

# Extent of Development of Core Values: Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa Among Grade 7 Learners

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**Abstract:** This study examines the internalization of core values among Grade 7 learners through the “Buhay-Kagitingan: Core Values in Action” program, which aligns with the MATATAG Curriculum’s emphasis on holistic character development. Using a descriptive quantitative approach, learners self-assessed their behaviors across four domains: Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa. Results revealed a Very High internalization of Maka-Diyos values ( $M = 4.172$ ), with standout indicators including respect for elders ( $M = 4.66$ ), gratitude to God ( $M = 4.38$ ), and inclusivity across religions ( $M = 4.34$ ). Makatao values were rated High overall ( $M = 4.04$ ), with strong peer respect ( $M = 4.21$ ) but lower scores in group collaboration ( $M = 3.61$ ). Environmental responsibility under Makakalikasan also scored High ( $M = 3.98$ ), with ethical treatment of living things ( $M = 4.18$ ) and moderate participation in school-led activities ( $M = 3.83$ ). Makabansa values were similarly strong ( $M = 4.15$ ), with high engagement in patriotic rituals ( $M = 4.43$ ) and civic involvement ( $M = 3.83$ ). These findings affirm the program’s effectiveness in translating abstract values into lived experiences. However, areas such as collaborative skills, environmental leadership, and community service require further support. Recommendations include integrating reflective spiritual activities, enhancing group-based learning, expanding student-led sustainability initiatives, and embedding civic engagement into the curriculum. Institutionalizing the program through school improvement plans and regular impact evaluation is also advised. Overall, the “Buhay-Kagitingan” program demonstrates strategic alignment with national educational goals and offers a promising model for values-based education.

**Keywords:** Core Values, Character Education, MATATAG Curriculum, Values Integration, Grade 7 Learners, Buhay-Kagitingan, Philippine Education, Holistic Development.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines upholds the development of core values as a central component of its K–12 curriculum. These values—Maka-Diyos (God-fearing), Makatao (humane), Makakalikasan (environmentally conscious), and Makabansa (patriotic)—are intended to shape Filipino learners into morally upright, socially aware, and environmentally responsible citizens. These values are essential for learners to become responsible, compassionate, and engaged citizens who can contribute to the country’s progress and development. As outlined in the DepEd Mission and Vision, instilling these core values is not only essential to academic success but also to nurturing holistic and values-oriented individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society.

Globally, youth values are increasingly shaped by the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Issues such as climate change, digital transformation, and social inequality have prompted young people to embrace values like environmental responsibility, equity, and civic engagement. Movements such as Fridays for Future and Black Lives Matter illustrate how youth are not only aware of global issues but are also actively participating in shaping solutions.

International frameworks, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasize the role of youth in achieving inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable societies. These frameworks promote values like respect for human rights, gender equality, and intercultural understanding. Youth are seen not merely as beneficiaries of development but as active agents of change whose values and actions can transform communities.

In countries like Finland, Japan, and Canada, education systems have integrated character and values education into their national curricula. These programs emphasize empathy, cooperation, and ethical reasoning, recognizing that cognitive development must be complemented by moral and social growth. Such models offer valuable insights for the Philippine context, where holistic education is also a national priority. Digital citizenship has emerged as a critical value domain for youth worldwide. As young people navigate online spaces, values such as integrity, respect, and critical thinking are essential for responsible digital engagement. International efforts to promote media literacy and online ethics reflect the growing need to guide youth in becoming thoughtful and discerning digital citizens.

In the Philippines, youth values are deeply rooted in cultural traditions and social norms. Concepts such as “*bayanihan*” (community spirit), “*pakikipagkapwa*” (shared humanity), and “*utang na loob*” (debt of gratitude) continue to shape how young Filipinos relate to others and contribute to society. These values are reinforced through family, faith, and community life, forming a strong foundation for civic responsibility. The Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) 2023–2028 identifies core values such as integrity, resilience, and participation as essential for youth empowerment. The plan emphasizes the importance of youth engagement in governance, education, and environmental sustainability, aligning national development goals with the aspirations of the younger generation.

Filipino youth are increasingly active in civic and political life. Through platforms like the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), youth organizations, and volunteer initiatives, young Filipinos are demonstrating leadership, accountability, and a commitment to social justice. These engagements reflect a growing awareness of their role in nation-building and a desire to uphold democratic values.

Education remains a vital platform for values formation among Filipino youth. Subjects like *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (EsP) and *Araling Panlipunan* provide structured opportunities for ethical reflection, community engagement, and character development. Teachers play a crucial role in modeling and reinforcing these values through both instruction and example. However, youth values are also influenced by contemporary challenges such as poverty, misinformation, and peer pressure. The tension between traditional values and modern influences—especially through social media—requires intentional efforts to help learners critically reflect on their beliefs and behaviors. Schools must create safe spaces for dialogue, discernment, and values clarification.

Nurturing youth values requires a whole-of-society approach. Families, schools, communities, and government institutions must collaborate to create environments that support moral development and civic engagement. By understanding both global trends and local realities, educators can design more responsive and impactful programs that empower youth to live out values that contribute to a just, compassionate, and sustainable society.

Values education in schools plays a transformative role in shaping learners’ moral compass and social behavior. Through structured lessons, reflective activities, and guided discussions, students are encouraged to examine ethical dilemmas, empathize with others, and make principled decisions. This intentional focus on values helps learners internalize concepts such as honesty, respect, and responsibility—not merely as abstract ideals but as actionable behaviors that guide their interactions within and beyond the school environment.

Beyond formal instruction, the school culture itself serves as a living laboratory for values transmission. Teachers, administrators, and staff model values through their daily conduct, creating an environment where learners witness integrity, fairness, and compassion in action. School rituals, classroom norms, and peer relationships all contribute to a shared moral ecosystem. When schools consistently reinforce positive values through both curriculum and culture, students are more likely to adopt these values as part of their identity and worldview.

Furthermore, values education fosters a sense of purpose and belonging among learners. By connecting values to real-life contexts—such as community service, environmental stewardship, and collaborative projects—students see how their actions can contribute to the common good. This experiential approach not only deepens understanding but also cultivates agency, encouraging learners to become proactive citizens who uphold ethical standards and advocate for justice, equity, and sustainability in their communities.

Values education plays a pivotal role in the formative years of Grade 7 students, a stage marked by rapid cognitive, emotional, and social development. At this age, learners begin to form a clearer sense of identity and moral reasoning, making them more receptive to lessons that shape their character and worldview. Values education provides a structured framework through which students can explore concepts such as respect, empathy, responsibility, and integrity—values that are essential for navigating adolescence and building healthy relationships with peers, teachers, and family members.

In the Grade 7 context, values education serves as a bridge between childhood dependence and adolescent autonomy. It helps students reflect on their actions, understand the consequences of their choices, and develop a sense of accountability. Through classroom discussions, real-life scenarios, and co-curricular activities, learners are encouraged to internalize positive behaviors and apply them in daily life. This process not only supports their personal growth but also fosters a respectful and inclusive school environment where diversity, cooperation, and mutual support are valued.

Likewise, values education at this stage lays the foundation for civic consciousness and social responsibility. As students become more aware of societal issues and their roles within their communities, values education equips them

with the ethical lens to engage in meaningful dialogue, make informed decisions, and contribute positively to collective well-being. By nurturing these dispositions early on, schools empower Grade 7 learners to become principled individuals who uphold the core values of Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa—preparing them not only for academic success but for lifelong citizenship and leadership.

The early years of secondary education, particularly Grade 7, represent a formative stage in a student's character development. This period is marked by heightened social interaction, increased exposure to diverse ideas, and a stronger sense of identity. It is therefore crucial to assess how deeply Grade 7 learners understand and embody these core values in their daily actions and decisions—both within and beyond the classroom setting.

While schools implement various strategies to promote value formation—including classroom instruction, co-curricular activities, and behavior modeling—there remains a need to evaluate the extent to which these values are truly internalized and practiced. Understanding the level of development of these core values among Grade 7 learners will provide insight into the effectiveness of current approaches and help educators and policymakers enhance values education.

As a Science and Values Education teacher and concurrently a Grade 7 class adviser, the researcher recognizes the pivotal role that the DepEd core values play in fulfilling responsibilities to the students. The researcher viewed that the development of academic competencies must go hand in hand with the cultivation of values to fully realize the holistic potential of every learner. Evaluating the extent to which these core values are developed among Grade 7 students is not only essential for understanding their character formation but also for fulfilling the role in assessing their behavior and values in the School Form 10 or the report card. As mandated by the Department of Education, advisers are tasked with evaluating learners' demonstration of core values each quarter—whether these are always observed, sometimes observed, rarely observed, or not observed at all. Conducting this study within the context of Casiguran Technical Vocational School will provide the researcher with substantial insights into how students internalize and practice the core values embraced by the Department of Education.

Moreover, this research serves as a valuable tool in refining teaching strategies and methodologies. By understanding the current level of values development among students, the researcher can design more targeted and meaningful activities that foster deeper reflection, empathy, and ethical behavior. The researcher believes that while academic excellence is important, the true measure of education lies in the values that students carry into their daily lives. These values must be nurtured intentionally so that learners not only acquire knowledge but also live it out in their interactions with others and in service to their communities.

From a research perspective, this study offers a timely and relevant opportunity to better understand the unique developmental needs of Grade 7 learners, who are at a critical juncture in their personal and social growth. It also guides the researchers' approach to building collaborative and supportive relationships within the school environment, ensuring that each learner feels seen, guided, and valued.

### ➤ Objectives

This study assessed the extent of development of the DepEd Core Values among Grade 7 learners, examining how these values are understood, expressed, and influenced by environmental and personal factors. Propose school-based activities or design programs that strengthen the development of the four core values.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to determine the current extent to which Grade 7 learners demonstrate the core values prescribed by the Department of Education—namely, Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa.

