

Ecological Justice from the Perspectives of Moulders of Society

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Abstract. Ecological justice (Ecojustice) is an environmental concept which is new and unpopular. The researcher conducted this project to find out the levels of knowledge about ecojustice among teachers, municipal officials, and media practitioners in selected towns in Iloilo during the fiscal year 2015. Close-ended questionnaires were administered, interviews were conducted to provide additional information, and observations among thirty (30) teachers, thirty (30) municipal officials, and thirty (30) media practitioners. Qualitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Results revealed that there is a "high" level of knowledge among teachers, "high" level of knowledge among municipal officials, and "low" level of knowledge among media practitioners. There is no significant difference in the level of expertise when teachers were classified according to sex but with a significant difference in the level of knowledge when they were classified according to educational qualification. There was no significant difference in the level of expertise when the municipal officials and media practitioners were classified according to sex and educational qualification.

1. Introduction

The world we live in is full of beauty, power, and wisdom. It is a place where all living and non-living entities have a share in the making of life possible. However, the desire of humans to uncover or control the resulting mysteries of life resulted in the degradation of the environment. Ecological challenges constitute a significant threat to the survival of both human and non-humans in the 21st Century. (Legarda, 2007). Environmental deterioration occurs. The country has undergone a catastrophic degradation of its natural resources (Guiang, 2004) thus placing it in a critical state. What levels of environmental damage and sufferings of non-living entities and living organisms of the earth become rampant and ecological justice must be served to them (Bautista, 2013) [1]. Being a new topic, ecojustice is unpopular among most of the people in the community. Thus, at this time, the status of seeking changes in policies and human behavior to guarantee protective practices for natural resources and the ecosystem is grim [2]. The community should be informed about ecojustice and that the best venues for information dissemination are the academe, local government units, and the media. These venues will

be entrusted with the responsibility of molding the member of the community to be responsible for their environment [3]. The molding will be successful if the teachers, municipal officials, and media practitioners can undertake ecojustice regarding subject information and implementation at their respective areas [5]. It is for these reasons that the researcher conducted this project on the views and knowledge about ecojustice among teachers, municipal officials and media practitioners in the province of Iloilo [6]. The project is anchored on the following theories:

- a) On ecojustice: The method of ecojustice by Brian Baxter (Baxter, 2004) states that "as respect to human activities many organisms in the earth face serious and worsening threats to the continued existence."
- b) On knowledge: Constructivist theory of learning by Vygotsky (Schunk, 2004) emphasizes that full cognition development requires social interaction. Peoples' knowledge is constructed through social interactions.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The project used the descriptive method of research. The paradigm of this method of analysis answered the maximum insight and understanding to characterize the knowledge about ecojustice among molders of society-the teachers, municipal officials, and media practitioners. The descriptive data collected were substantiated by observation of the researcher and interviews collected from the respondents.

2.2. Participants or Informants

In this project, ninety respondents were involved (30 teachers, 30 municipal officials, and 30 media practitioners). The teachers were from elementary, secondary and tertiary public schools in Lambunao, Janiway, and Calinog. The city officials were members of Sangguniang Bayan and barangay councilmen from the three municipalities. The media practitioners were the persons involved in the information dissemination about public concerns from print, radio, and social media in the City and Province of Iloilo

2.3. Sampling Method

To determine the settings and respondents, purposive sampling was used.

2.4. Instrument

The research instrument utilized was the survey questionnaire adopted from the previous research of the researcher. It was made up of two parts (1 – respondent's profile, and 2 – Questionnaire Proper). The questionnaire proper included a 10-item Alternative Responses and 10-item Multiple Choice tests. The adopted instrument has 0.82 value of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (a high-reliability amount) which was processed by SPSS program. The validity of the said instrument was ensured by utilizing the observation by the researcher and the intentions.

2.5. Data Collection Procedure

The necessary permit needed in the conduct of the project were secured. Letters were personally delivered to the heads of offices. Upon approval, the behavior was scheduled. During the scheduled dates, the researcher informed the respondents regarding the intention, purpose, and significance of the research. After the questionnaires were answered, they will immediately gather and checked if all the

needed data are given. After the retrieval, the collected data were encoded, tallied, computer-analyzed, and interpreted.

2.6. Data Analysis Procedure

The qualitative data gathered were subjected to certain computer-analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Interpretations were given to what has been observed.

