





Attitude Toward Catholic Beliefs Among the Students in a Catholic School in Western Visayas

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the degree of attitude toward Catholic beliefs in the factors of incarnational, scriptural, moral, and eschatological aspects among Grade 11 students in a Catholic school, considering them as a whole and grouping them according to sex, family structure, religion, strand, and last school attended. Similarly, the study examined the differences in attitudes toward Catholic beliefs when classified by students' demographics. This study used a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive-comparative approach. The respondents of the study were 168 Grade 11 students in a Catholic school in Western Visayas. In gathering the data, the study used a 21-item standardized questionnaire with a scale of interpretation ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). In analyzing the data, frequency counts, percentages means, and standard deviations were used, along with the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis H test. Hence, the findings indicate that the respondents generally agreed with Catholic beliefs. In terms of the demographics, males and intact families had a strong agreement. In terms of religion, Catholics and non-Catholics both showed agreement with Catholic beliefs. Strand-wise, GAS-Hums indicated a stronger agreement than its counterparts. Meanwhile, there is a significant difference according to sex and family structure. This study demonstrates that Catholic schools play a crucial role in fostering students' growth in Catholic beliefs through religious activities, family support, and moral education. The findings invite continued reflection on how Catholic education can guide all students toward a meaningful life shaped by the Catholic beliefs.

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Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how students in a Catholic school in Western Visayas perceive and internalize Catholic

beliefs. It informs educators and administrators about prevailing attitudes, aiding in the development of faith-based programs that strengthen religious formation and promote a more meaningful engagement with Catholic teachings.

1. Introduction

Students hold diverse attitudes toward Catholic beliefs, which are shaped by their socio-cultural background and educational experiences (Zellma et al., 2022). In predominantly Catholic countries, such as Italy and Spain, students often exhibit a strong alignment with Catholic teachings which manifests into their daily lives (Vide & Wroblewski, 2022; Kiciński & Annicchiarico, 2022). Conversely, in secular nations such as France and Germany, students may exhibit a more critical or indifferent stance toward religious doctrines (Davie, 2022). This divergence highlights the influence of national culture and secularization on the religious perceptions of students (Cívico Ariza et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Catholic educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping these attitudes (Zellma et al., 2022).

In Asia, countries like South Korea exhibit a higher degree of Catholic adherence, with students often participating in religious activities and upholding Catholic values (Kim & Connolly, 2024). In contrast, in a nation like China, where Catholicism is a minority religion, students may have limited exposure to Catholic teachings, leading to varying levels of attitude and interest (Xiong, 2024). This disparity highlights the influence of the demographics and educational systems on students' attitude toward Catholic beliefs (Wang & Froese, 2020). Moreover, the rise of secularism and alternative belief systems across Asia has introduced new challenges in maintaining religious engagement among the youth (Cornelio, 2024).

In the Philippines, Catholicism has a profound influence on students' attitudes, given the country's designation as the third-largest Catholic nation globally (Estrellas, 2022). Research indicates that Filipino students often perceive Catholic beliefs as integral to their moral and ethical development (Tibo et al., 2022). Additionally, Catholic educational institutions in the Philippines emphasize religious education, aiming to cultivate a deep understanding of Catholic doctrines among students (Perez & Eusebio, 2019). However, the effectiveness of these programs can vary, with some students expressing a preference for more practical applications of religious teachings in addressing contemporary societal issues (Aseery, 2024; Fernando et al., 2024). This indicates a need for Catholic education to evolve, integrating traditional beliefs with modern challenges to maintain relevance and engagement among students (Sultana, 2022).