Quantitative data were gathered using structured survey instruments, designed to capture observable behaviors and learner self-assessments related to the DepEd Core Values. These instruments will include Likert-scale items that measure the frequency and consistency of value-oriented actions across various domains, such as classroom behavior, peer interaction, environmental practices, and civic participation. The use of numerical data allows for statistical analysis, enabling the researcher to identify patterns, trends, and areas of strength or concern in values development.

This design supports the study's goal of providing evidence-based insights into how values are internalized and expressed by Grade 7 learners. It also aligns with the theoretical grounding of the research, which emphasizes developmental appropriateness, behavioral indicators, and learner reflection as key components of moral education. By employing a descriptive-quantitative approach, the study ensures that findings are both measurable and actionable—informing future strategies for values integration in Philippine junior high schools.

The respondents of the study consisted of Grade 7 students who were enrolled during the academic year 2024–2025 in selected public secondary schools in Casiguran, Sorsogon. These students were chosen based on the inclusion criterion that they had completed at least one grading period of instruction in *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP)*, ensuring that they had sufficient exposure to the DepEd Core Values—Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa—as embedded in the curriculum.

To gain a broader and more triangulated understanding of values formation, the study also included selected key informants such as EsP teachers, class advisers, and guidance counselors. These individuals provided qualitative insights into the observable behavioral indicators of values

development among learners, based on their daily interactions and professional observations. Their perspectives helped validate student self-assessments and enriched the interpretation of quantitative data.

This combination of student respondents and adult key informants allowed the study to capture both internal perceptions and external observations of values embodiment, contributing to a more comprehensive analysis of how Grade 7 learners demonstrate the DepEd Core Values in school settings.

### III. RESULTS

The results are organized according to the research questions and objectives outlined in the previous chapters. Quantitative data are analyzed to uncover patterns, relationships, and significant trends relevant to the study. Narrative descriptions are used to illustrate the outcomes clearly and concisely.

#### ➤ *The Extent to which Grade 7 Students Demonstrate the Core Value of Maka-Diyos in their Daily Interaction and Activities*

Table 1 presents the extent to which Grade 7 learners demonstrate the Filipino core value of Maka-Diyos, as reflected in their responses to various faith-related indicators.

Table 1 The Extent Grade 7 Learners Demonstrate the Core Value of Maka-Diyos

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
<i>"Iginagalang ko ang magulang at nakatatanda ayon sa turo ng aking pananampalataya"</i> (I honor my parents and elders as taught by my faith)	4.66	Very High
<i>"Nagpapasalamat ako sa Diyos sa aking mga biyayang natatanggap"</i> (I thank God for my blessings)	4.38	Very High
<i>"Nirerespeto ko ang may ibang relihiyon o paniniwala"</i> (I respect classmates of different religions or beliefs)	4.34	Very High
<i>"Palagi akong nagdarasal at nagpapakita ng paggalang sa mga gawaing panrelihiyon"</i> (I pray regularly and show respect during religious activities)	4.26	Very High
<i>"Hindi ko ginagamit ang pangalan ng Diyos sa walang kabuluhang bagay"</i> (I do not use God's name in vain)	4.24	Very High
<i>"Nagpapakita ako ng kabutihan sa iba bilang bahagi ng aking pananampalataya"</i> (I show kindness to others as part of my faith)	4.17	High
<i>"Pinagninilayan ko ang aking mga kilos at humihingi ng gabay para gumawa ng mabuti"</i> (I reflect on my actions and ask for guidance in doing good)	4.13	High
<i>"Ako ay sumusunod sa mga alituntunin bilang mabuting mananampalataya"</i> (I follow rules as part of being a good believer)	4.13	High
<i>"Pinapatawad ko ang mga taong nakagawa ng mali sa akin"</i> (I forgive others who wrong me)	3.99	High
<i>"Sumasama ako sa mga aktibidad na ispiritwal o panrelihiyon na isinasagawa ng paaralan"</i> (I join school-led spiritual or religious event. )	3.42	High
Total Mean	41.72	
Average Mean	4.172	High

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The data presented in Table 1, the Maka-Diyos category, reveal a compelling portrait of Grade 7 learners' spiritual and moral development. With combined mean scores ranging from 3.42 to 4.66, all indicators fall within the High to Very High descriptive ratings. This suggests that students consistently demonstrate behaviors aligned with the core value of Maka-Diyos in their daily interactions and activities. The overall trend points to a strong internalization of religious and moral principles among these learners.

The highest-rated indicator, *"Iginagalang ko ang magulang at nakatatanda ayon sa turo ng aking pananampalataya"* (I honor my parents and elders as taught by my faith), scored a combined mean of 4.66, placing it firmly in the Very High category. This reflects a deeply rooted respect for authority figures, which is a cornerstone of many faith-based teachings. It also implies that learners are not only aware of these values but actively practice them,

especially in familial and school settings where elders play a guiding role.

Three other indicators *"Nagpapasalamat ako sa Diyos sa aking mga biyayang natatanggap"* (I thank God for my blessings), *"Nirerespeto ko ang may ibang relihiyon o paniniwala"* (I respect classmates of different religions or beliefs), *"Nirerespeto ko ang may ibang relihiyon"* and *"Palagi akong nagdarasal at nagpapakita ng paggalang sa mga gawaing panrelihiyon"* (I pray regularly and show respect during religious activities), also received Very High ratings, with means of 4.38, 4.34, and 4.26 respectively. These scores suggest that students are not only spiritually reflective but also inclusive and grateful. The high score for respecting classmates of different religions is particularly noteworthy, as it indicates a level of religious tolerance and empathy that is essential in a diverse educational environment.



Meanwhile, indicators such as “*Pinagninilayan ko ang aking mga kilos at humihingi ng gabay para gumawa ng mabuti*” (I reflect on my actions and ask for guidance in doing good), “*Nagpapakita ako ng kabutihan sa iba bilang bahagi ng aking pananampalataya*” (I show kindness to others as part of my faith) all fall within the High range, with scores between 4.13 and 4.17. These behaviors reflect the learners’ moral reasoning and ethical conduct. Although slightly lower than the top-tier indicators, they still show a strong commitment to living out faith-based values in practical, everyday decisions.

The indicator “*Sumasama ako sa mga aktibidad na ispiritwal o panrelihiyon na isinasagawa ng paaralan*” (I join school-led spiritual or religious events) received the lowest score in the group, with a combined mean of 3.42, but still qualifies as High. This may suggest that while students are personally spiritual, their participation in organized religious activities may be influenced by external factors such as scheduling, interest, or family involvement. It’s an area that could benefit from further encouragement or integration into school culture.

Interestingly, “*Pinapatawad ko ang mga taong nakagawa ng mali sa akin*” (I forgive others who wrong me) scored 3.99, just shy of the Very High threshold. Forgiveness is a complex emotional and spiritual act, and this score may reflect the challenges young adolescents face in navigating interpersonal conflicts. Nevertheless, the score still indicates a strong inclination toward reconciliation and emotional maturity.

The average mean across all indicators is approximately 4.23, which places the overall demonstration of Maka-Diyos values in the Very High category. This suggests that Grade 7 learners not only understand these values cognitively but also apply them consistently in their behavior. The data support

the conclusion that spiritual and moral education is effectively resonating with students at this developmental stage.

The interpretation of the Maka-Diyos indicators reveal a well-rounded and deeply ingrained value system among Grade 7 learners. Their responses reflect a balance of personal spirituality, ethical behavior, and respect for others. While there are slight variations in specific indicators, the overall picture is one of strong alignment with the core values of faith, compassion, and moral responsibility. This data can serve as a foundation for reinforcing these values further through curricular and extracurricular programs.

The bar graph clearly illustrates that Grade 7 learners exhibit a strong commitment to Maka-Diyos values, with most indicators scoring in the High to Very High range. The standout indicator is “*Iginagalang ko ang magulang at nakatatanda ayon sa turo ng aking pananampalataya*” (I honor my parents and elders as taught by my faith), which received the highest mean score of 4.66, reflecting deep respect for elders—a value deeply rooted in Filipino spirituality and tradition.

Three other indicators “*Nagpapasalamat ako sa Diyos sa aking mga biyayang natatanggap*” (I thank God for my blessings), (4.38), “*Nirerespeto ko ang may ibang relihiyon o paniniwala*” (I respect classmates of different religions or beliefs) (4.34), and “*Palagi akong nagdarasal at nagpapakita ng paggalang sa mga gawaing panrelihiyon*” (I pray regularly and show respect during religious activities), (4.26)—also fall under the Very High category. These scores suggest that students are not only spiritually reflective but also inclusive and grateful, showing that their faith is expressed through both personal devotion and respect for others.



Fig 1 Bar Graph for Makadiyos

• *Combined Mean Scores for Maka-Diyos Indicator*

Indicators such as “*Pinagninilayan ko ang aking mga kilos at humihingi ng gabay para gumawa ng mabuti*” (I reflect on my actions and ask for guidance in doing good) , “*Nagpapakita ako ng kabutihan sa iba bilang bahagi ng aking pananampalataya*”( I show kindness to others as part of my faith) and “*Ako ay sumusunod sa mga alituntunin bilang mabuting mananampalataya*” (I follow rules as part of being a good believer) hover around the 4.13 to 4.17 range, indicating a High level of moral reasoning and ethical behavior. These scores reflect that students are actively thinking about their actions and striving to live out their faith in practical ways.