Mean Scale			Description
79.00	-	81.99	Low Knowledge
82.00	-	84.99	Moderately High Knowledge
85.00	-	87.99	High Knowledge
88.00	-	90.99	Very High Knowledge

3. Results and Discussions

Table 1. Level of Knowledge about Ecojustice Among Teachers

Category	SD	Mean	Description
Entire Group	3.77	87.90	High
Sex			
Male	3.46	88.89	Very High
Female	3.89	87.09	High
Educational Qualifications			
College Graduate	2.47	84.60	Moderately High
Post College Graduate	2.93	89.90	Very High

Table 1 shows that the teachers have a "high" level of knowledge ($M=87.90$, $SD=3.77$) about ecojustice when taken as an entire group. The obtained standard deviation showed a wide dispersion of the mean scores, indicating that the teachers were heterogeneous with regards to their level of knowledge about ecojustice. The "high" level of knowledge of the teacher-respondents implies that they have adequate knowledge about ecojustice. They were aware that their day-to-day existence had a severe impact on the biosphere which they shared with all other organisms. The result signifying a healthy knowledge about ecojustice is similar to the findings of Unlas (2000) that the high grades of students were because they gave rigorous attention to their studies; thus they retained most of the environmental knowledge they had learned or gained. The "high" environmental knowledge of the teachers may also be due to the vast and rich experiences of the ecological processes taking place in their areas. Their attendance to seminars, conferences, workshops or educational field trips may have contributed to their literacy on environmental topics. Being mentors, respondent-teachers were expected to be knowledgeable of ecological concepts. They were expected to be models of their students, as well as, in their respective communities. Teachers had a "high" level of knowledge about ecojustice for humans but missed the non-human component. They only considered the importance of the environment for human benefits. They lost the idea that the situation should be preserved, conserved, and utilized adequately so that non-human components of the case will be sustained.

Table 2. Differences as to Sex, and Educational Qualification Among Teachers.

Category	Mean Differences	t-value	p-value	Discussion
Sex	1.80	1.53	0.135	Not Significant
Educational Qualifications	-5.28	-5.83	0.000	Significant

Sex makes a difference regarding their level of knowledge about ecojustice. Males had a "very high" level of knowledge of ecojustice ($M=88.89$, $SD= 3.46$) compared to females ($M=87.09$, $SD=3.89$). Males maybe are more concerned with chores or projects outside the house while females concentrate or focus more inside the house. Teachers who are post-college graduate have "very high" level of knowledge about ecojustice ($M=89.90$, $SD= 2.931$), while those who are college graduate ($M=84.60$, $SD =2.47$) have "moderately high" level of knowledge. Teachers who have masters and doctorate degrees had been exposed to ecological developments when they have their professional advancement. They exchange ideas with their classmates and colleagues in school and talking about the environmental impacts and their remediations — those who stopped schooling after graduation was just contented of what they see and hear around their place. Nowadays, climate change and environmental awareness are prescribed subjects in educational advancement courses.

Table 3. Level of Knowledge about Ecojustice Among Municipal Officials

Category	SD	Mean	Description
Entire Group	2.59	85.10	High
Sex			
Male	2.82	84.47	Moderately High
Female	2.29	85.67	High
Educational Qualifications			
College Graduate	2.31	84.74	Moderately High
Post College Graduate	2.88	85.43	High

As an entire group, municipal officials have a "high" level of knowledge of ecojustice ($M=85.10$, $SD=2.59$). The "high" level of knowledge is due to their wide exposure to environmental concerns and issues. As municipal officials, they have to go around their areas of responsibility and find out how their constituents live and cope especially when there are disasters or calamities. They have witnessed these calamities, and they have planned to work for the release of calamity funds immediately and to prepare for the future calamities. They had campaigned for the observance and implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Program. As observed from the respondents, most of the male officials are in their late 50's, and some are retired government workers, and they have "moderately high" level of knowledge about ecojustice ($M=84.47$, $SD=2.82$) while females have "high" level of knowledge about ecojustice ($M=85.67$, $SD=2.29$). They may have the "high" knowledge, but they may have less involvement in environment-related activities. Females are ecocentric (concern for nature), they are more concerned in the biosphere and living entities (Zelezny, 2000). They are more known for nurturing and caring. The municipal officials who have graduated in college have "high" level of knowledge ($M=85.43$, $SD=84.74$) while high school graduate – municipal officials have "moderately high" level of knowledge about ecojustice ($M=84.74$, $SD=2.31$). This implies that better-educated persons tend to use the more current knowledge that one who is less educated or stick to superstitious beliefs and practices. This conforms to the study of Chester (1981) that persons with high educational qualifications are

inclined to participate more in community activities since they readily appropriate the value of involvement. If one is not knowledgeable enough, he is almost in joining such activities.