Students encounter several challenges in reconciling their attitude toward Catholic beliefs with contemporary societal norms and personal experiences. One significant issue is the perceived conflict between traditional Catholic teachings and modern values, particularly regarding topics such as gender roles, reproductive health, and social justice (Aguilar et al., 2024; Haldane, 2024). For instance, students may struggle with the church's stance on contraception and LGBTQ+ rights, leading to feelings of alienation or disillusionment (Stacey, 2022; Fernando & Cabardo, 2024). Additionally, the rise of secularism and exposure to diverse belief systems can prompt students to question or distance themselves from Catholic doctrines or beliefs (Jomoad et al., 2016). Not to mention, peer influence and social media also play substantial roles in shaping students'

perspectives, often presenting alternative viewpoints that challenge traditional religious teachings (Zhang, 2025). Despite these challenges, many students strive to maintain their faith, engaging in dialogues and activities that enable them to navigate the complexities of modern life while upholding their Catholic beliefs (Apgar & Parada, 2024).

While various studies have examined student attitudes toward Catholic beliefs, existing literature reveals several contextual and demographic gaps that warrant further exploration. Estrellas (2022) focused on third-year college students in Catholic institutions across Negros Occidental, with an emphasis on religious knowledge and attitudes. Similarly, Baring et al. (2024) explored how Catholic Life Formation shapes environmental attitudes among senior high school students, with an emphasis on ecological behavior. Internationally, Małkosa and Rozpędowski (2023) highlighted the decline in affective and behavioral attitudes toward the Catholic Church among Polish youth, underscoring the need for localized studies. Amores (2024) conducted a comparative study on the attitudes of Grade 12 students toward formal and non-formal Catholic education in Cebu. Given all available studies, there is still a dearth in the literature. Thus, this is the gap that this study would like to fill in.

This study assessed the degree of attitude toward Catholic Beliefs in the factors of incarnational, scriptural, moral, and eschatological aspects among Grade 11 students in a Catholic school, considering them as a whole and grouping them according to sex, family structure, religion, strand, and last school attended. Similarly, the study examined the differences in attitudes toward Catholic beliefs when classified by students' demographics. The findings may serve as a basis for developing initiatives at Catholic institutions that foster a deeper appreciation of Catholic teachings, contributing to the holistic formation of students as morally grounded and spiritually enriched individuals.

This study theoretically assumed that the degree of attitude toward Catholic beliefs among the Grade 11 students varies in consonance with their sex, family structure, religion, strand, and last school attended. Hence, this assumption was grounded in Bandura's (1991) Social Cognitive theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between personal beliefs, social influences, and environmental factors in shaping an individual's attitude and behavior. In the context of the study, this theory highlights how students' attitudes toward Catholicism are influenced by observing the behaviors of peers, teachers, and family members who model religious practices. Moreover, environmental factors such as religious activities at school, including Masses and retreats, as well as the level of religious involvement within their families, play a significant role in reinforcing or challenging students' attitudes toward Catholicism.

2. Research Methods

This study used a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive-comparative approach. The chosen methodology statistically assessed a set of variables to answer the theory-guided research questions, problems, and hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The descriptive approach assessed the degree of attitude toward Catholic beliefs among the grade 11 students in a Catholic school, considering them as a whole and grouping them according to sex, family structure, religion, academic strand, and last school attended. In addition, the comparative approach examined the significant differences in attitudes toward Catholic beliefs when respondents were grouped based on their demographics. The respondents of the study were 168 Grade 11 students from

St. Anthony's College, a Catholic school in Western Visayas. The research locale was purposely chosen since as a Catholic institution, it may provide valuable insights on the attitude toward Catholic beliefs among the students. They were sampled using the Raosoft online calculator with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Additionally, the respondents were identified through stratified random sampling, and the fishbowl technique was utilized. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	n	%
Sex		
Male	89	53.0
Female	79	47.0
Family Structure		
Intact	115	68.5
Not Intact	53	31.5
Religion		
Catholic	144	85.7
Non-Catholic	23	13.7
Strand		
HUMSS	21	12.5
ABM	26	15.5
STEM	113	67.3
GAS-Hums	8	4.8
Last School Attended		
Catholic School	109	64.9
Government	58	34.5
Whole	168	100.0

