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Original Article

## The Level of Awareness of Youth on Sacramentals and its Implication

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### Abstract

*This study aimed to assess the awareness of Senior High School (SHS) students on sacramentals at San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite. The research included 204 students in Grades 11 and 12 who were enrolled in the Christian Life Formation subject for the Academic Year 2021–2022. The importance of this research lies in addressing the declining religiosity among youth by evaluating their understanding of sacramentals. The study employed a descriptive quantitative survey design, utilizing stratified purposive sampling and statistical tools such as the t-test and F-test to examine significant differences in students' awareness of sacramentals and their demographic profiles. Most respondents are young students, with a higher number of females than males and an equal distribution across Grades 11 and 12. Many participants attended Catholic schools and reported being fully aware of sacramentals, although most were not affiliated with any religious organization. While students demonstrated strong awareness overall, with the highest levels being for holy water, the Sign of the Cross, and prayer before and after meals, lower awareness was noted for scapulars, images and icons, and medals. No significant differences were found in awareness levels across demographic profiles. The findings have implications for the Christian Life Formation subject, which plays a vital role in nurturing students' Catholic identity and understanding of sacramentals. This study may serve as a reference for future research involving larger samples from public and non-sectarian schools. Providing CLF teachers with training focused on spirituality and sacramentals, along with implementing the proposed Sacramentals Module, could further enhance respondents' awareness of sacramentals.*

**Keywords:** *Christian Life Formation, Holy Things and Actions, Sacramentals, San Sebastian College, Senior High School*

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## Introduction

It is easier to understand vagueness and confusion when there are signs and symbols to explain it. It narrows down broad ideas into a more concise concept. It does not utter a single word, but looking at it, it conveys a deeper message. A painter, for example, expresses his thoughts through art, breaking barriers of words. People use signs and symbols to make them more aware of the presence of God, which, even earlier in the Bible stories, was already visible. The narratives in the Bible explain that in the Old Testament, the man linked to Elisha's bones awoke and rose to his feet (2 Kings 13:20-21). In the New Testament, Jesus made clay to mend the visually impaired man (John 9:6-12). The lady with hemorrhages was quickly recovered by contacting Jesus' shroud (Luke 8:44). The fabrics or covers that contacted Paul's skin were applied to the debilitated, their sicknesses left them, and the abhorrent spirits came out of them (Acts 19:11-12).

Early Christians had high respect for consecrated items and regarded these as a method for recalling and interfacing with the nearness of God in every one of them. The Sacraments are outward signs instituted by Christ, who confers grace. The Sacraments work *ex opere operato* (i.e., by virtue of the action itself) (Rock, 2020). On the other hand, there is *ex opere operantis* (i.e., by virtue of the one performing the work). Noticeably, even until the present time, as a significant aspect of productive custom, Christians, despite everything, look at the importance of those things called "Sacramentals". Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC) #1578 teaches those objects, actions, practices, places, and the like that help us become aware of Christ's grace-filled presence, known as sacramentals. These are blessings; pious acts such as kneeling and making the Sign of the Cross; words in the form of novena prayers; objects such as crucifixes, rosaries, and scapulars; places such as churches and shrines; and liturgical seasons such as Advent and Lent. These sacred objects are used to deepen one's relationship with God and His heavenly people. Consecrated articles and actions are used as tools of constant communion with God, which helps Catholics gain confidence.

The Catholic Church, which is considered the oldest Church established by Jesus Christ after He died in 33 A.D., has abundant and colorful traditions, which, up to the present time, are being religiously followed by the faithful. As per a recent 2019 report, there are over 1.3 billion faithful worldwide, which is around eighteen percent of the overall population in the world. In an article by Geggel (2021), archaeologists unearthed 1,500 years 1,500-year-old inscribed Christian blessing, with the word, "Christ, born with Mary", which was believed to be part of a church door in Israel. In addition, Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, who happens to be the Patroness of the Philippines and whose image has been placed among Filipino Catholic homes, has been venerated because of numerous and unexplained inscriptions and symbolism. The Parable of the Mustard Seed represents the Catholic Church's undying mission of awakening the unshakeable faith, specifically among Filipino youth. In an interview with the late Archbishop Oscar Cruz, he claimed that the Church is growing since the Catholic directory has provided 1.21 million baptisms since 2012 (Uy, 2013).