Table 4. Difference as to Sex and Educational Qualifications Among Municipal Officials

Category	Mean Differences	t-value	p-value	Discussion
Sex	1.192	1.477	0.148	Not Significant
Educational Qualifications	-0.691	0.840	0.406	Not Significant

Though there are minor differences in how the municipal officials think and how aware they are in the environmental issues, generally, sex and educational qualifications did not make a difference in their level of knowledge.

Table 5. Level of Knowledge about Ecojustice Among Media Practitioners

Category	SD	Mean	Description
Entire Group	6.62	80.31	Low
Sex			
Male	4.12	80.67	Low
Female	7.63	80.13	Low
Educational Qualifications			
College Graduate	6.89	79.88	Low
Post College Graduate	6.02	81.38	Low

As an entire group and when classified according to sex and educational qualifications, media practitioners have a "low" level of knowledge about ecojustice. This may be because they focus more on social issues and not on environmental issues. What we usually hear from the media (especially in the broadcast) are the killings, accidents, politics, and known personages. Environmental issues are only death with when there are human-made or natural calamities that occur.

Table 6. Difference as to Sex and Educational Qualifications Among Media Practitioners

Category	Mean Differences	t-value	p-value	Discussion
Sex	0.533	0.252	0.802	Not Significant
Educational Qualifications	1.509	0.689	0.494	Not Significant

Table 6 shows that the knowledge about ecojustice among media practitioners when classified according to sex and educational qualification is not significant because their p-values are higher than 0.05. Whatever their sex and educational qualification, they have "low" knowledge about ecojustice.

4. Conclusion

In the light of the aforesaid results, the following conclusions were drawn. The teachers in the Municipalities of Lambunao, Calinog, and Janiuay, all in the Province of Iloilo, possess a "high" level of knowledge about ecojustice. This "high" level of knowledge is due to their vast and rich ecological experiences. Their attendance to seminars, conferences, workshops, educational field trips, and professional studies has contributed to their exposure on environmental topics. The level of knowledge is confined in their adequate awareness of preserving, conserving, and proper utilization of the environment for the benefits of humans and non-humans. They appreciate the beauty of nature, and they are very much aware of the roles organisms play in the environment. They are aware that their day-to-day existence has a severe impact in the biosphere which they share with other organisms. The municipal officials have a "high" level of knowledge about ecojustice. This was attributed to their awareness of what is happening to their constituents in their respective areas of responsibility. Their "hands-on" activities in the different barangay, especially during calamities, allowed them to see the causes and effects. With these exposures, they were forced to make preparations to prevent these disasters.

These practices and attitudes shape their knowledge of environmental issues and concerns. They have to support their clientele and thus have to make ordinances, implementing measures, to prevent disasters, and preparation for coping after the accident. The "low" level of knowledge about ecojustice among media practitioners is expected. Being a new and unpopular topic is not a "cream" to broadcast. Media practitioners are more into social issues; they are better known for their broadcasting and publishing news regarding political controversies, killings, well-known personages. Environmental issues were only dealt with when disasters or calamities come. They provided superficial news on these issues, but they do not deal with programs for the environmental preservation, conservation, and utilization for the benefits of man and non-humans of the environment.

Given the other conclusions, the researcher recommends the following: Curriculum planners should integrate ecological issues at all levels. Heads of academic institutions should encourage and support teachers in their participation in seminars, training, conferences, workshops, and activities related to the ecological issues and concerns. Teachers should attend environment-related conventions, seminar-workshop, and other opportunities to enrich themselves more with information and strategies in teaching ecojustice topics and issues. Teachers should be active in facilitating the organization of environmental clubs, and celebration of environmental programs. Local government units should conduct group discussion on the nature of ecojustice. This will encourage people to have positive awareness and attitudes towards ecojustice. Local officials should enact and strictly implement laws for the protection of the environment. Information dissemination about ecojustice should be conducted in every barangay including the construction of billboards and like so that each barangay is accountable for its implementation and observance. Environmental programs must be aimed at radio, television, and other social media. There should be regular programming about ecological concerns and issues in all media outlets to increase literacy about, development of proper attitude towards, and adequate practice of ecojustice. Experts in the field must be invited to talk on the programs such that stakeholders, commentators, and staff will be enhanced with knowledge about ecojustice.

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