The lowest score, “*Sumasama ako sa mga aktibidad na ispiritwal o panrelihiyon na isinasagawa ng paaralan*” (I

join school-led spiritual or religious events) at 3.42, still falls within the High category but suggests that participation in organized religious activities may be less consistent. This could be due to external factors such as availability, interest, or family involvement.

The graph shows a well-rounded spiritual profile among Grade 7 learners. Their values are not only taught but lived through prayer, gratitude, respect, and moral conduct. The data support the conclusion that Maka-Diyos is deeply embedded in their character and daily life.

➤ *How Grade 7 Learners Exhibit the Core Value of Makatao in their relationships with Peers and Teachers*

Table 2 presents the extent to which Grade 7 learners demonstrate the Filipino core value of Makatao, as reflected in their responses to various humane -related indicators.

Table 2 The Extent Grade 7 Learners Demonstrate the Core Value of Makatao

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
“May paggalang at pantay ang pagtrato ko sa aking mga kaklase” (I treat my classmates with fairness and respect)	4.21	Very High
“Nakikinig ako kapag may nagsasalita” (I listen when someone is speaking)	4.2	High
“Humihingi ako ng tawad kapag nagkamali” (I apologize when I make mistakes)	4.18	High
“Sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran sa silid-aralan para sa respeto at kaligtasan” (I follow classroom rules that promote respect and safety)	1.13	High
“Iniwasan ko ang panbully at tinutulungan ko ang iba para maiwasan ito” (I avoid bullying and help others avoid it too)	4.1	High
“Maayos akong nakikipag-usap sa mga kaklase, guro, at kawani ng paaralan” (I speak politely to classmates, teachers, and school staff)	4.1	High
“Tinatanggap ko ng bukal sa aking loob ang bagong estudyante at pinapadama na sila ay kabilan” (I welcome new student and make them feel included)	4.1	High
“Ipinagtatanggol ko ang mga kaklaseng hindi makatarungang tinatrato” (I defend someone who is being treated unfairly)	3.96	High
“Nagbibigay ako sa mga nangangailangan” (I share my things with others in need)	3.79	High
“Nakiisa ako sa mga gawain ng grupo” (I work well with others in group activities)	3.61	High
Total Mean	40.38	
Average Mean	4.04	High

The data on Grade 7 learners’ demonstration of the core value Makatao reveals a strong and consistent commitment to respectful, empathetic, and socially responsible behavior in their relationships with peers and teachers. With combined mean scores ranging from 3.61 to 4.21, all indicators fall within the High to Very High descriptive ratings. This suggests that students are not only aware of what it means to be Makatao but actively embody these values in their daily interactions.

The highest-rated indicator, “*May paggalang at pantay ang pagtrato ko sa aking mga kaklase*,” (I treat my classmates with fairness and respect) scored 4.21, earning a Very High rating. This reflects a deeply ingrained sense of fairness and respect among learners, which is foundational to building inclusive and harmonious classroom relationships. It also suggests that students are conscious of treating others equally, regardless of differences in background, ability, or personality.

Several indicators clustered closely around the 4.10 to 4.20 range, including “*Nakikinig ako kapag may nagsasalita*,” (I listen when someone is speaking) “*Humihingi ako ng tawad kapag nagkamali*,” (I apologize when I make mistakes) “*Iniwasan ko ang panbully, at tinutulungan ko ang iba para maiwasan ito*” ( I avoid bullying and help others avoid it too) “*Maayos akong nakikipag-usap sa mga kaklase, guro,at kawani ng paaralan*” (I speak politely to classmates, teachers, and school staff) “*Tinatanggap ko ng bukal sa loob ang bagong estudyante at pinapadama na sila ay kabilan*”(I welcome new student and make them feel included)and “*Sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran sa silid-aralan para sa respeto at kaligtasan*”(I follow classroom rules that promote respect and safety). These behaviors are essential to maintaining respectful and cooperative relationships with both peers and authority figures. The high scores suggest that students are actively practicing good communication, accountability, and inclusivity.

The indicator “*Nagbibigay ako sa mga nangangailangan*” (I share my things with others in need) scored 3.79, which, while still rated High, is slightly lower than others. This may reflect the practical limitations students face in offering material or emotional support, or it could indicate that generosity is expressed more situationally. Nonetheless, the score still points to a positive disposition toward helping others, which is a key aspect of being Makatao.

“*Nakiisa ako sa mga gawain ng grupo*” (I work well with others in group activities) received the lowest score at 3.61, though it remains within the High category. This may suggest that while students value collaboration, some may still be developing confidence or motivation to fully engage in group activities. It could also reflect varying levels of comfort in social settings, especially during adolescence when peer dynamics are complex.

The indicator “*Ipinagtatanggol ko ang mga kaklaseng hindi makatarungang tinatrato*”(I defend someone who is being treated unfairly) scored 3.96, indicating that students are generally willing to stand up for others, though perhaps

not as consistently as they demonstrate other interpersonal values. This behavior requires courage and moral conviction, and the score suggests that while many students are willing to advocate for fairness, some may still be learning how to do so effectively.

Statistically, the average combined mean across all Makatao indicators is approximately 4.04, placing the overall demonstration of this core value in the High category. This reflects a well-developed sense of empathy, fairness, and social responsibility among Grade 7 learners. Their responses suggest that these values are not only taught but internalized and practiced in meaningful ways.

Grade 7 learners exhibit the core value of Makatao through respectful communication, inclusive behavior, and a willingness to support and protect their peers. While there is room for growth in areas like group participation and advocacy, the overall data paints a picture of a compassionate and socially aware student body. These findings can inform future programs that further strengthen interpersonal skills and deepen students’ commitment to human dignity and equality.

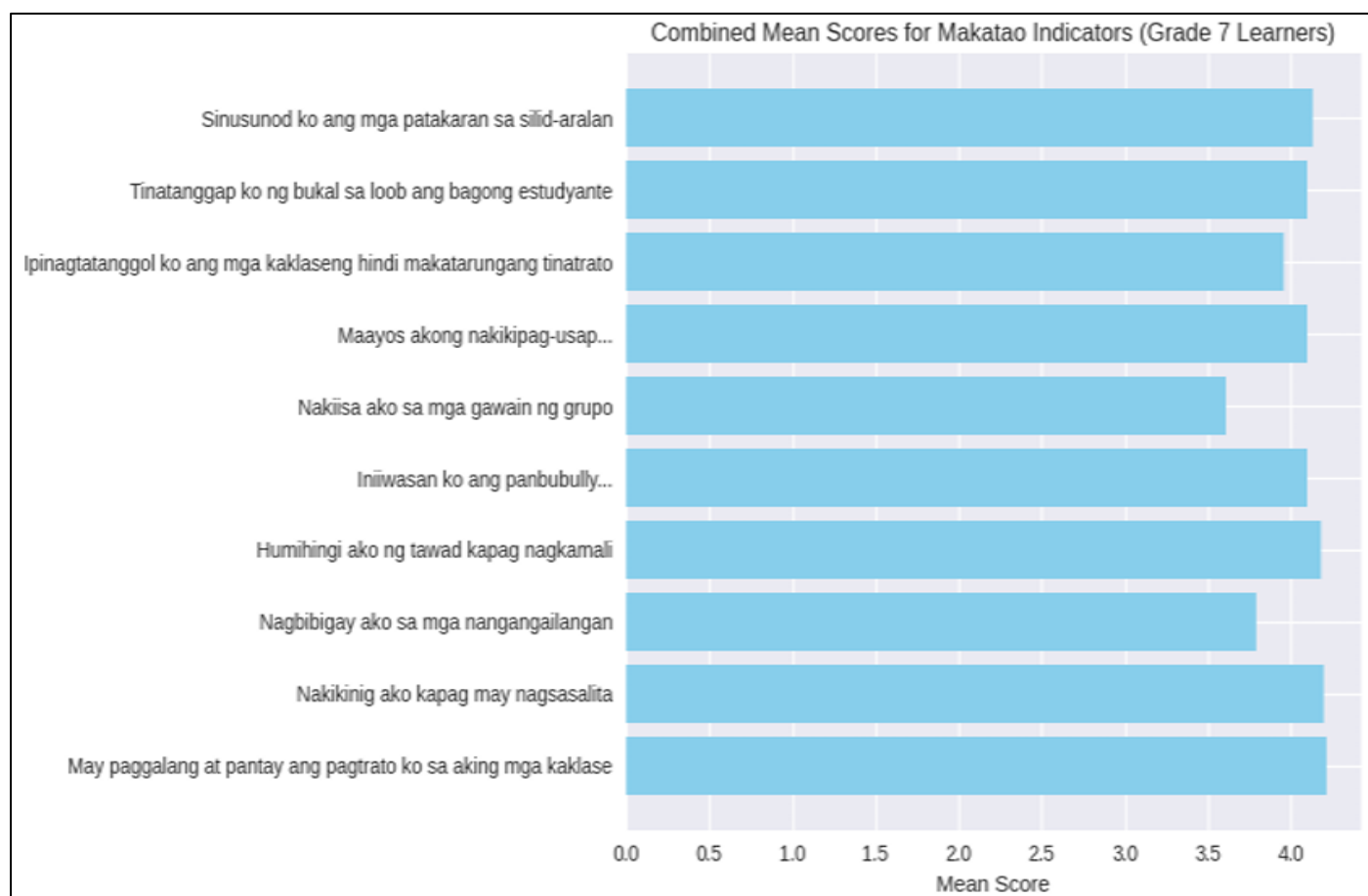


Fig 2 Bar Graph for Makatao

The graph shows that Grade 7 learners consistently exhibit High to Very High levels of Makatao values in their daily interactions. The highest-rated indicator, “*May paggalang at pantay ang pagtrato ko sa aking mga kaklase*”(I treat my classmates with fairness and respect)

(4.21), falls under the Very High category. This reflects a strong sense of fairness and respect among students, suggesting that they value equality and inclusivity in their peer relationships.