In the report of Catholic News Service by Nicholas Wolfram Smith (2018), a 2018 study on youthful adults discovered that young individuals leave the Catholic Church at the middle age of 13, well before they stop attending church service. A renowned Catholic evangelist, Tim Staples (2018), said, "They have been raised that

way and believe it, but so often they do not know why they are Catholic.” Young people are not fully aware of their religious practices and faith, especially sacramentals. Pew Research Center (2018) claims that young adults around the world are less likely to be religious based on several indicators. The study revealed that out of 106 countries, young adults are significantly less likely to affiliate with a religious group in 41 countries. In addition, only two countries with young adults are more likely to consider themselves part of a religious organization, while the rest have significant differences. This supports the study of Wright et al. (2018) that religiosity declines during adolescence. Based on the results of the study, there were three (3) distinct profiles of spiritual connectedness: low and steady, moderate decline over the study period, and high and steady. However, youth who have a high and steady profile are more goal-directed and satisfied and have effective emotional management. Even in the Philippines, Cornelio (2016) said that it is common to hear concerns about the decline in religiosity among young people who do not attend Church, do not understand their beliefs, and do not take their faith seriously. Thus, it is worth noting to include the selfless roles of educators and formators in the spiritual wellness of Filipino youths. Bual & Cena (2021) assessed the degree of spiritual, religious, and existential well-being of public senior high school students in Bacolod City, Philippines. Findings deduced that students’ spiritual well-being was in a moderate state. Although religious well-being was high, existential well-being was also moderate. The findings of the study pushed for school administration and faculty to effectively hone students’ values to appreciate and meet life’s purpose and satisfaction. As a recommendation, values and religious formators should provide and guarantee students’ spiritual well-being. Meanwhile, Baring et al. (2016) probed the relationship between academic growth and religious life among Filipino students who have strong interests in religious and sociological discussions. In an article by Madrigal et al. (2020), they claimed that senior high school students of a Recoletos School in Negros Occidental demonstrated a very high extent of religiosity but significantly different when grouped according to year level, church involvement, mass attendance, and Catholic identity. In addition, they were significantly different when it comes to gender, and there was a significant relationship between religiosity and well-being, which implies that the more Recoletos students observe Catholic teachings and practices, the more that they develop personal encounters with the Divine, sense of satisfaction, and purpose in life. Findings showed that there was a significant difference between identity and relational variables. This proves that there is a decline in the level of religiosity among the young. Since they are not fully informed and aware of their faith, what would be the level of their awareness on sacramentals? Thus, the researcher decided to come up with a study on the students’ level of awareness about these sacred objects, specifically the senior high school students, since they are entering the maturity of how their devotions come up in the life of the greater populace of the Church.

San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite is one of the academic institutions in the Philippines that provides the subject Christian Life Formation, which discusses the Catholic Church’s teachings. The Christian Life Formation offers opportunities for students to develop a personal relationship with God as He reveals the wonders of His creation in their daily lives. It emphasizes prayer, worship, liturgy, church doctrines, and community building. Given these realities and the desire to contribute a significant study, the researcher believes it is critical to ascertain the level of

awareness of sacramentals among senior high school students at San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite.

This is a timely study in the Philippine context, considering that the Church is celebrating the 500th year of the arrival and the reception of the faith in the country. The researcher recognizes the issues and concerns of Filipino youth today concerning spirituality and religiosity. For them to embrace the Catholic faith, they must be illuminated with the fundamentals, and that is through the Sacramentals of the Holy Mother Church. Additionally, this research can provide significant insights and perspectives to a broad worldwide audience, ranging from educators and governing bodies to religious studies and theology researchers and those active in interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange programs. It provides a prism through which to investigate the complex relationship between education and faith in many international contexts.

This study aimed to explore the level of awareness regarding Sacramentals among Senior High School (SHS) students at San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite during the Academic Year 2021-2022, with the intended outcome of informing and improving the Christian Life Formation subject. Specifically, the research achieved the following:

1. investigated the overall level of awareness about Sacramentals among the SHS students and explored whether significant differences existed in this awareness based on the students' demographic profiles: age, gender, strand/track, year level, membership in church organizations, and previous school enrollment (public, private Catholic, or private non-sectarian),
2. examined implications of the students' level of awareness on their appreciation of Sacramentals for the Christian Life Formation subject, and,
3. proposed a suitable Christian Living Formation Module focused on Sacramentals.