In gathering the data, the study utilized a 21-item standardized questionnaire developed by Weaver (2024). It is a self-reporting instrument that measures attitudes toward Catholic beliefs about dogma, doctrines, and fundamental practices. Not to mention, the items were distributed across factors of incarnational, scriptural, moral, and eschatological attitudes. On the one hand, in terms of the reliability of the instrument, the internal consistency of all four sub-scales was determined by computing their alpha coefficients. It is stated that the alpha coefficients ranged from 0.67 to 0.93. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was pilot-tested again on 30 non-participating respondents to check its suitability for the study context and yielded a reliable Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.82. On the other hand, the validity of all subscales was reported as significantly correlated ($p < .001$); thus, all demonstrated convergent validity. Meanwhile, the scale of interpretation used was 1-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Frequency count and percentage distribution assessed the distribution of respondents. The mean and standard deviation were analyzed in the degree of attitude among the Grade 11 students toward Catholic beliefs. Meanwhile, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the normality of the overall data on attitudes toward Catholic beliefs. Results showed a statistically significant deviation from normality, $[W(168) = 0.966, p = .000]$. This indicates that the distribution of scores does not follow a normal distribution, and non-parametric statistical tests are recommended for further analysis. Hence, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in attitude toward Catholic beliefs in terms of sex, family structure, religion, and the last

school attended. Meanwhile, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine the significant differences based on the strand. Lastly, this study adhered to the guidelines of the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). It addressed the general principles of respect for persons, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice to ensure the ethical soundness of the study.

3. Results

3.1. Degree of Attitude Toward Catholic Beliefs

Students hold diverse attitudes toward Catholic beliefs, which are shaped by their socio-cultural background and educational experiences (Zellma et al., 2022). Table 2 presents the degree of attitude toward Catholic beliefs across various demographic variables, with interpretation based on Likert scale responses. The overall mean score was 3.21 (SD=0.42), indicating that respondents generally agreed with Catholic beliefs. When grouped by sex, males had a higher mean of 3.28 (SD = 0.39), interpreted as strongly agree, while females had a mean of 3.13 (SD = 0.43), interpreted as agree. By family structure, those from intact families reported a mean of 3.27 (SD=0.39), showing strong agreement, whereas those from non-intact families had a mean of 3.06 (SD=0.44), reflecting agreement. In terms of religion, Catholics (M=3.23, SD=0.42) and non-Catholics (M=3.08, SD=0.41) both showed agreement with Catholic beliefs. Strand-wise, GAS-Hums had the highest mean of 3.65 (SD=0.13), indicating strong agreement, followed by ABM (M=3.26, SD=0.27), also interpreted as strongly agree. HUMSS (M=3.06, SD=0.43) and STEM (M=3.19, SD=0.43) students expressed agreement. Lastly, students who attended Catholic schools (M = 3.22, SD = 0.40) and government schools (M = 3.19, SD = 0.44) both reported agreement with Catholic beliefs.

In terms of Incarnational Attitude, the overall mean score was 3.45 (SD=0.56), indicating that respondents strongly agreed with statements reflecting this attitude. When grouped by sex, both males (M=3.49, SD=0.54) and females (M=3.41, SD=0.59) demonstrated strong agreement. In terms of family structure, those from intact families had a higher mean of 3.56 (SD = 0.47), interpreted as a strong agreement. In comparison, those from non-intact families had a lower mean of 3.22 (SD = 0.67), which is interpreted as agreement. About religion, Catholics (M=3.52, SD=0.48) expressed strong agreement, while non-Catholics (M=3.02, SD=0.79) indicated agreement. Among the different academic strands, GAS-Hums students had the highest mean of 3.95 (SD = 0.13), followed by ABM (M = 3.58, SD = 0.46), HUMSS (M = 3.35, SD = 0.54), and STEM (M = 3.41, SD = 0.59), all of which reflected strong agreement. Lastly, respondents from Catholic schools (M = 3.48, SD = 0.56) and government schools (M = 3.40, SD = 0.56) also showed strong agreement with the Incarnational Attitude.