Most indicators—such as “*Nakikinig ako kapag may nagsasalita*”(I listen when someone is speaking), “*Humihingi ako ng tawad kapag nagkamali*”(I apologize when I make mistakes), and “*Sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran sa silid-aralan para sa respeto at kaligtasan*”(I follow classroom rules that promote respect and safety)—hover around the 4.10 to 4.20 range, indicating a High level of empathy, accountability, and cooperation. These behaviors are essential for maintaining respectful and productive relationships with both peers and teachers.

The indicator “*Nagbibigay ako sa mga nangangailangan*” (I share my things with others in need) scored 3.79, which, while still High, suggests that generosity may be more situational or influenced by opportunity. Similarly, “*Nakiisa ako sa mga gawain ng grupo*” (I work well with others in group activities) scored 3.61, indicating that while students are generally collaborative, some may still be developing confidence or motivation in group settings.

Overall, the data paints a picture of a socially aware and emotionally intelligent student body. Grade 7 learners are actively practicing kindness, fairness, and responsibility—core traits of Makatao—in their school environment. These findings affirm the importance of nurturing interpersonal values through both structured activities and everyday interactions.

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The data pointed out a socially aware and emotionally intelligent student body. Grade 7 learners are actively practicing kindness, fairness, and responsibility—core traits of Makatao—in their school environment. These findings affirm the importance of nurturing interpersonal values through both structured activities and everyday interactions.

#### ➤ Practices Among Grade 7 Learners that Reflect their Commitment to the Core Value of Makakalikasan

Table 3 presents the extent to which Grade 7 learners demonstrate the Filipino core value of Makakalikasan, as reflected in their responses to various environmentally conscious-related indicators.

Table 3 The Extent Grade 7 Learners Demonstrate the Core Value of Makakalikasan

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Hindi ako nananakit ng hayop o halaman para sa katuwaan lamang “ (I don’t harm animals or plants for fun)	4.18	High
“Itinatapon ko ang basura sa tamang basurahan” (I dispose waste properly)	4.1	High
“Nagtitipid ako sa tubig at kuryente”(I conserve water and electricity)	3.97	High
“Hinihikayat ko ang iba na maging responsible sa kalikasan” (I encourage others to be responsible for nature)	3.97	High
“Inaalagaan ko ang mga halaman sa paaralan” (I take care of school gardens or plants)	3.97	High
“Isinusumbong ko ang naninira sa kalikasan” (I report classmates who harm the environment)	3.96	High
“Nakikilahok ako sa pagtatanim o paglilinis ng kapaligiran” (I participate in tree planting and clean-up drives)	3.91	High
“Iniwasan ko ang paggamit ng plastik at isinusulong ko ang eco-friendly na mga alternatibo” (I avoid using plastics that promote and promote eco-friendly choices)	3.91	High
“Inaayos at nire-recycle ang gamit para sa proyekto” (I reuse or recycle materials for school projects)	3.91	High
“Sumasali ako sa mga aktibidad ng paaralan para sa pangangalaga ng kalikasan” (I join activities that promote caring for the environment)	3.83	High
Total Mean	39.71	
Average Mean	3.97	High



Table 3 results show the Grade 7 learners' demonstration of the core value Makakalikasan reveals a consistent and meaningful commitment to environmental stewardship. All ten indicators fall within the High descriptive rating, with combined mean scores ranging from 3.83 to 4.18. This suggests that students are not only aware of ecological responsibilities but also actively engage in practices that promote sustainability and care for the natural world.

One of the most prominent practices is proper waste disposal, as shown by the indicator "*Itinatapon ko ang basura sa tamang basurahan*" (I dispose waste properly) with a mean of 4.10. This reflects a strong awareness of cleanliness and environmental order, which is foundational to ecological responsibility. It also implies that students are internalizing the importance of waste segregation and its impact on community health and sustainability.

The highest-rated indicator, "*Hindi ako nananakit ng hayop o halaman para sa katuwaan*," (I don't harm animals or plants for fun) scored 4.18, showing a deep respect for living organisms. This behavior goes beyond compliance—it reflects empathy and ethical consciousness toward nature. Such a score suggests that learners are developing a moral stance against environmental harm, even in subtle forms like playful cruelty.

Participation in school-led environmental activities, such as tree planting and clean-up drives, is also evident, with "*Sumasali ako sa mga aktibidad ng paaralan para sa pangnagalaga ng kalikasan*" (I join school activities that promote caring for the environment) scoring 3.83. While slightly lower than other indicators, it still reflects active involvement. This may indicate that while students are willing, participation could be influenced by availability, scheduling, or the visibility of such programs.

Resource conservation practices are also well-demonstrated. Indicators like "*Nagtitipid ako sa tubig at kuryente*" (I conserve water and electricity) and "*Inaalagaan ko ang mga halaman sa paaralan*" both scored 3.97, showing that students are mindful of their consumption and take responsibility for maintaining green spaces. These scores suggest that environmental values are being translated into everyday habits, not just occasional efforts.

The indicator "*Isinusumbong ko ang naninira sa kalikasan*" (I report classmates who harm the environment) scored 3.96, reflecting a proactive stance in protecting the environment. This behavior requires moral courage and a sense of accountability, indicating that students are willing to speak up when they witness harmful actions. It's a sign of growing environmental advocacy among young learners.

Efforts to reduce plastic use and promote eco-friendly alternatives are also evident, with "*Iniiwasan ko ang paggamit ng plastik at isinusulong ko ang eco-friendly na mga alternatibo*" (I avoid using plastics that promote and promote eco-friendly choices) scoring 3.91. This shows that students are aware of the long-term impact of plastic pollution

and are making conscious choices to reduce their footprint. Similarly, "*Inaayos at nire-recycle ang gamit para sa proyekto*" (I reuse or recycle materials for school projects) also scored 3.91, reinforcing the idea that sustainability is being integrated into academic and creative tasks.

Lastly, the indicator "*Hinihikayat ko ang iba na maging responsible sa kalikasan*" (I encourage others to be responsible for nature) scored 3.97, suggesting that students are not only practicing environmental values themselves but also encouraging others to do the same. This reflects leadership and influence, key traits in building a culture of ecological responsibility within the school community.

Grade 7 learners exhibit a strong and consistent commitment to Makakalikasan through daily habits, school participation, and advocacy. Their behaviors reflect not just awareness but a growing sense of environmental ethics and responsibility. These findings highlight the effectiveness of environmental education and suggest that with continued support, these learners can become active stewards of the planet.

The graph shows that all indicators fall within the High descriptive rating, suggesting that students consistently practice environmentally responsible behaviors. The highest score, "*Hindi ako nananakit ng hayop o halaman para sa katuwaan lamang*" (I don't harm animals or plants for fun) at 4.18, reflects a strong ethical stance toward living organisms—indicating empathy and respect for nature.

Indicators like "*Itinatapon ko ang basura sa tamang basurahan*" (I dispose waste properly)" (4.10), "*Nagtitipid ako sa tubig at kuryente*" (I conserve water and electricity) (3.97), and "*Hinihikayat ko ang iba na maging responsible sa kalikasan*" (I encourage others to be responsible for nature) (3.97) show that students are not only mindful of their own actions but also influence others positively. These scores highlight a growing culture of sustainability and peer-led advocacy.

Participation-based indicators such as "*Sumasali ako sa mga aktibidad ng paaralan para sa pangnagalaga ng kalikasan*" (I join activities that promote caring for the environment) (3.83) and "*Nakikilahok ako sa pagtanim o paglilinis ng kapaligiran*" (I participate in tree planting and clean-up drives) (3.91) suggest that while students are willing to engage, there may be room to increase involvement through more accessible or engaging school programs.