For the Hypotheses section, when grouped by demographic profile, there is no significant difference in the level of awareness of Senior High Students (SHS) of San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite, A.Y. 2021-2022 on Sacramentals.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a Descriptive Quantitative survey design, which refers to systematic investigations that utilize numerical data to understand educational phenomena. This study utilized the demographic profile of students, such as age, gender, strand/track, year level, membership in church organizations, and previous school enrollment (public, private Catholic, or private non-sectarian) to identify the students' level of awareness regarding Sacramentals and to determine whether there is a significant difference between the respondents' levels of awareness based on their demographic profile. A survey tool referred to as Google Forms was used to collect information consisting of a series of questions distributed to and completed by student respondents because of the imposed restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The questionnaire items were developed based on the relevant literature and studies gleaned from various sources, including books, journals, theses, and internet sources. To collect information about the level of sacramental awareness among senior high school students at San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite, A.Y. 2021-

2022, as well as the opinions and characteristics of the group, the questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section was designed to collect information on the demographic profile of the student-respondents, such as age, gender, strand/track, year level, membership in church organizations, and previous school enrollment (public, private Catholic, or private non-sectarian). The second part inquired about the level of awareness of student-respondents about specified sacramentals from Catechism for Filipino Catholics #1534. For the validation and Test of Reliability of the Questionnaire, the self-made questionnaire was forwarded to the adviser for comments and suggestions. Revisions were incorporated to improve the instrument. The instrument was validated by three assigned Religious Education professors from the College of Education Graduate Studies at De La Salle University—Dasmariñas. This set of questions was tested at Sacred Heart Recoletos de Alfonso, Cavite, offering the same subject among senior high school students using Cronbach Alpha. The researcher employed stratified random sampling techniques to consider the total number of 430 senior high school students for the 2021-2022 school year. Cochran's formula was used to determine the sample size. The total number of student respondents was 204.

The statistical tests employed in this study were crucial for analyzing the data gathered. Frequency count and relative frequency in percentage were utilized as descriptive statistics to determine the demographic profile of the respondents. This included information regarding their age, gender, strand/track, year level, membership in church organizations, and previous school enrollment (public, private Catholic, or private non-sectarian). These same descriptive statistics were also applied to analyze the respondents' answers concerning their awareness of Sacramentals. The mean was calculated as a descriptive statistic to determine senior high school students' overall awareness of Sacramentals. To compare the level of awareness according to the demographic profile of the student-respondents, the researcher used t-tests for age, gender, year level, and participation in religious organizations, and F-tests for strand/track and previous school enrolled. A Likert scale was employed to measure the level of awareness of the student-respondents regarding Sacramentals. The instrument consisted of 20 items that explored various aspects of Sacramentals in Catholic practice. These included sacred times, places, words, actions, objects, and gestures observed by the faithful; the role of Sacramentals in enhancing the effects of the sacraments; and specific examples such as blessings of homes, cars, and buildings; the Sign of the Cross; bowing, kneeling, and genuflecting; prayers before and after meals; novenas and litanies; ashes on Ash Wednesday; palms on Palm Sunday; holy water; candles; the crucifix; medals; the rosary; scapulars; images and icons; the Church and sacred places; the Liturgical Calendar; relics; and prayer books and religious articles. Each item was rated on a 4-point scale, where a score of 4 (3.26–4.00) indicated “Fully aware,” 3 (2.51–3.25) indicated “Aware,” 2 (1.76–2.50) indicated “Not aware,” and 1 (1.00–1.75) indicated “Fully not aware.”

Before conducting the study, the researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the College of Education Graduate Studies. A formal request to conduct the research was submitted to the Senior High School Principal of San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite, who granted permission and informed the class advisers accordingly. The study's purpose and duration were explained to the participants, and informed consent was obtained. For respondents aged 18 and below, a parental

consent form was required. Parents were encouraged to be present during the survey process.

Participants were informed that they could skip any questions they found irrelevant. Those who needed assistance reading the survey were allowed help, and responses were their own. No names or sensitive personal information were collected to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Only necessary demographic data, such as age, gender, strand/track, year level, church organization membership, and previous school type were gathered. Data collection was conducted in private settings to avoid observation or eavesdropping. All digital files were encrypted and stored in a password-protected zip file on a secure online drive. Personal identifiers were removed, and only the researcher had access to the survey results.