In terms of Scriptural Attitude, the overall mean score was 3.33 (SD=0.58), indicating that respondents strongly agreed with statements reflecting this dimension. When grouped by sex, both males (M=3.34, SD=0.54) and females (M=3.31, SD=0.62) showed strong agreement. Respondents from intact families had a mean of 3.37 (SD=0.51), interpreted as strongly agree, while those from non-intact families had a slightly lower mean of 3.23 (SD=0.70), interpreted as agree. In terms of religion, both Catholics (M=3.29, SD=0.59) and non-Catholics (M=3.53, SD=0.43) demonstrated strong agreement. Across academic strands, all groups reflected strong agreement, with GAS-Hums students reporting the highest mean of 3.68 (SD=0.30), followed by STEM (M=3.32, SD=0.60), HUMSS (M=3.30, SD=0.56), and ABM (M=3.27, SD=0.53).

Table 2: Degree of Attitude toward Catholic Beliefs

Variable	Incarnational Attitude			Scriptural Attitude			Moral Attitude			Eschatological Attitude			Attitude toward Catholic Beliefs		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Sex															
Male	3.49	0.54	SA	3.34	0.54	SA	3.32	0.56	SA	2.58	0.64	Ag	3.28	0.39	SA
Female	3.41	0.59	SA	3.31	0.62	SA	2.87	0.69	Ag	2.47	0.61	Di	3.13	0.43	Ag
Family Structure															
Intact	3.56	0.47	SA	3.37	0.51	SA	3.17	0.65	Ag	2.54	0.66	Ag	3.27	0.39	SA
Not Intact	3.22	0.67	Ag	3.23	0.70	Ag	2.99	0.68	Ag	2.50	0.56	Di	3.06	0.44	Ag
Religion															
Catholic	3.52	0.48	SA	3.29	0.59	SA	3.10	0.69	Ag	2.55	0.63	Ag	3.23	0.42	Ag
Non-Catholic	3.02	0.79	Ag	3.53	0.43	SA	3.17	0.48	Ag	2.38	0.63	Di	3.08	0.41	Ag
Strand															
HUMSS	3.35	0.54	SA	3.30	0.56	SA	2.73	0.82	Ag	2.46	0.48	Di	3.06	0.43	Ag
ABM	3.58	0.46	SA	3.27	0.53	SA	3.23	0.59	Ag	2.47	0.52	Di	3.26	0.27	SA
STEM	3.41	0.59	SA	3.32	0.60	SA	3.11	0.62	Ag	2.54	0.68	Ag	3.19	0.43	Ag
GAS-Hums	3.95	0.13	SA	3.68	0.30	SA	3.75	0.30	SA	2.67	0.56	Ag	3.65	0.13	SA
Last School Attended															
Catholic School	3.48	0.56	SA	3.31	0.57	SA	3.13	0.69	Ag	2.53	0.63	Ag	3.22	0.40	Ag
Government	3.40	0.56	SA	3.35	0.60	SA	3.08	0.60	Ag	2.53	0.64	Ag	3.19	0.44	Ag
Whole	3.45	0.56	SA	3.33	0.58	SA	3.11	0.66	Ag	2.53	0.63	Ag	3.21	0.42	Ag

Mean Range: 1.00-1.75=Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.76-2.50=Disagree (Di), 2.51-3.25=Agree (Ag), 3.26-4.00=Strongly Agree (SA)

Lastly, students who attended Catholic schools ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.57$) and government schools ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.60$) both expressed strong agreement with the Scriptural Attitude.