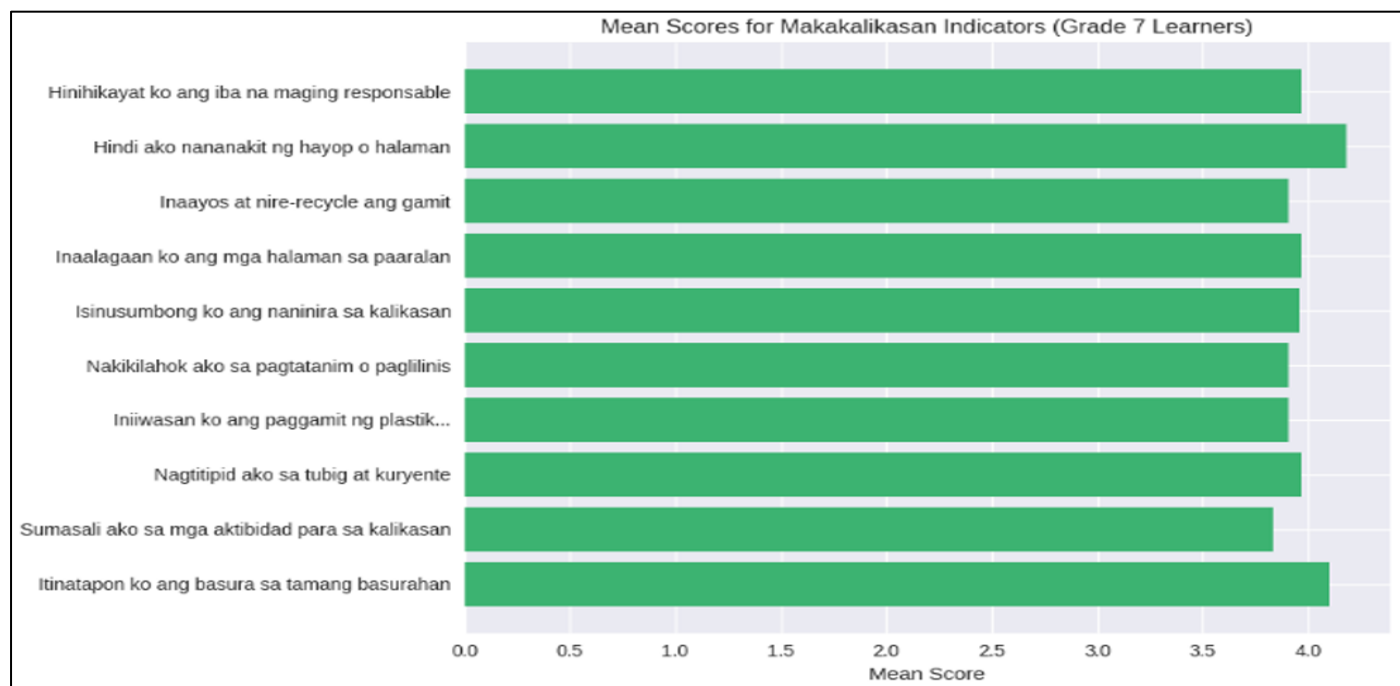


Fig 3 Bar Graph for Makakalikasan

The data reflect a well-developed environmental consciousness among Grade 7 learners. Their behaviors—from recycling and conservation to advocacy and ethical treatment of nature—demonstrate that Makakalikasan is not just a concept they understand, but a value they live out consistently.

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just a concept they understand, but a value they live out consistently.

➤ *How Grade 7 Learners Express the Core Value of Makabansa Through Participation in School and Community Activities*

Table 4 presents the extent to which Grade 7 learners demonstrate the Filipino core value of Makabansa, as reflected in their responses to various patriotic-related indicators.

Table 4 The Extent Grade 7 Learners Demonstrate the Core Value of Makabansa

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
“Dumadalo sa flag ceremonies” (I attend and participate in flag ceremonies)	4.43	Very High
“Iginagalang ko ang watawat ng pilipinas at mga simbolo nito” (I show respect to the Philippine flag and national symbols)	4.31	Very High
“Alam at sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran ng paaralan” (I know school rules and policies)	4.24	Very High
“Ipinagmamalaki ko ang pagsasalita ng Filipino at paggamit ng mga lokal na wika” (I take pride in speaking Filipino and using local languages)	4.14	High
“Iginagalang ko ang mga opisyal ng pamahalaan at paaralan” (I support and respect government and school officials)	4.13	High
“Kinikilala ko ang mga bayaning Pilipino at ang kanilang kontribusyon” (I recognize Filipino heroes and their contributions)	4.13	High
“Ipinagdiriwang ang mga pambansang okasyon at nauunawaan ko ang kahalagahan nang mga ito” (I celebrate Philippine holidays and know their significance)	4.13	High
“Kumakanta ako ng pambansang awit nang may paggalang at pagmamalaki” (I sing the national anthem with respect and pride)	4.00	High
“Iniwasan ko ang pagpalaganap ng maling balita o mapanirang tsismis online” (I avoid spreading fake news or harmful rumors online)	3.97	High
“Tumutulong sa community service o outreach na mga Gawain” (I help community service or outreach activities)	3.83	High
Total Mean	41.31	
Average Mean	4.13	High

The data on Table 4 pointed out how Grade 7 learners' demonstration of the core value Makabansa paints a vivid picture of their active engagement in both school and community life, reflecting a strong sense of national pride, civic responsibility, and cultural identity. With combined mean scores ranging from 3.83 to 4.43, all indicators fall within the High to Very High descriptive ratings. This suggests that students are not only aware of their role as young citizens but are also consistently expressing patriotism through meaningful actions.

The highest-rated indicator, "*Dumadalo sa flag ceremonies*" (I attend and participate in flag ceremonies) with a mean of 4.43, reflects a deep respect for national symbols and traditions. This very high score indicates that learners view these ceremonies not as mere routine but as important expressions of unity and national pride. Their consistent attendance and participation show that they understand the significance of honoring the country's heritage and values.

Closely following is "*Iginagalang ko ang watawat ng pilipinas at mga simbolo nito*" (I show respect to the Philippine flag and national symbols) with a mean of 4.31, also rated Very High. This suggests that students are mindful of how they treat national emblems, such as the Philippine flag, and are likely to observe proper etiquette during flag-raising and other patriotic events. Such behavior reflects a strong internalization of respect for national identity and the symbols that represent it.

The indicator "*Alam at sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran ng paaralan*" (I know school rules and policies) scored 4.24, another Very High rating. This implies that students recognize the importance of rules and regulations as part of their civic duty. Following school policies is not just about discipline—it's a reflection of their understanding of structure, order, and the role of governance in society.

Several indicators fall within the High category, including "*Kumakanta ako ng pambansang awit nang may paggalang at pagmamalaki*" (I sing the national anthem with respect and pride) (4.00), "*Ipinagdiriwang ang mga pambansang okasyon at nauunawaan ko ang kahalagahan nang mga ito*" (I celebrate Philippine holidays and know their significance) (4.13), and "*Kinikilala ko ang mga bayaning Pilipino at ang kanilang kontribusyon*" (I recognize Filipino heroes and their contributions) (4.13). These scores suggest that students actively participate in cultural and historical commemorations, and they appreciate the contributions of national heroes. Singing the national anthem with pride and celebrating national holidays are clear expressions of their connection to Filipino heritage.

The indicator "*Tumutulong sa community service o outreach na mga Gawain*" (I help community service or outreach activities) scored 3.83, which, while still High, is the lowest among the group. This may reflect logistical or opportunity-based limitations in community involvement. However, the score still indicates a willingness to contribute to the common good, which is a vital aspect of Makabansa. It also suggests potential for growth through more accessible and engaging outreach programs.

"*Ipinagmamalaki ko ang pagsasalita ng Filipino at paggamit ng mga lokal na wika*" (I take pride in speaking Filipino and using local languages) scored 4.14, showing that students take pride in using the national language. This is a powerful expression of cultural identity and unity, especially in a multilingual society. It also reflects the learners' appreciation for linguistic heritage and their role in preserving it.

Finally, "*Iniiwasan ko ang pagpalaganap ng maling balita o mapanirang tsismis online*" (I avoid spreading fake news or harmful rumors online) scored 3.97, indicating a growing awareness of digital citizenship. In an age where misinformation spreads rapidly, this score suggests that students are learning to be responsible and ethical in their online interactions—an essential modern expression of patriotism and civic duty.

In summary, Grade 7 learners express the core value of Makabansa through a wide range of practices that span ceremonial participation, rule-following, cultural pride, and community involvement. Their behaviors reflect a strong foundation of national consciousness and civic engagement. While most indicators are already in the high range, the data also highlights areas where schools and communities can further support and deepen students' patriotic involvement.

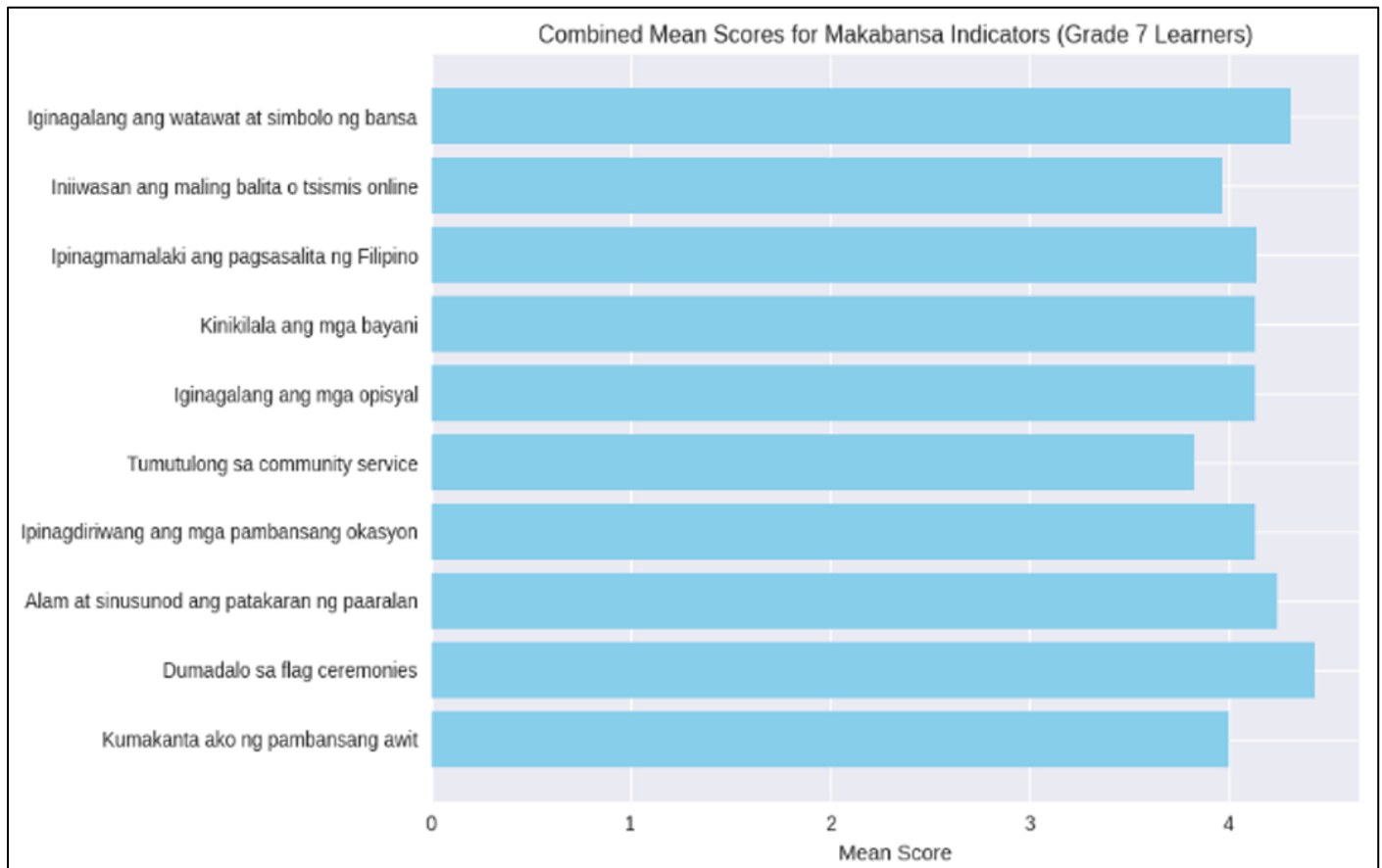


Fig 4 Bar Graph for Makabansa

The bar graph reveals a strong sense of patriotism and civic responsibility among Grade 7 learners. The highest-rated indicator, “*Dumadalo sa flag ceremonies*” (I attend and participate in flag ceremonies) (4.43), reflects a deep respect for national traditions and symbols. This very high score suggests that students actively participate in these rituals with pride and reverence.