### Results and Discussions

The results and analysis of the data are presented below.

Table 1. Profile of Student-Respondents according to Demographic Variables

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
16-17 years old	111	54
18-19 years old	93	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	77	38
Female	127	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Strand/Track</b>		
ABM	44	21
HUMSS	26	13
STEM	134	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Year Level</b>		
11	102	50
12	102	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Participation in Religious Organization</b>		
Yes	76	37
No	128	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Previous School Enrolled</b>		
Public School	69	34
Private Catholic School	99	48
Private Non-Sectarian School	36	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>100</b>

1.1. Age. Table 1 shows that the age of respondents is grouped into two: (a) 16-17 years old and (b) 18-19 years old. Among the 204 respondents, 111, or 54 percent, are 16-17 years old, while 93, or 46 percent, are 18-19 years old. The data show that more of the respondents were Grade 11 students or within the early teen bracket. This

supports the findings of Cornelio (2016) when he claimed that young people do not attend Church, do not understand their beliefs, and do not take their faith seriously. However, this contradicts the study of Madrigal et al. (2020) when they mentioned that Senior High School students from a rural Catholic school demonstrated a very high extent of religiosity, but it differed when grouped according to year level, church involvement, mass attendance, and Catholic identity.

1.2. Gender. It is also shown in Table 1 that in terms of gender, 127 or 62 percent are female. The male respondents are 77 or 38 percent. It was revealed that more student respondents are female. This could mean that more Senior High School students are females. This finding is closely related to the study of Rose et al. (2014), which showed that adolescents who consider religion an important aspect of their lives serve as a guide in decision-making. However, Burge (2022) claimed that there is a religious affiliation gap by gender where he identified Christian women around the globe as, on average, 7 percent more likely than men to attend church services, while the youngest adults are less likely to report never attending.

1.3. Track/Strand. Strand/Track of student-respondents were grouped into 3, namely: (a) ABM, (b) HUMSS, and (c) STEM. Table 4 presents that in terms of strand/track, 134 or 66 percent are STEM, 44 or 21 percent are ABM, and 26 or 13 percent are HUMSS. This means that most student respondents are from the STEM strand. This is in parallel with the study of Bajuri et al. (2021), who claimed that spirituality is a crucial concept that can ensure social, emotional, economic, and environmental sustainability among individuals associated with technology. Meanwhile, Spector (2018) added that adolescents who practice religion regularly perform better academically than disengaged adolescents. This also indicates that religious engagement may influence academic performance.

1.4. Year Level. Table 1 also shows that, in terms of year level, 102 or 50 percent are Grade 11 while 102 or 50 percent are Grade 12. This means that both groups are equally distributed. This finding coincides with Ariel et al. (2019), who concluded that spirituality is a fundamental character strength and an essential aspect of positive development among adolescents.

1.5. Participation in Religious Organization. Table 1 also shows student-respondents' demographic profile when grouped according to their membership in a religious organization. 128 or 63 percent are not members of religious organizations, while 76 or 37 percent are members of religious organizations. This could mean that more student respondents do not participate in religious organizations. This aligns with the findings of Pew Research Center (2018) that young adults worldwide are less religious and less likely to join a religious group in 41 of 106 countries. Only 2 countries have more young adults who consider themselves part of a religious organization than the rest. Also, Wright et al. (2018)'s study found that religiosity declines during adolescence and can be categorized into three profiles of spiritual connectedness such as low and steady, moderately declining, and high and steady. Moreso, this is also in parallel to the studies of Cornelio (2016) where he mentioned that young people do not attend Church, do not understand their beliefs, and do not take their faith seriously, and that of Baring et al. (2016) where he studied academic growth and religious life among Filipino students interested in religious and sociological discussions. The study found a decline in youth religiosity. This is, likewise, parallel to the study of Tumminio-Hansen (2021), which found that organized religion has declined for decades.

1.6. Previous School Enrolled. The demographic profiles of student-respondents according to the previous school enrolled were grouped into 3, namely: (a) Public School, (b) Private Catholic School, and (c) Private Non-Sectarian School. Table 2 also demonstrates the demographic profile of student-respondents when grouped by previous school enrollment. 99 or 48 percent attended Private Catholic schools, 69 or 34% of the respondents attended public school, 99 or 48% attended private Catholic schools, and 36 or 18% attended private non-sectarian schools. The findings could mean that most student respondents are from Private Catholic Schools. This supports the study of Bual & Cena (2021), which found that Private Catholic high school students' spiritual health was moderate and existential well-being was low despite high religious well-being. Thus, this study pushed school administration and faculty to help students appreciate life's purpose and satisfaction. Baring et al. (2016) studied academic growth and religious life among Filipino students who were interested in religious and sociological discussions. Their study found that identity and relational variables are different. This shows a decline in youth religiosity.

