One item is given below for purposes of explanation of the design of the foils:

"If you knew a classmate here who is a drug addict, what would you most likely do?"

(a) Nothing; I wouldn't be disturbed. None of my business.

(b) I would be disturbed but do nothing.

(c) I would be disturbed but whether I took action would depend on who the student was.

(d) I would express my concern only to the student, maybe advise him to stop it or see a doctor.

Attention is invited to the way the foils are worded. Foil a describes an attitude of indifference

or apathy; Foil b describes a disturbed feeling, concern, but no action is taken; Foil c and Foil d also show the same orientation as the first two in that there is a "scaling" pattern to assess the degree of disturbance or concern and a possible course of action. This design has been followed in all the ten items which make up the inventory wherever it was possible. In all cases, though, the scaling pattern was maintained.

Reliability and validity of the inventory. Based on the item responses of 175 or more students chosen by systematic sampling design from the seven college groups (except Theology where all the 18 respondents were included), the reliability coefficient ⁴ was .93.

A combination of different methods of validation was used.

(a) It was hypothesized that if the inventory discriminated certain groups of known social conscience orientation he and those with somewhat lower social conscience, the inventory, for one thing, should be valid. The Theology group, whom we assumed to belong to the first, did better in the inventory in a "try-out" computation than a random sample from

⁴The coefficient alpha as developed by Cronback, L.J., "Coefficient Alpha and Internal Consistency of Tests," in *Psychometrika*, 1951, was used.

all the other six groups. The difference between the means of these two trial groups was 3.62 in favor of the former. The critical ratio was 6.2, which indicated that the difference was significant at the one per cent level. The weakness of this method is that the assumption about the superiority of the Theology group is open to question.

(b) It was assumed that this inventory would correlate rather highly with the social concern inventory on the theory that both had a fairly good similarity of orientation and content. The obtained coefficient of correlation was .69. This, of course, was an *ad hoc* method, since the research versions of the two inventories were used.

(c) It was assumed that the inventory had validity if there was agreement in the rankings of the items based on weighted group scores of the seven colleges represented, it would be assumed that the inventory had validity as a group measure. The Kendall "W"⁵ was .74, which is very high and significant at the 1 per cent level.

(d) Finally, the item/scale correlations of the items were computed. The findings were:

Item 2	. . . . .	.93
Item 5	. . . . .	.79
Item 8	. . . . .	.83
Item 11	. . . . .	.42
Item 14	. . . . .	.46
Item 17	. . . . .	.39
Item 20	. . . . .	.0 (?)
Item 23	. . . . .	.64
Item 26	. . . . .	.54
Item 29	. . . . .	.67

(4) The coefficient alpha as developed by Cronback, L.J., "Coefficient Alpha and Internal Consistency of Tests," in *Psychometrika*, 1951, was used.

Item 20, obviously is a poor item. It should be replaced or revised in a future version of this instrument. We included this item in the scoring of figures in the paper. On the whole, however, it can be said that for purposes of this study, the inventory was sufficiently valid and reliable.

Description of the inventory. As mentioned in Section 2.1, the inventory is of the Likert type. Some of the "themes" tapped are about cheating, gambling by juveniles, exploitation of labor, poverty, irresponsible use of leisure time, etc. High scores in the inventory

⁵ John J. Peatman, *Introduction to Applied Statistics*, Over seas edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1964, pp. 382 - 385.

indicate that the respondents express concern about these themes, while low scores imply that the respondents are apathetic, undisturbed, or detached about the matter.

Scoring. The foils in each of the ten items were given arbitrary weights, as follows:

Foil a ... 1 Foil b ... 2
Foil c ... 3 Foil d ... 4

If a respondent marked Foil d, his score for that item was 4; if he marked Foil a, his item score was 1. His total scale score was the sum of all the item scores. Thus, if he marked all Foils d in every one of the ten items, his scale score would be 40, which is the highest possible

score. If he marked Foils a in every one of the ten items, his scale score was 10, which is the lowest possible score.

Determination of "high" or "low" scores. Since the means and standard deviations of the instrument in social concern ⁽⁶⁾ and this one are particularly the same ($M = 31.2$ and 31.1 , $SD_s = 4.36$ and 4.25 respectively) and the SE_m of both were the same, the model for categorizing the scores used in the former was adopted here.

The reader is referred to Research Bulletin No. 2, s. 1975 for an explanation of the rationale of the model.

Class Interval	Description of Categories
37 - 40	Very, very high
33 - 36	Very high
29 - 32	High
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27 - 28	Uncertain
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23 - 26	Low
19 - 22	Very low
15 - 18	Very, very low
14 - below	Extremely low

⁶ See Research Bulletin No. 2, s. 1975.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented in two sub-sections.

Comparative data by college groups. Table 3.1—a reports the means, standard deviations, and standard error of the means for each of the seven college groups included in this study.

Attention is invited to column "total." With an SE_m of .19, the population mean can be estimated to fall between $31.2 + .49$, or (30.71–31.69) or 31 in round figures. This is three score points above the out-off point of .28, ($CR = 11$). This says that if another random sample of 514 from the population of CPU college students, the odds are better than 99 in a

hundred that the mean of that sample would be more than 28.

Analysis of the differences of the means of the seven groups represented was done by computing the entry all pair-by-pair means. Table 3.1—b reports the obtained values.