Similarly, “*Iginagalang ko ang mga opisyal ng pamahalaan at paaralan*” (I support and respect government and school officials) (4.31) and “*Alam at sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran ng paaralan*” (I know school rules and policies) (4.24) also fall under the Very High category. These scores indicate that learners not only respect national emblems but also understand the importance of rules and governance—key traits of responsible citizenship.

The remaining indicators, all rated High, show consistent engagement in activities that promote national identity and social responsibility. From singing the national anthem (4.00) to recognizing Filipino heroes (4.13) and avoiding misinformation online (3.97), students demonstrate that Makabansa values are deeply embedded in their behavior.

Even “*Tumutulong sa community service o outreach na mga Gawain*” (I help community service or outreach activities) (3.83), while slightly lower, still reflects a meaningful level of involvement in outreach efforts. This

suggests that learners are not just passive observers but active contributors to their communities.

Overall, the data paints a picture of young citizens who are proud of their heritage, respectful of their institutions, and eager to contribute to the nation’s well-being. Their actions reflect a vibrant and growing commitment to Makabansa values.

➤ *Proposed School Program to Intensify the Development of the Core Value Maka-diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa*

- *Program Title: “Buhay-Kagitingan: Core Values in Action”*

- *Values Month Celebration (Quarterly Focus)*

The program is designed to promote and further develop the core values of Makadiyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa.

- *Each Quarter Highlights One Core Value Through Themed Activities*

- ✓ Q1: *Makadiyos* – “Pananalig at Paglilingkod”
- ✓ Q2: *Makatao* – “Pakikipagkapwa at Pagkakaisa”
- ✓ Q3: *Makakalikasan* – “Kalikasan Ko, Sagot Ko”
- ✓ Q4: *Makabansa* – “Bayan Ko, Mahal Ko”



- *Background*

The Philippine educational system recognizes the importance of holistic development, which includes not only intellectual growth but also moral and civic formation. The Department of Education has emphasized the integration of core values—Makadiyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa—into the curriculum and school culture. These values serve as guiding principles for students to become responsible, compassionate, and patriotic citizens.

However, many students struggle to internalize these values due to limited opportunities for experiential learning. While lessons in the classroom provide theoretical knowledge, they often lack the emotional and social engagement necessary for deep value formation. This gap calls for a more dynamic and participatory approach to values education.

Schools are uniquely positioned to foster these values through structured programs that combine reflection, action, and community involvement. By creating safe spaces for dialogue, service, and creativity, schools can help students connect values to real-life situations. This approach not only enhances character development but also strengthens school-community relationships.

Moreover, the promotion of these core values contributes to a more peaceful, sustainable, and united society. When students learn to respect others, care for the environment, and love their country, they become agents of positive change. The school becomes a microcosm of the nation, where values are lived and shared.

Thus, the proposed program aims to institutionalize a values-based culture through quarterly themes, flagship activities, and student-led initiatives. It will serve as a blueprint for schools seeking to embed values into everyday learning and behavior, ensuring that students grow not just in knowledge but in wisdom and integrity.

- *Rationale*

The rationale behind this program stems from the need to make values education more meaningful and impactful. Traditional methods such as lectures and textbook readings are insufficient in cultivating deep moral convictions. Students need to experience values in action to truly understand their significance and relevance.

Recent studies and school observations reveal that students respond positively to interactive and reflective activities. When given the chance to lead, collaborate, and express themselves, they develop empathy, responsibility, and a stronger sense of identity. This program leverages those insights to create a more engaging values formation process.

Furthermore, the program aligns with the K-12 curriculum's emphasis on character development and 21st-century skills. Values such as respect, environmental awareness, and patriotism are essential in preparing students for life beyond school. These values also support mental

health and social cohesion, which are increasingly important in today's world.

The program also addresses the influence of external factors such as media, peer pressure, and societal challenges. By providing a structured and supportive environment, schools can counteract negative influences and reinforce positive behaviors. Students will learn to critically evaluate their choices and act in accordance with their values.

The rationale is to transform values education from a passive to an active experience. Through this program, students will not only learn about values but live them—making decisions, solving problems, and building relationships that reflect their moral compass. It is a step toward nurturing principled leaders and compassionate citizens.

- *Objectives*

The primary objective of the program is to instill and strengthen the core values of Makadiyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa among students. These values will be integrated into their daily routines, academic activities, and social interactions. The goal is to make values a lived experience rather than a theoretical concept.

Specifically, the program aims to develop spiritual awareness and respect for diverse beliefs under Makadiyos. Students will engage in activities that promote spiritual journaling, interfaith dialogue and service-learning projects. This will foster a sense of humility, gratitude, and reverence for life.

Under Makatao, the program seeks to cultivate empathy, kindness, and cooperation. Students will participate in peer mentorship, kindness campaigns, and inclusive dialogues. These activities will help them appreciate diversity and build meaningful relationships.

For Makakalikasan, the objective is to promote environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. Students will be involved in clean-up drives, recycling projects, and eco-friendly campaigns. These experiences will deepen their connection to nature and their responsibility to protect it.

Lastly, under Makabansa, the program aims to instill patriotism and civic responsibility. Students will learn about national history, participate in community service, and engage with local leaders. These activities will help them understand their role in nation-building and inspire pride in their heritage.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### ➤ *The Extent to which do Grade 7 Learners Demonstrate the Core Value of Maka-Diyos in their Daily Interactions and Activities*

Results revealed that Maka-Diyos values among Grade 7 learners present a compelling narrative of spiritual and moral maturity. With combined mean scores ranging from

3.42 to 4.66, all indicators fall within High to Very High descriptive ratings, suggesting that students consistently exhibit behaviors aligned with spiritual principles. This trend reflects a strong internalization of religious and ethical teachings, indicating that values education is resonating effectively with learners at this developmental stage. Such findings affirm the importance of integrating spiritual formation into the broader educational framework.

The highest-rated indicator, *“Iginagalang ko ang magulang at nakatatanda ayon sa turo ng aking pananampalataya”* (I honor my parents and elders as taught by my faith) with a mean score of 4.66, underscores the deep respect students hold for authority figures. This respect is not merely cultural but is rooted in faith-based teachings that emphasize honoring elders as a moral imperative. Reyes (2016) highlights that Filipino spirituality is intertwined with familial reverence, and this score suggests that learners are actively practicing these teachings in their daily lives. The school environment likely reinforces this value through teacher modeling and classroom norms.

Three other indicators *“Nagpapasalamat ako sa Diyos sa aking mga biyayang natatanggap”* (I thank God for my blessings), *“Nirerespeto ko ang may ibang relihiyon o paniniwala”* (I respect classmates of different religions or beliefs), *“(Nirerespeto ko ang may ibang relihiyon”* and *“Palagi akong nagdarasal at nagpapakita ng paggalang sa mga gawaing panrelihiyon”* (I pray regularly and show respect during religious activities), also received Very High ratings, reflecting students’ spiritual reflection, inclusivity, and gratitude. Emmons and Stern (2013) argue that gratitude enhances moral sensitivity and emotional resilience, while Tan (2018) emphasizes the role of religious tolerance in fostering peace education. These scores suggest that students are not only engaging in personal devotion but are also developing empathy and respect for religious diversity, which are essential traits in a pluralistic society.

Indicators such as *“Pinagninilayan ko ang aking mga kilos at humihingi ng gabay para gumawa ng mabuti”* (I reflect on my actions and ask for guidance in doing good), *“Nagpapakita ako ng kabutihan sa iba bilang bahagi ng aking pananampalataya”* (I show kindness to others as part of my faith) and *“Ako ay sumusunod sa mga alituntunin bilang mabuting mananampalataya”* (I follow rules as part of being a good believer), fall within the High range, indicating strong moral reasoning and ethical conduct. Gibbs (2019) explains that adolescents begin to evaluate actions based on internal principles, and these scores reflect that learners are applying faith-based values in everyday decisions. While slightly lower than the top-tier indicators, they still demonstrate a commitment to living out moral teachings in practical contexts.

The indicator *“Sumasama ako sa mga aktibidad na ispiritwal o panrelihiyon na isinasagawa ng paaralan”* (I join school-led spiritual or religious events) received the lowest score of 3.42, though it still qualifies as High. This may suggest that while students are personally spiritual, their participation in organized religious activities is influenced by

external factors such as scheduling or family involvement. Garcia and Mendoza (2020) found that engagement in school-based religious programs often depends on perceived relevance and parental support. This area presents an opportunity for schools to make spiritual activities more inclusive and engaging.