*Table 2. Student-Respondents' Rating on the Level of Awareness on Sacramentals*

Level of Awareness on Sacramentals	Mean	Description	Rank
1. Sacred times, places, words, actions, objects, and gestures observed and practiced by the Catholic faithful are called Sacramentals.	3.32	FA	15
2. Sacramentals help us better receive the effects of the sacraments in our life and bring us closer to God.	3.45	FA	10.5
3. Sacramentals such as the blessings of homes, cars, and buildings remind us of Christ's continuous presence in our lives.	3.34	FA	13
4. The Sign of the Cross is a Sacramental because it is used to profess Catholic faith and invoke Divine protection.	3.57	FA	2
5. Bowing, kneeling, and genuflecting are sacramentals because they are signs of high respect to the Blessed Sacrament.	3.47	FA	8.5
6. Prayers before and after meal are sacramentals because these are dialogues to thank God for the blessings received and abundance.	3.56	FA	3.5
7. Novenas and litanies are sacramentals because these are holy rituals for petitions, favors, and devotions by honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Saints, and Martyrs.	3.27	FA	16
8. Ashes placed on the faithfuls' foreheads during Ash Wednesday are sacramentals because they remind us of death and repentance.	3.47	FA	8.5
9. Palms are sacramentals because they remind us of Jesus' symbolic entry to Jerusalem during Palm Sunday.	3.45	FA	10.5
10. Holy water used in Baptism and other religious occasions are Sacramentals because it signifies spiritual cleansing.	3.58	FA	1
11. A Candle is a Sacramental because it is a symbol of the light of Christ.	3.36	FA	12
12. The Crucifix is a Sacramental because it a reminder of Christ's infinite love for mankind-and that is through His death and resurrection.	3.55	FA	5.5
13. Medals are Sacramentals because these are constant reminders of God's faithful servants - the BVM and the Saints.	3.00	A	20
14. The rosary is a Sacramental because it tells us the life stories of Christ and His Mother.	3.48	FA	7
15. Scapulars are Sacramentals because they are symbolic pledges to a Confraternity of the BVM and Saints.	3.07	A	19
16. Images and icons are Sacramentals because they are God's incarnation in Christ by taking human body and nature.	3.13	A	18
17. The Church and sacred places are Sacramentals because it is where faithfuls gather as community to worship and praise God.	3.56	FA	3.5
18. The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is a Sacramental because it serves as guide in the life and Paschal mystery of Christ.	3.33	FA	14



19. Relics are Sacramentals because they affirm that Saints in heaven intercede for those on earth by means of miracles and healings.	3.26	FA	17
20. Prayer books and religious articles are Sacramentals because they contain prayers and devotional readings which deepen Catholic spirituality.	3.55	FA	5.5
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.39</b>	<b>Fully aware</b>	
<i>Legend: FA- Fully Aware    A- Aware</i>			

The instrument used to assess the level of awareness on Sacramentals comprised 20 items. Results revealed that the highest mean rating was for Item 10, “Holy water used in Baptism and other religious occasions is a Sacramental because it signifies spiritual cleansing,” which received a mean of 3.58, described as Fully Aware. This was closely followed by Item 4, “The Sign of the Cross as a profession of faith and invocation of Divine protection,” with a mean of 3.57.

Items that also scored highly include Item 12 (The Crucifix as a reminder of Christ’s love) and Item 20 (Prayer books and religious articles that deepen Catholic spirituality), both with a mean rating of 3.55. Items 6 and 17, referring to prayers before and after meals and the role of churches and sacred places, each scored 3.50. These results suggest that respondents are well aware of the most visible and frequently practiced sacramentals.

Items such as the rosary (Item 14, 3.40), gestures like bowing and genuflecting (Item 5, 3.47), and Ash Wednesday ashes (Item 8, 3.47) were also described as Fully Aware, indicating familiarity with traditional Catholic expressions of reverence and penance. Other sacramentals such as palms (Item 9, 3.45), candles (Item 11, 3.36), blessings of homes and vehicles (Item 3, 3.34), and the liturgical calendar (Item 18, 3.33) were similarly recognized.