In terms of Moral Attitude, the overall mean score was 3.11 ($SD=0.66$), indicating that respondents generally agreed with statements reflecting this dimension. When grouped by sex, males had a higher mean of 3.32 ($SD = 0.56$), interpreted as strongly agree, while females scored lower at 2.87 ($SD = 0.69$), interpreted as agree. Based on family structure, both those from intact families ($M=3.17$, $SD=0.65$) and non-intact families ($M=2.99$, $SD=0.68$) showed agreement. In terms of religion, both Catholics ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.69$) and non-Catholics ($M=3.17$, $SD=0.48$) agreed with moral attitudes. Among the strands, GAS-Hums had the highest mean of 3.75 ($SD=0.30$), indicating strong agreement, while HUMSS had the lowest at 2.73 ($SD=0.82$), still interpreted as agree. ABM ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.59$) and STEM ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.62$) students also showed agreement. Lastly, students from Catholic schools ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.69$) and government schools ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.60$) both demonstrated agreement with the Moral Attitude.

In terms of Eschatological Attitude, the overall mean score was 2.53 ($SD=0.63$), indicating that respondents generally agreed with statements related to beliefs about end times or final destiny. When grouped by sex, males ($M=2.58$, $SD=0.64$) showed agreement, while females ($M=2.47$, $SD=0.61$) disagreed. Based on family structure, those from intact families ($M=2.54$, $SD=0.66$) agreed, whereas those from non-intact families ($M=2.50$, $SD=0.56$) disagreed. Catholics ($M=2.55$, $SD=0.63$) agreed, while non-Catholics ($M=2.38$, $SD=0.63$) disagreed. Among the strands, GAS-Hums ($M=2.67$, $SD=0.56$) and STEM ($M=2.54$, $SD=0.68$) students indicated agreement, while HUMSS ($M=2.46$, $SD=0.48$) and ABM ($M=2.47$, $SD=0.52$) students expressed disagreement. Lastly, students from both Catholic ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.63$) and government schools ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.64$) showed a similar degree of agreement regarding Eschatological Attitude.

The findings show that male students, those from complete families, and those in the GAS-HUMS strand agree more with Catholic beliefs than other students. This means that a student's sex, family background, and strand may impact their attitude toward Catholic beliefs. One reason for this might be that male students in the institution participate in church activities, such as serving as altar servers or youth leaders, which helps them build a stronger connection to their Catholic beliefs (Miller, 2023). Meanwhile, this finding could be attributed that in terms of the distribution of respondents, male have a greater number than female which could affect the statistical result. It may also be because some students in the GAS-HUMS strand are seminarians who already have deep religious training and most of their applied and specialized subjects are about Catholic teachings (Wang et al., 2023; Porter et al., 2019). In addition, Monteiro (2022) and Powell and Argue (2019) found that family structure plays a significant role in the faith of young people, especially in complete families. Also, Tajuddin et al. (2021) noted that students from stable families are more likely to follow clear moral beliefs, including those based on religion. These results help Catholic schools see the value of faith-based programs and church activities, especially for all family types or structures. The findings imply incorporating faith lessons into all strands, and equal learnings of Christian Living

Education subjects in both male and female students which can help students to have a positive attitude toward Catholic beliefs.

The findings show that students' Incarnational Attitudes were different depending on their religion and family background. Catholic students and those from complete families agreed more with Christ-like values compared to others. This suggests that growing up in the Catholic faith and having a complete family may help students exhibit more compassion, kindness, and humility in their daily lives and elicit a positive attitude toward Catholic beliefs (Chelladurai et al., 2022; Monteiro, 2022; Powell & Argue, 2019). One reason for this could be that Catholics learn more about the Incarnation—the belief that God became fully human in Jesus—which teaches them to care for others and be present in their lives (Brouillette, 2016). Cárdenas (2024) explained that Catholic education teaches students to live out values that focus on relationships and Christ-like behavior. Also, students from complete families may receive more emotional and moral support, which helps them regularly practice these values (Roksa & Kinsley, 2019). These findings imply that teachers teaching Christian Living Education subjects may provide more effort to teach the incarnational factor, especially to those Non-Catholic students who belong to non-intact families.

