

verbal attracting attentions, winking, pouting, lousy sitting boys.” Classroom sitting arrangement alleviate the problems of too much physical closeness that disrupts learning. Parents support disciplinary measures in mixed-sex.

Focus on academics, less distraction to learning are evident in single-sex classrooms (Miliband, 2004; Spielhofer, Benton and Schagen, 2004; Flowers, 2005; Nidoy, 2011; Eisenkopf et al, 2015) and girls-boys competition in mixed-sex but enhancing presence of each other (Jackson and Bisset, 2005; advantages of coeducation, <https://cathedral-school.co.uk/co-education.html>). The conservative culture of private schooling in the Philippines is evident in single-sex and mixed-sex where students in exclusive schools especially the all-girls uphold the Filipina lady-like identity, while finesse of girl-boy attention-seeking in mixed-sex. This is also reflected in the socialization experiences and the formation for social awareness and responsibility.

Social awareness, responsibility, and socialization experience

Single-sex and mixed-sex private schools are strong in instilling social awareness and responsibility, supporting classroom discussions on environment, social and political issues while maintaining conservative stand regarding the Philippines reproductive health bill that encourage the use of artificial birth control measures. Joining peoples' initiatives and cause-oriented civic activities, learning responsible leadership in school organizations like the student council, and outreach programs to marginalized/disadvantaged communities are other activities that aim to raise awareness and promote responsible citizenship. Students mentioned organizing fund-raising activities for the informal settlers, academic assistance like tutorials for children and adults, and sharing material blessings to poor people. Creative school provides holistic environment with space for active engagement and encourage child participation (Ucus and Acar, 2019), opportunities for community immersion to gain a different point of view, to understand their own life, the social environment, and to contemplate on public affairs issues (Loyola, 2012; Shih, Hsu and Ye, 2018).

Single-sex schools for girls promote women empowerment, forming women leaders even among young graders' "munting barangay" a student council for elementary students. Instilling interconnectedness is evident as the school community welcome the "Aetas", the tribal Filipinos not only for gift-giving but sharing of songs and dances during school programs. Students in higher grade levels are involved in lay apostolate programs to local communities, the orphanages, community mission centers, and catechism and faith-sharing experience with people of the same religious affiliation upon parents' consent. Students in mixed-sex reported fulfilling experience of interacting and providing material and educational assistance to marginalized communities and increase awareness of sex differences, rights, and limitations. Teachers and administrators mentioned that boys and girls, interaction with the local communities is reflective of life realities.

Participants shared rewarding socialization experiences in single-sex and mixed-sex schools' yearly activities such as the family day according to grade level where parents and children bond together with fun, games and programs, and annual intramurals that showcase talents in sports, cheer dancing, and singing. Single-sex exclusive for girls introduced the parents-children bonding where father and daughter in dance duo. Parents mentioned that girls' socialization with the opposite sex happen on weekends with relatives and friends and occasional parties. Students shared stronger bonds and friendship in single-sex as "*quite easy finding similar interests that could talk over, not intimidated and awkward sharing weirdness and naivete*". On the other hand, participants mentioned that students in mixed-sex learned to interact and handle emotions in the presence of the opposite sex, including the LGBT+ as

considered particularly important for student's future adjustment in college and their chosen profession.

Holistic education focuses on the development of the learner's whole person's body, mind, spirit, the cognitive and affective levels, promoting social activity, and fostering interrelationship and interdependence (Yang, 2004; Hare, 2006; Mahmoudi et al, 2012; Miller and Four Arrows, 2013; Flores, Walters and Kiekel, 2018; Widodo, 2019; Miller, no date). These are reflective of the private sectarian schools in the study that aim for the formation of the total person including the strength of character and values formation.

Strength of character, proper decorum, living out values/morals

Strength of character and proper decorum includes living out the Christian values, the "golden rule", upholding the school's integrity, steadfast in speech and action, and exhibiting self-respect that trickles down to respecting others regardless of social class and status. Hallmark of values includes simple living, humble/joyful service, honesty, compassion, sensitivity, gratefulness, stewardship, and care for mother earth such as the "clean-green projects, recycling materials, prohibiting the use of plastics within the school premises. Single-sex schools emphasized responsible public social behavior, prim and proper, learning social grace, in all-girl schools forming "truly girls in values", "women of character", and in all-boy schools training "real gentlemen" in public/social gatherings. Parents added, "*environment exudes proper behavior, manner of speaking, ways of acting, and close-monitoring students' behavior, and the learning of social grace*". Murphy (2008) mentioned that moral character education is more effective in a single-sex environment. However, teachers and administrators in mixed-sex schools mentioned that close physical interaction between boys and girls helped them learn self-control, self-discipline, and awareness of gender rights and differences. Students tend to act on what they believe is morally upright and observe right conduct inside and outside school premises.