Interestingly, Items 16 (Images and icons, 3.13), 15 (Scapulars, 3.07), and 13 (Medals, 3.00) received the lowest ratings and were categorized under the “Aware” level. This suggests that while most respondents know about commonly practiced and visibly encountered sacramentals, lesser-known or more symbolic items may not be as widely understood.

Overall, 17 out of 20 items were rated as Fully Aware, yielding a general mean rating of 3.39, indicating a high awareness level among student respondents. These findings affirm the assertion of the Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC 1534) that sacramentals are highly popular among Filipino Catholics, who naturally seek tangible expressions of faith. These include actions such as kneeling and making the Sign of the Cross, devotional objects like crucifixes and rosaries, sacred places like churches and shrines, and liturgical seasons such as Advent and Holy Week.

However, the relatively lower ratings for the three items also reflect a knowledge gap. This aligns with Kosloski’s (2016) observation that sacramentals are often misunderstood or misused as superstitious objects by the uninformed faithful despite their longstanding role in Catholic tradition. Thus, catechesis and pastoral instruction remain crucial to deepen the proper understanding of these sacred signs.

*Table 3. Comparison on the Level of Awareness of Student-Respondents on Sacramentals According to Demographic Profile*

Dimension	Mean	Df	t-value	Significance
Age				
16-17	3.41	110	0.55	0.057 NS
18-19	3.36	92		
Gender				
Male	3.33	76	1.14	0.129 NS
Female	3.43	126		
Strand/Track			F-value	0.495 NS

ABM	3.46	2	0.706	
HUMSS	3.28	201		
STEM	3.39	203		
Year Level				
11	3.36	101	0.77	0.221 NS
12	3.42	101		
Participation in Religious Organization				
Yes	3.43	75	0.75	0.227 NS
No	3.36	127		
Previous School Enrolled				
Public School	3.33	2	F-value	0.292 NS
Private Catholic School	3.46	201	1.238	
Private Non-Sectarian School	3.31	203		
Level of Awareness			t-value	
Overall Demographic Profile	3.38	118.17	0.81	0.10 NS
			F-Value	
			0.972	

NS= Not Significant df= degrees of freedom

Table 3 presents the analysis of the differences in the level of awareness on Sacramentals among student respondents when grouped according to age, sex, academic strand, year level, participation in religious organizations, and type of previous school attended.

In terms of age, respondents aged 16–17 had a mean rating of 3.41, while those aged 18–19 had a slightly higher mean rating of 3.46. However, the computed t-value of 0.55 using 110 and 92 degrees of freedom was not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in sacramental awareness based on age was accepted. This suggests that students' awareness of Sacramentals is not influenced by age and is generally consistent across both age groups.

With regard to sex, male respondents recorded a mean rating of 3.33, while female respondents had a higher mean rating of 3.43. Despite the difference, the computed t-value of 1.14 with a significance level of 0.129 (df = 76 and 126) indicated no statistically significant difference. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, affirming that gender does not significantly influence the level of awareness of sacramentals. This supports Rich's (2012) assertion that spirituality-related measures often yield no significant differences across gender. Moreover, it reflects contemporary understandings that gender is increasingly shaped by personal identity and societal perceptions.

When grouped according to Strand/Track, ABM students had the highest mean rating of 3.46, followed by STEM students with 3.39 and HUMSS students with 3.28. Nonetheless, the calculated f-value of 0.706 (df = 2, 201, 203) and the significance level of 0.495 revealed no significant differences. The null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that students' strand or track has no substantial bearing on their sacramental awareness. This finding contradicts Sapp's (2017) conclusion that religiosity and spirituality negatively correlate with academic focus, suggesting instead that awareness may be evenly distributed regardless of academic orientation.

As for year level, Grade 11 students had a mean rating of 3.36, while Grade 12 students averaged 3.42. The computed t-value of 0.77 with a significance level of 0.221 (df = 101) indicated no statistically significant difference, supporting the acceptance

of the null hypothesis. This implies that both junior and senior high school students exhibit similar levels of awareness regarding sacramentals.