In terms of Scriptural attitude, the findings show that students from complete families agreed more with Scriptural Attitude than those from non-intact families. This means that students who live with both parents are more likely to read, understand, and value the messages in the Bible (Smith & Adamczyk, 2020; Fernando et al., 2024). One reason for this may be that intact families often guide their children in religious habits, such as reading the Bible (Appleton, 2020). In addition, this could be attributed to the fact that students from non-intact families lack facilitation in reading the Bible and hearing interesting stories and passages from it. Based on the study by Kahsai (2021), there is a need for biblical parenting for the children to appreciate the bible. Powell and Argue (2019) found that young people raised in united families often develop a stronger love for Scripture because their parents actively help in their faith journey. These results remind Catholic schools of the important role families play in helping students grow in faith and elicit positive attitudes toward the scriptures.

In terms of moral attitude, the findings show that male students and those in the GAS-HUMS strand agreed more with this factor than other students. This means these groups are more likely to support good behavior and values taught by the Catholic Church. One reason could be that many GAS-HUMS students are seminarians who receive deeper training in values, discipline, and Catholic teachings (Wang et al, 2023; Porter et al., 2019). Also, subjects taken by the seminarians include topics like the value of life and the sanctity of marriage. Also, Porter et al. (2019) mentioned that seminarians are most likely to exhibit certain moral behaviors because of their moral formation in the seminary. Similarly, Jomuad et al. (2016) stated that students involved in church work exhibit stronger moral awareness because they are more actively engaged in faith practices. Porter et al. (2019) and Johnston et al. (2022) found that seminarians receive specialized training in moral behavior, which helps shape their actions. Lio et al. (2023) shared that entering the seminary helps young people feel more responsible for their actions because of their formation. These results demonstrate the importance of Catholic schools and the formation of the seminary in supporting and expanding programs that enable students to learn and practice moral values.

In terms of eschatological attitude, the findings show that students' attitudes toward beliefs about life after death, such as heaven, hell, and final judgment, were different based on their sex, family background, religion, and academic strand. Male students, Catholics, and those from intact families were more likely to agree with these beliefs. On the other hand, female students, non-Catholics, and those from families that are not whole were less likely to agree. One reason for this may be that teachings about the afterlife, heaven, hell, and final judgment are not strongly taught in classes hence eliciting variations in result (Nababan, 2023). Moskala (2020) stated that young people today often do not receive sufficient instruction on life after death, which affects their understanding and appreciation of these beliefs. Meanwhile, Coombes (2022) explained that students from other religions may see Catholic beliefs about life after death in different ways. Small (2023) stated that students in programs focused on religious life specifically those seminarians are more likely to understand and deeply accept these teachings. These findings suggest that teachers teaching Christian Living Education in senior high school may give premium or more attention to teaching about life after death, heaven, hell, and the final judgment.

3.2. Difference in the Degree of Attitude Toward Catholic Beliefs

Table 3 presents the difference in the degree of attitude toward Catholic beliefs. The results showed a significant difference according to sex [$U = 2799.000$, $p = 0.023$], with male students exhibiting a stronger positive attitude than female students. A significant difference was also found based on family structure [$U=2193.500$, $p=0.004$], where students from intact families reported stronger positive attitudes than those from non-intact families. No significant differences were found based on religion [$U=1274.500$, $p=0.076$] or last school attended [$U=3021.000$, $p=0.638$]. The findings revealed a significant difference [$\chi^2(3)=14.838$, $p=0.002$]. Post hoc comparisons revealed that GAS-Hums students ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.13$) significantly differed from HUMSS ($p = 0.000$), ABM ($p = 0.005$), and STEM students ($p = 0.001$), with GAS-Hums students exhibiting the highest attitude toward Catholic beliefs. These results suggest that strand, sex, and family structure may influence students' attitudes toward Catholic beliefs.