Spiritual, and religious formation

Students learn and live out moral values as integrated in all subjects besides the Christian living education subjects. Spiritual and religious formation includes community prayers, monthly and occasional eucharistic celebrations to honor saints, retreats and recollections, and prayer meetings as expressions of faith in God. Single-sex schools contributed to nurturing religious vocations with their focus on the examination of conscience and reflecting on the question, "*what have I done to God and to my neighbors*", growing in faith, learning from the lives of saints, and appreciating events in the light of God's grace and presence. Parents added, "*it is important that our children know in their hearts that there is a God. there will always be a God, how important prayer is in daily lives to guide actions and decisions*". Similarly, students in mixed-sex expressed appreciation of prayers, and faith in God guiding actions and behaviors. However, teachers mentioned that discipline was a problem in mixed-sex during religious activities thus it was deemed necessary separating girls and boys to encourage focus, silence, and concentration during the activities. Spiritual formation is considered important in holistic formation (Singh, 1996: 227, cited in Hare, 2006). The Adlerian perspective on the tasks of life address intimate love relationships not only with fellow beings in society but with God or the universe (Manaster & Corsini, 1982; Mosak, 1979, cited in Watts, no date, <https://books.google.com.ph>).

Coping with school-related problems

School-related problems were considered detrimental to holistic formation. These include physical and social bullying that affect physical, mental health, academic and extra-curricular

performance. Social bullying in single-sex schools were reported as close-knit peer “barkada” and peer group alienation, conflicts, and rejection. In mixed-sex schools, physical and social bullying resulted from the bravado competition among boys to attract girls’ attention, and girls’ conflicts and competition for boys’ attention. Other problems were homosexual/same-sex relationship in single-sex and teenage sexual relationship and early pregnancy in mixed-sex that contributed to school dropouts. Both single-sex and mixed-sex schools’ wellness centers provide interventions that include individual and group counseling, therapy sessions, parent-student encounter and conferences, student-teacher consultations, and homeroom guidance program to help students express their concerns and problems. The concerted effort and support of school administrators, teachers, and parents to various interventions alleviated if not totally solved the problems.

Stakeholders mentioned that with the ardent desire of the schools to promote and strengthen holistic formation for the 21st century learners, included among the important quality assurance agenda is revisiting the vision-mission and thrust of the schools for their relevance and responsiveness to UN sustainable goals for quality education and lifelong learning.

Holistic formation impact on 21st century schooling

Single-sex and mixed-sex schools that participated in the study envision an agency of change providing formation that address the unique needs of the 21st century learners. The learners are considered critical thinkers, problem solvers, creative innovators, collaborators, technologically shrewd, and globally connected (Characteristics of 21st century learners, 2019, <https://blog.kamiapp.com>; <https://learner21stcentury.wordpress.com>). Interviews with the school administrators and teachers during the on-site school visitations mentioned the schools’ activities from formal academic skills ‘enhancement to non-formal and informal learning through interaction with the local communities, cultural and intercultural awareness in response to the UN sustainable development goals (<https://www.un.org/envision2030.html>) along the areas of quality education and life-long learning. The clean-green campaign, prohibiting the use of plastic containers and eating utensils within the school premises, and waste segregation, joining peoples’ initiatives addressing environmental and political issues aim to raise awareness among students on the issue of climate change. Teachers and students are given the opportunities to join local and international competitions from academics to various forms of arts for values formation not only the joy of winning. Students’ collaborative science projects such as experimenting on reusable materials, medicinal plants, and other related researches are not only intended for inter-schools’ competition but to help local communities, sharing information and resources with the marginalized and disadvantaged communities including the tribal people. Providing high internet connectivity and promoting participatory and engaging classroom cater to the needs of the 21st century learners, the onliners, and facilitate 21st century skills development.

Holistic school visions locally-rooted, globally competent, and life-long learners (Nurturing 21st century students holistically, 2017, <https://digitallearning.eletsonline.com>). Students’ exposure to diverse cultural information and experiences, cultural exchange and interactions, developing individual learners’ cross-cultural competencies are among the strategies to facilitate lifelong learning that should appeal to the totality of a person--heart, body, and brain--and more importantly, to existential values and emotions, and aim to promote the art of human maturity, which is a prerequisite for becoming a good citizen who is actively involved in local, national, and international issues and problems (Medel-Anonuevo, Ohsako and Mauch, 2001).

School stakeholders mentioned that despite decreasing enrollment, five percent on the average in the past 10 years, the schools survive with the continuing assistance of benefactors and graduate alumni to augment and sustain the scholarship programs to keep the talented and gifted students but financially-challenged. The continuing technology advances and the multiple influences of social media on learning and instruction posed challenge to the schools' moral and spiritual formation as students were trying to make sense of their school experiences in conjunction with the vast array of information just tick away on mobile phones and internet access. This also impact parents', teachers' and administrators schooling advocacies and priorities. Graduates alumni supportive of the tradition, and vision-mission of their alma mater also expressed concerns regarding the skills development of the 21st century learners. These concerns raise issue whether to adhere to same-sex or mixed-sex classroom. The study suggests that regardless of school type, moral and spiritual values are important to thrive and progress in today's goal of education for sustainability.