In terms of participation in religious organizations, non-participants had a slightly higher mean rating of 3.46 compared to 3.36 among participants. Despite this unexpected trend, the t-value of 0.75 with a significance level of 0.227 (df = 75 and 127) was not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was again accepted. This suggests that involvement in religious organizations does not significantly affect awareness levels, contrary to the findings of Villani et al. (2019), which emphasized the positive relationship between spirituality and well-being. It also diverges from USCCB's (n.d.) claims that campus ministry programs foster spiritual awareness through active participation.

Lastly, student respondents were grouped by the type of school they previously attended. Students from private Catholic schools had the highest mean score of 3.46, followed by public schools at 3.36, and private non-sectarian schools at 3.31. However, the f-value of 1.238 (df = 2, 201, 203) with a significance of 0.292 showed no statistically significant difference. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that prior school background, whether public, Catholic, or non-sectarian—does not significantly influence students' awareness of sacramentals. This complements the findings of Wadsworth and Walker (2017), who highlighted the positive religious engagement among Catholic high school students while also echoing Wooden's (2018) observation that Catholic education, though dominant in form, may no longer be a sole determinant of religious knowledge or practice.

Across all demographic variables examined, no significant differences were found in the level of awareness of sacramentals. The general mean score of 3.39, categorized as Fully Aware, supports the conclusion that students possess a uniformly high level of understanding regarding sacramentals, regardless of age, sex, academic track, year level, religious participation, or school background.

The results of the study on students' level of awareness on Sacramentals have certain implications for the Christian Life Formation subject:

1. Catholic schools assist the Holy Catholic Church in fulfilling its teachings by introducing Christ to students through the Sacraments included in the Christian Life Formation subject. As emphasized in the Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC #1578), sacramentals, such as sacred objects, gestures, and prayers, are visible signs that help individuals become more aware of God's grace-filled presence. These practices stem from both Scripture and tradition and have been employed since biblical times to express faith and draw closer to God.
2. The Christian Life Formation subject is essential for nurturing senior high school students' Catholic identity. The subject helps students understand the meaning, purpose, and proper use of sacramentals such as holy water, crucifixes, scapulars, and Marian devotions. This allows them to internalize their faith and apply it in their daily lives. This aligns with findings by Bual & Cena (2021) and Madrigal et al. (2020), which show how important religious education is for students' spiritual well-being and sense of purpose. When students comprehend the significance of sacramentals, they are more inclined to engage in profound prayer and cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

3. The researcher identified various types of sacramentals to help senior high school students at San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite recognize and understand them before they use them during prayer. This awareness is crucial because it enables students to treat sacramentals with reverence and significance. The students' ability to articulate their awareness can establish a basis for the frequency and importance of their prayer practices, whether at home, in Church, or in public settings. This supports the idea that sacramentals are not just religious objects but also tools for spiritual growth and connecting with God.
4. The crucial role of Catholic educators, formators, and Church leaders in educating young people is essential to foster sacramental awareness and its eventual implementation. Studies by Staples (2018), Cornelio (2016), and the Pew Research Center (2018) indicate that many young individuals today lack a deep understanding of their faith. This often stems from limited catechetical training and insufficient support for professional development. Therefore, Catholic educators, formators, and Church leaders must go beyond mere instruction and act as witnesses to the faith by demonstrating the use of sacramentals and creating sacred spaces. This role is vital to ensuring that the next generation remains connected to the rich traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn: To begin with, student-respondents are young adults since most of them are in Grade 12. There are more females than males, most are enrolled under STEM strand/track, most of the respondents are not members of any religious organizations, and most came from private Catholic schools. Furthermore, San Sebastian College – Recoletos de Cavite's senior high students are well-versed in the Sacramentals, but it is necessary to emphasize the significance of Scapulars, Images and Icons, and Medals. Finally, grouping respondents according to age, gender, strand/track, participation in a religious organization, and previous school enrolment revealed no statistically significant differences in their level of awareness.

Considering the findings and conclusion, the researcher posed these recommendations: First and foremost, this study is recommended as a point of reference for future researchers for further studies involving more respondents from non-sectarian and public high school schools.

The level of awareness of senior high students at San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite on Sacramentals must be sustained and enhanced by providing Christian Living Formation teachers adequate and relevant training focused on Spirituality and Sacramentals.

Overall, the proposed Sacramentals Module must be implemented to sustain the high level of awareness of senior high school students of San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite about Sacramentals and further improve other points that students need to know about sacramentals, such as sacred images and icons, brown scapular, and religious medals.

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