*“Pinapatawad ko ang mga taong nakagawa ng mali sa akin”* (I forgive others who wrong me) scored 3.99, just below the Very High threshold. Forgiveness is a complex emotional and spiritual act, especially for adolescents navigating interpersonal conflicts. Toussaint et al. (2016) note that forgiveness requires empathy and emotional regulation, which are still developing during early adolescence. Despite the challenges, the score indicates a strong inclination toward reconciliation and emotional maturity among learners.

The average combined mean across all indicators is approximately 4.172, placing the overall demonstration of Maka-Diyos values in the Very High category. This suggests that Grade 7 learners not only understand these values cognitively but also apply them consistently in behavior. Narvaez (2015) emphasizes that moral behavior is shaped by supportive environments, and the data implies that the school climate is conducive to spiritual and ethical growth.

Filipino spirituality is deeply rooted in cultural practices such as bayanihan, pagdarasal, and paggalang. Salazar (2017) explains that these traditions shape moral behavior and community engagement. The data reflects how cultural norms reinforce spiritual values, creating a synergistic effect in learners’ development. This cultural foundation strengthens the internalization of Maka-Diyos values and supports holistic character formation.

Family plays a central role in transmitting spiritual values. Bernarte and Santos (2019) found that parental modeling and religious rituals at home significantly influence children’s spiritual orientation. The high respect for elders and consistent prayer habits suggests strong family-school alignment in values education. This partnership enhances the effectiveness of moral instruction and reinforces consistent behavior across contexts.

Schools serve as moral ecosystems where values are taught, modeled, and practiced. Lickona (2016) argues that character education must connect rules to values, helping students understand the moral rationale behind behavioral expectations. The indicators on rule-following and kindness suggest that learners view obedience not as compliance but as a reflection of their spiritual identity. This alignment between behavior and belief is a hallmark of effective values education.

DepEd’s mandate to integrate core values across subjects ensures that spiritual education is not confined to religion classes. DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, emphasizes that values must be reflected in behavior statements and observed across learning areas. This holistic approach likely contributes to the consistent demonstration of Maka-Diyos

behaviors, as students encounter moral lessons in various academic and social settings.

Adolescents learn values through peer interactions. Bandura's social learning theory posits that behaviors are acquired through observation and imitation. The data suggests that students are surrounded by peers who model respectful and spiritual behavior, reinforcing positive norms. Peer influence, when aligned with school values, becomes a powerful tool for moral development.

The relatively lower score in organized spiritual activities may reflect a disconnect between institutional religion and personal spirituality. Cordero (2021) notes that young people often seek authenticity and relevance in religious experiences. Schools may need to adapt spiritual programs to better resonate with students' interests and contexts, making them more participatory and student-led.

Spiritual development is closely linked to emotional intelligence. Goleman (2017) argues that self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation are enhanced through spiritual practices. The indicators on forgiveness, reflection, and kindness suggest that students are developing these competencies alongside moral values, contributing to their overall well-being and interpersonal effectiveness.

Teachers play a pivotal role in modeling and reinforcing Maka-Diyos values. Llego (2015) emphasizes that educators must embody the core values they teach, creating authentic learning experiences. Professional development in values education can further enhance teachers' capacity to nurture spiritual growth and create classrooms that reflect moral integrity.

To strengthen Maka-Diyos values, schools can implement spiritual journaling, interfaith dialogues, and service-learning projects. These activities provide experiential learning opportunities that deepen understanding and application. As DepEd Region III's memorandum suggests, integrating prayer and reflection into daily routines fosters spiritual connection and reinforces moral habits.

The data paints a hopeful picture of Grade 7 learners' spiritual and moral development. With most indicators in the High to Very High range, students are not only aware of Maka-Diyos values but actively embody them. Continued support through curriculum, family engagement, and teacher modeling will ensure that these values remain central to their personal and civic identity.

This analysis underscores the importance of values education in shaping holistic learners. By fostering spiritual awareness, ethical conduct, and respect for diversity, schools contribute to the formation of compassionate and principled citizens. The Maka-Diyos data serves as both a benchmark and a guide for future programming, ensuring that moral development remains at the heart of Philippine education.

### ➤ *How Grade 7 Learners Exhibit the Core Value of Makatao in their Relationships with Peers and Teachers?*

Collected data on Grade 7 learners' demonstration of the core value *Makatao* reveals a commendable level of social awareness, empathy, and respect in their interactions. With mean scores ranging from 3.61 to 4.21, all indicators fall within the High to Very High descriptive ratings, suggesting that students not only understand the principles of being *Makatao* but actively embody them in their behavior. This is particularly significant in early adolescence, a developmental stage where peer relationships and moral reasoning begin to deepen. The findings affirm that values education in the Philippine context is effectively shaping learners' interpersonal conduct.

The highest-rated indicator, "*May paggalang at pantay ang pagtrato ko sa aking mga kaklase,*" (I treat my classmates with fairness and respect), reflects a strong internalization of fairness and respect. This aligns with Lickona's (2016) assertion that character education must emphasize equality and dignity in everyday interactions. When students treat their classmates with fairness regardless of differences, they contribute to a more inclusive and psychologically safe learning environment. Such behavior is foundational to building harmonious relationships and reducing instances of discrimination or exclusion.

Indicators such as "*Nakikinig ako kapag may nagsasalita,*" (I listen when someone is speaking) "*Humiingi ako ng tawad kapag nagkamali,*" (I apologize when I make mistakes) "*Iniiwasan ko ang panbubully, at tinutulungan ko ang iba para maiwasan ito*" (I avoid bullying and help others avoid it too), scored within the 4.10 to 4.20 range, reinforcing the idea that students are practicing active listening, accountability, and nonviolence. These behaviors are essential components of emotional intelligence, which Goleman (2017) describes as critical to social success and conflict resolution. The data suggests that learners are developing the capacity to manage their emotions and respond to others with empathy and respect—skills that are vital both inside and outside the classroom.

The slightly lower score of 3.79 for "*Nagbibigay ako sa mga nangangailangan*" (I share my things with others in need) may reflect situational limitations in students' ability to offer material or emotional support. However, it still indicates a positive disposition toward generosity. Narvaez (2015) emphasizes that moral development is shaped by both internal values and external opportunities for prosocial behavior. Schools can enhance this aspect by creating more structured avenues for students to engage in acts of service, such as donation drives or peer support programs.

"*Nakiisa ako sa mga gawain ng grupo*" (I work well with others in group activities) which received the lowest score at 3.61, points to an area for growth in collaborative engagement. While still within the High category, this score may suggest that some students are still developing confidence or motivation to participate actively in group settings. Branson (2015) notes that social justice in education includes fostering equitable participation and voice in group

dynamics. Encouraging cooperative learning and inclusive group activities can help students build trust and teamwork skills

The indicator “*Ipinagtatangol ko ang mga kaklaseng hindi makatarungang tinatrato*” (I defend someone who is being treated unfairly) scored 3.96, indicating that students are generally willing to advocate for fairness, though perhaps not as consistently as they demonstrate other interpersonal values. Advocacy requires moral courage, which develops over time and through modeling by adults and peers. Garcia and Bual (2022) found that students who are exposed to values-based instruction are more likely to stand up for others, especially when they feel supported by their school environment.

The overall average mean score of 4.04 places the demonstration of *Makatao* values firmly in the High category. This suggests that Grade 7 learners possess a well-developed sense of empathy, fairness, and social responsibility. These traits are not only taught but internalized, reflecting the effectiveness of the Philippine values education framework. As Perida and Miguel (2023) argue, integrating values into subject areas enhances students’ ability to apply moral principles across contexts.

The data also highlights the importance of inclusive behavior, as seen in the high score for “*Tinatanggap ko ng bukal sa loob ang bagong estudyante at pinapadama na sila ay kabilang*” (I welcome new student and make them feel included). Welcoming new students reflects openness and compassion, which are central to the *Makatao* value. Tan (2018) emphasizes that peace education begins with everyday acts of inclusion and acceptance. Schools can reinforce this by celebrating diversity and encouraging peer mentorship programs.

Respectful communication, as indicated by “*Maayos akong nakikipag-usap sa mga kaklase, guro, at kawani ng paaralan*” (I speak politely to classmates, teachers, and school staff) is another key strength among learners. Effective communication fosters mutual understanding and reduces conflict. Goleman (2017) links this skill to emotional intelligence, noting that students who communicate clearly and respectfully are better equipped to navigate complex social situations. This behavior also supports collaborative learning and positive classroom culture

The consistent practice of asking for forgiveness, as shown in “*Humihingi ako ng tawad kapag nagkamali*” (I apologize when I make mistakes) reflects moral accountability. Lickona (2016) stresses that recognizing and correcting one’s mistakes is a sign of moral maturity. This behavior helps build trust and strengthens relationships, especially during adolescence when peer dynamics are sensitive and evolving.

Avoiding bullying, as indicated by “*Iniiwasan ko ang panbubully, at tinutulungan ko ang iba para maiwasan ito*” (I avoid bullying and help others avoid it too), critical marker of *Makatao* behavior. Bullying undermines dignity and

equality, and its prevention requires both personal conviction and institutional support. Narvaez (2015) advocates for moral education that empowers students to reject harmful behaviors and promote kindness. The high score here suggests that students are internalizing these lessons and contributing to a safer school environment.

Listening attentively, as seen in “*Nakikinig ako kapag may nagsasalita*,” (I listen when someone is speaking) a foundational social skill that supports empathy and respect. Goleman (2017) identifies active listening as a key component of emotional intelligence, enabling individuals to understand others’ perspectives and respond appropriately. This behavior enhances classroom discourse and fosters mutual respect among peers.