Conclusion

Findings highlight themes of holistic formation associated to unique stakeholders' experiences in single-sex and mixed-sex private schools. Overall adequacy of information was confirmed through member-checking with the participants from whom the data were collected for clarificatory information, analytic interpretations, and conclusions. Presentation of software-generated wordclouds to the participants facilitated in-depth explanation and meaning of frequently occurring words that were reiterated, given emphasis relating to experiences, and contributed to the finalization of themes.

- (1) Holistic formation and training in single-sex and mixed-sex are reflected in the school's vision-mission incorporating hallmark of values guiding formation of well-rounded persons in character, morals, and spiritual. Promoting academic excellence and behavior, instilling social awareness and responsibility, inculcating Christian values and responsible character, moral and spiritual formation are themes of holistic formation mechanisms.
- (2) Pursuit for academic excellence in single-sex and mixed-sex is evident in winning inter school competitions and school's recognition. Academic behavior and classroom discipline were considered important in achieving academic excellence. Students in single-sex schools exhibit diligence and good study habits, and teachers could discuss freely gender-sensitive topics that interest students. Classroom discipline in mixed-sex schools pose challenge to teachers but tempered through disciplinary measures with the concerted effort of administrators, teachers, and parents.
- (3) Activities in single-sex and mixed-sex schools are anchored on the vision-mission and thrust of the schools focusing on social awareness, responsibility, local and global environment issues, and concerns. Values integration and social issues in classroom discussions raise student's awareness and ignite passion for service and action. School programs and activities, actual community experience inside and outside school, community involvement, immersion, and outreach programs to marginalized sectors in the community instill among students their significant role in society. Remarkable difference between single-sex and mixed-sex lies on self-fulfillment and social maturation. Participants claim better social maturation among students in mixed-sex when boys and girls together in community involvement and activities. Single-sex schooling stress particularly all-girl schools on forming women leaders from elementary

to high school with the desire to make a difference in society through lay apostolate program in the orphanages and other mission shelters.

- (4) Socialization experiences promote stronger bonds and friendship in single-sex as students find it easier expressing thoughts and emotions, sharing similar interests, and learning social grace and responsible behavior. In mixed-sex, students learn gender equality, rights, privileges, and to handle emotions with the opposite sex including the LGBT+.
- (5) Strength of character, good manners and proper decorum, and living out hallmark of Christian values like simplicity, humility, honesty, respect, compassion, joyful service, gratefulness, and care for mother earth are vital attributes of holistically formed individual and are considered important to thrive in the 21st century learning environment. Students in mixed-sex learn self-discipline, self-control, and sex awareness when dealing with the opposite sex. Single-sex emphasizes among students the responsible social behavior, social grace, prim and proper behavior in public social gatherings.
- (6) Single-sex and mixed-sex schools emphasized the importance of morals guiding behaviors through reflections and faith in God, and the integration of moral values in school's curriculum, in Christian living education subjects, and spiritual activities such as community prayers, monthly and occasional eucharistic celebrations, retreats and recollections. Single-sex schools inspired religious vocations among students with the practice of deep constant prayers, examination of conscience, and reflective thinking to guide thoughts and actions. Discipline during religious activities and community prayers posed great challenge in mixed-sex schools.
- (7) School-related problems are considered impediments to holistic formation. Single-sex and mixed-sex schools designed and implemented intervention programs to address problems like physical and social bullying, homosexual relationship in single-sex, and teenage sexual relationship, and early pregnancy in mixed-sex. The concerted effort of school administrators, teachers, and parents, alleviate if not totally solve the problems.

Findings suggest that holistic formation in single-sex and mixed-sex private schools aim to address the demands of the 21st century schooling and design and implement programs in response to the UN sustainable development goals of providing quality education and promoting life-long learning. Burgeoning technologies, social media, and 21st century schooling needs and concerns influence and impact the chain of tradition regarding adherence to single-sex and mixed-sex education. Preserving and upholding the teaching of morals and spiritual formation amidst the fast-paced technological advances and multiple influences surrounding 21st century learners are considered imminent challenge to private sectarian single-sex and mixed-sex schooling.

Findings have important implications on the dynamic and evolving holistic formation in the 21st century private sectarian-religious schooling. This study provides evidence for future endeavors along the area of schooling that would address the need for wholeness in the next centuries with fascinating challenges, what is needed, what should be prioritized, and what should be set aside or perhaps sacrificed while preserving school culture moral and spiritual tradition.

Note:

The author experienced coeducational elementary schooling and exclusive for girls secondary schooling. Her ongoing research interest in 21st century schooling focus on the experiences of online learners and teachers in single-sex and mixed-sex considering blended and entirely online classrooms in the Philippines.

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