Table 3: Difference in the Degree of Attitude toward Catholic Beliefs

Variable	U	z	p
Sex	2799.000*	-2.279	0.023
Family Structure	2193.500*	-2.917	0.004
Religion	1274.500	-1.773	0.076
Last School Attended	3021.000	-0.471	0.638
	χ^2	df	p
Strand	14.838*	3	0.002

Note: *The difference in the means is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

The results show that students' sex, family structure, and academic strand vary their attitudes toward Catholic beliefs. Male students showed stronger attitudes toward Catholic teachings compared to female students. This may be because male students are more often involved in church activities, such as serving at Mass (Jomud et al., 2016; Clements & Bullivant, 2021). Also, students who come from complete families showed stronger positive attitudes than those from families that are not intact. This supports what Dollahite and Marks (2019) and Chelladurai et al. (2022) found that a stable family gives steady moral and spiritual guidance, which helps students grow in faith. These families often participate in prayer, attend church, and engage in discussions about

values, which help children develop a deeper understanding of their religion (Powell & Argue, 2019).

The study also found differences in student attitudes toward Catholic beliefs based on academic strands. Students from the General Academic Strand with a focus on Humanities, who are also pursuing a career in the priesthood, showed the strongest Catholic beliefs. This is likely because their education and formation include regular religious classes and spiritual guidance (Wang et al, 2023; Porter et al, 2019). Similarly, Simonds et al. (2021) stated that students preparing for the priesthood receive regular religious training, which helps build a strong foundation of faith and elicit a strong positive attitude toward Catholic beliefs. These findings suggest that Catholic schools may strengthen religious programs for female students, those from incomplete families, and those in academic strands outside of priestly formation. This will help all students grow a stronger positive attitude toward Catholic beliefs.

The application of Bandura's (1991) Social Cognitive theory validates the assumption that attitudes toward Catholic beliefs among Grade 11 students are shaped by a complex interplay of personal, social, and environmental factors. Students do not form religious attitudes in isolation; rather, they internalize beliefs through the observed behaviors and expressed values of influential figures such as family members, teachers, and peers. These modeled actions, coupled with environmental exposures like participation in school-based religious activities and the religious orientation of the home, contribute to varied levels of acceptance, resistance, or indifference toward Catholic teachings. Additionally, demographic factors such as sex, family structure, religion, academic strand, and the nature of their previous school environment further mediate how religious influences are interpreted and integrated. These variations support the idea that student attitudes toward Catholicism are not uniform but are influenced by a dynamic set of experiences and social cues. Meanwhile, further studies are encouraged to validate the claims of this study and explore how these factors interact over time.

4. Conclusion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into how Catholic schools support students in growing in faith and beliefs. The findings showed that religious activities, family involvement, and moral education are closely connected to how students develop their beliefs. These efforts impact students in various ways, depending on their family background, religion, and field of study. The findings indicate that it is beneficial for students to participate in school ministries, join values-based programs, and have experiences that teach them about faith in everyday life. The findings also imply that students benefit when they are supported in practicing their faith at home, learning more about the life of Jesus, and understanding what the church teaches about the future and eternal life. This is especially true for students who come from non-intact families, are not Catholic, or are in courses that do not focus on religion. These results help Catholic schools recognize the need to continually reflect on how they support all types of students in their faith journey. It reminds us that Catholic education is not only about teaching knowledge but also about guiding students to live with faith and promote a positive attitude toward Catholic beliefs. Future research can delve further into these ideas to better understand how Catholic schools can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of young people.

This study acknowledged several limitations. The focus on one institution and one grade level restricts the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, while the descriptive-comparative design allowed for statistical examination of differences across demographic variables such as sex, family structure, religion, academic strand, and last school attended, it did not explore the deeper reasons or contexts behind these attitudes, which a qualitative component could have captured. Future research may adopt a mixed-methods or longitudinal approach and include a more diverse range of schools to enhance both the depth and generalizability of the findings.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researchers adhered to the guidelines of the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of respect for persons, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice to ensure the ethical soundness of the study. Informed consent and parental assent forms were obtained from all participants.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest in conducting the study.

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