The Theology group tops the other six groups significantly. Nursing tops Engineering, Arts, Agriculture, and Commerce, but not Education. Education tops Arts, Agriculture, and Commerce but not Engineering. There are no significant differences between the means of Engineering, Arts, Agriculture, and Commerce.

The distribution of scores according to the model is given in Table 3.1—c, below.

TABLE 3.1—a
Means, Standard Deviation and Standard Error of
the Means by Colleges
(Social Conscience)

	Theol.	Nursing	Educ.	Eng'g	Arts	Agric.	Com.	Total
M	33.62	31.60	31.16	29.90	29.66	29.64	29.20	31.20
SD	2.32	3.75	4.65	3.79	4.30	4.04	4.30	4.25
SE_m	.55	.31	.64	.44	.42	.52	.55	.19
N	18	146	52	73	103	61	61	514

TABLE 3.1—b
 Matrix of Critical Ratios of
 Differences of Means
 (Social Conscience)

	Theol.	Nursing	Educ.	Eng'g	Arts	Agric.	Com.
Theol.	x	3.2	2.92	5.7	5.2	5.2	5.7
Nursing		x	.61	3.2	3.7	3.3	4.0
Educ.			x	1.8	2.0	2.82	3.28
Eng'g				x	.8	.4	1.0
Arts					x	.03	.7
Agric.						x	.6
Com.							x

Note: Critical ratio of at least 1.96 and 2.58 are necessary for the difference to be significant at the 5 per cent and 1 per cent level of significance respectively. Differences between means can be abstracted from Table 3.1—a.

TABLE 3.1—c
 Distribution of Scores According to the Model

N = 514

Scores	Categories	No.	%	Sub-tot. No.	Sub-tot. %
37—40	Very, very high	53	10.28		
33—36	Very high	166	32.20		
29—32	High	158	30.65		
	Sub-Total			380	73.15
27—28	Uncertain	65	12.61	65	12.61
23—26	Low	55	10.67		
19—22	Very Low	17	3.30		
15—18	Very, very Low	0	—		
14—below	Extremely Low	0	—		
	Sub-total			72	13.97
Total		514	99.71	514	99.71

Seventy-three per cent of the sample come within the "high to very, very high" categories, whereas only 14 per cent come within the "low to very, very low" categories. These facts should confirm the observation made earlier in this subsection that the obtained mean is significantly higher than the cut-off point of 28.

Table 3.1-d below, gives a breakdown of the distribution of the scores by colleges according to the model.

All the respondents from Theology fall within the "high to very, very high" categories, while nearly 28% of the Commerce group fall within the "low to very low" categories. Almost 22% of the Engineering groups had scores falling within the "low to very low" categories.

DISCUSSION

The findings imply, for one thing, that as a group, C.P.U. college students have reached or are reaching the threshold of critical aware-

TABLE 3.1-d
Distribution of Scores According to the Model
by Colleges

Scores	CAT	Theol.		Nursing		Educ.		Eng'g		Arts		Agric.		Com.	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
37-40	VVH	3	16.6	22	15.1	7	13.4	4	5.4	9	8.7	5	8.2	3	4.9
33-36	VH	12	66.6	57	38.8	13	25.0	13	17.8	38	36.9	20	32.8	13	21.3
29-32	H	3	16.6	45	30.8	18	34.6	33	45.1	24	23.3	17	27.8	18	29.5
27-28	UN	—	—	15	10.2	6	11.5	7	9.5	16	15.5	11	18.0	10	16.4
23-26	L	—	—	5	3.4	6	11.5	12	16.4	12	11.6	7	11.4	13	21.3
19-22	VL	—	—	2	1.4	2	3.8	4	5.4	4	3.8	1	1.6	4	6.5
15-18	VVL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14-below	ExL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		18	99.8	146	99.7	52	99.8	73	99.7	103	99.8	61	99.8	61	99.9

ness - awareness of the ills of the social order, as well as its virtues. This is another way of saying that they are developing an enlightened conscience, which, by the way, is one of the objectives of our general education program. They are, in a manner of speaking, ready for change. The potentialities for positive social and individual action are there. What remains for us to do is to externalize that enlightened conscience from the level of "pure thought" to that of positive action.

Just how?

The problem, we like to think, is not really change itself, for whether we do anything about it or not, change is most certainly going on. The problem is the management of change. And change management, in turn, requires a good deal of understanding of institutions and how people behave in them.

Then we might add that sudden imposed change may be more harmful than beneficial. We are not referring to sudden change in the area of quantitative measurable change like the physical environment, buildings, facilities, and the like. We are speaking of imposed

sudden change in the realm of the moral, spiritual, or attitudinal.

We might select one concern perceived to be a hindrance to individual or social development, say the maximization of the use of personal resources. The selection of this concern is, of course, the outcome of a dialogue between the teacher and the students. The less we talk about our positions in the philosophy of change the better - whether society should first be changed and society will change the individual, or whether we should change the individual first and society will change accordingly. This might result in the polarization of people into opposing camps, and will, eventually have nothing to do with each other.

Both positions are necessary. They complement each other. The strategy, maybe, is to focus on inner-directed change, acceptance of the need for change at the grass-roots level. The next phase of this suggested strategy is to create and/or provide the supporting structures by means of which the individual student is given the opportunities to externalize the needed change over time. □