Following classroom rules, as reflected in “*Sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran sa silid-aralan para sa respeto at kaligtasan*” (I follow classroom rules that promote respect and safety) indicates that students recognize the importance of structure and shared norms. Garcia and Bual (2022) found that adherence to rules correlates with students’ understanding of fairness and responsibility. This behavior supports a positive learning environment and reinforces the moral rationale behind discipline.

Welcoming new students and treating them with kindness, as seen in “*Tinatanggap ko ng bukal sa loob ang bagong estudyante at pinapadama na sila ay kabilang*” (I welcome new student and make them feel included), reflects inclusivity and compassion. Tan (2018) argues that such behaviors are foundational to peace education and social harmony. Schools can build on this strength by promoting peer support systems and inclusive classroom practices.

The willingness to help those in need, though slightly lower in score, still reflects a generous disposition. Narvaez (2015) suggests that moral behavior is reinforced through opportunities for service and reflection. Schools can enhance this by integrating community service into the curriculum and recognizing acts of kindness.

Group participation, while rated High, shows potential for improvement. Branson (2015) emphasizes the importance of equitable collaboration in fostering social justice. Encouraging cooperative learning and providing structured roles in group tasks can help students build confidence and engagement.

Advocacy for peers, as seen in “*Ipinagtatangol ko ang mga kaklaseng hindi makatarungang tinatrato*” (I defend someone who is being treated unfairly) reflected moral courage. Garcia and Bual (2022) note that students are more likely to stand up for others when they feel supported by their school community. Role-playing and values-based discussions can strengthen this behavior.

The data on *Makatao* values among Grade 7 learners reveals a strong foundation of empathy, fairness, and social responsibility. While some areas show room for growth, the overall picture is one of a compassionate and morally aware



student body. These findings affirm the effectiveness of values education and provide a roadmap for enhancing interpersonal skills and ethical behavior in schools.

➤ *Practices Among Grade 7 Learners that Reflect their Commitment to the Core Value of Makakalikasan*

The data on Grade 7 learners' demonstration of the core value *Makakalikasan* reveals a promising and consistent commitment to environmental stewardship. With all ten indicators falling within the High descriptive rating and mean scores ranging from 3.83 to 4.18, it is evident that students are not only aware of their ecological responsibilities but are actively engaging in behaviors that promote sustainability. This trend reflects the success of environmental education efforts in shaping young learners' attitudes and habits toward nature.

The highest-rated indicator, "*Hindi ako nananakit ng hayop o halaman para sa katuwaan*," (I don't harm animals or plants for fun) with a mean score of 4.18, highlights a deeply rooted respect for living organisms. This behavior goes beyond rule-following—it reflects empathy and ethical consciousness. According to Narvaez (2015), moral development includes the ability to extend compassion beyond human relationships, and this score suggests that learners are developing a moral stance against environmental harm, even in subtle forms.

Proper waste disposal, as shown by the indicator "*Itinatapon ko ang basura sa tamang basurahan*" (I dispose waste properly) (4.10) reflects a strong awareness of cleanliness and environmental order. This behavior is foundational to ecological responsibility and suggests that students understand the impact of waste management on community health and sustainability. Garcia and Bual (2022) found similar results in their study, noting that students who are taught proper waste segregation are more likely to practice it consistently.

Resource conservation is another area where students show strong commitment. Indicators such as "*Nagtitipid ako sa tubig at kuryente*" (I conserve water and electricity) and "*Inaalagaan ko ang mga halaman sa paaralan*" (I take care of school gardens or plants) both scoring 3.97, suggest that learners are mindful of their consumption and take responsibility for maintaining green spaces. These behaviors reflect the integration of environmental values into daily routines, which is essential for long-term sustainability.

The indicator "*Isinusumbong ko ang naninira sa kalikasan*" (I report classmates who harm the environment) scored 3.96, indicating that students are willing to take a proactive stance in protecting the environment. This behavior requires moral courage and a sense of accountability. Lickona (2016) emphasizes that character education should empower students to speak up against wrongdoing, and this score suggests that learners are beginning to embrace that responsibility.

Participation in school-led environmental activities, such as tree planting and clean-up drives, is reflected in the

indicator "*Sumasali ako sa mga aktibidad ng paaralan para sa pangnagalaga ng kalikasan*" (I join school activities that promote caring for the environment) which scored 3.83. While slightly lower than other indicators, it still reflects active involvement. This may suggest that while students are willing, participation could be influenced by availability, scheduling, or the visibility of such programs. Perida and Miguel (2023) recommend increasing student-led initiatives to boost engagement.

Efforts to reduce plastic use and promote eco-friendly alternatives are evident in the indicator "*Iniiwasan ko ang paggamit ng plastik at isinusulong ko ang eco-friendly na mga alternatibo*" (I avoid using plastics that promote and promote eco-friendly choices) which scored 3.91. This behavior shows that students are aware of the long-term impact of plastic pollution and are making conscious choices to reduce their footprint. Tan (2018) argues that environmental education must include practical actions, and this score reflects that principle in practice.

The indicator "*Inaayos at nire-recycle ang gamit para sa proyekto*" (I reuse or recycle materials for school projects) also scoring 3.91, reinforces the idea that sustainability is being integrated into academic and creative tasks. Recycling and repurposing materials not only reduce waste but also encourage innovation and resourcefulness. Goleman (2017) links such behaviors to systems thinking, where students understand the interconnectedness of their actions and the environment.

"*Hinihikayat ko ang iba na maging responsible sa kalikasan*" (I encourage others to be responsible for nature) with a score of 3.97, suggests that students are not only practicing environmental values themselves but also encouraging others to do the same. This reflects leadership and influence, key traits in building a culture of ecological responsibility. Branson (2015) notes that social justice includes empowering students to advocate for collective well-being, including environmental health.

The overall average mean score of 3.98 places the demonstration of *Makakalikasan* values firmly in the High category. This suggests that Grade 7 learners possess a well-developed sense of environmental ethics and responsibility. These traits are not only taught but internalized, reflecting the effectiveness of the Philippine values education framework. Garcia and Bual (2022) emphasize that consistent reinforcement of values across subjects leads to deeper integration.

The data also highlights the importance of experiential learning in environmental education. Activities such as gardening, clean-up drives, and recycling projects provide students with hands-on experiences that reinforce theoretical knowledge. Narvaez (2015) advocates for experiential moral education, where students learn by doing, and the data supports this approach.

Respect for nature, as seen in the high score for not harming animals or plants, reflects a shift from

anthropocentric to ecocentrism thinking. This shift is essential in fostering sustainable behaviors. King and Boyatzis (2015) argue that spiritual development includes a sense of connectedness with all life forms, and this score suggests that students are beginning to embrace that worldview.

The emphasis on proper waste disposal also reflects the success of school policies and community campaigns. When students consistently practice waste segregation, it indicates that environmental messages are being effectively communicated and reinforced. Lickona (2016) stresses the importance of consistency in character education, and this behavior exemplifies that principle.

Resource conservation behaviors, such as saving water and electricity, show that students are developing habits that extend beyond the classroom. These habits contribute to environmental sustainability and reflect a sense of personal responsibility. Goleman (2017) notes that such behaviors are part of ecological intelligence, where individuals understand the impact of their choices on the planet.

Reporting environmental harm, as seen in the indicator "*Isinusumbong ko ang naninira sa kalikasan*" (I report classmates who harm the environment) reflects a growing sense of advocacy among students. This behavior requires not only awareness but also the courage to act. Branson (2015) emphasizes that empowering students to take action is a key component of social justice education.

Participation in environmental activities, while slightly lower in score, still reflects a willingness to engage. Schools can enhance this by making activities more student-led and integrating them into the curriculum. Perida and Miguel (2023) suggest that student ownership increases motivation and long-term commitment.

Reducing plastic use and recycling materials for projects show that students are applying environmental principles in creative ways. These behaviors reflect innovation and adaptability, which are essential in addressing environmental challenges. Tan (2018) argues that education must prepare students to think critically and act sustainably, and these scores suggest progress in that direction.

Encouraging others to be environmentally responsible reflects leadership and influence. When students take initiative to promote sustainability, they contribute to a culture of care and accountability. Lickona (2016) notes that character education should develop leaders who inspire others, and this behavior exemplifies that goal.

The data on *Makakalikasan* values among Grade 7 learners reveals a strong foundation of environmental awareness, ethical behavior, and proactive engagement. While some areas show room for growth, the overall picture is one of a responsible and ecologically conscious student body. These findings affirm the effectiveness of environmental education and provide a roadmap for enhancing sustainability practices in schools.

### ➤ *How Grade 7 Learners Express the Core Value of Makabansa Through Participation in School and Community Activities?*

The analysis of Grade 7 learners' demonstration of the core value *Makabansa* offers a rich and nuanced view of how patriotism and civic responsibility are being internalized and practiced by Filipino youth. The data, with mean scores ranging from 3.83 to 4.43, confirms that students are not only aware of their national identity but are actively expressing it through respectful, participatory, and ethical behaviors.

The highest-rated indicator, "*Dumadalo sa flag ceremonies*" (I attend and participate in flag ceremonies) reflects a strong reverence for national symbols and rituals. According to Garcia and Bual (2022), consistent participation in flag ceremonies is a key marker of civic engagement among students, as it reinforces unity and respect for national heritage. This behavior suggests that learners perceive these ceremonies as meaningful expressions of patriotism rather than mere routine.

Closely following is "*Iginagalang ko ang watawat ng pilipinas at mga simbolo nito*" (I show respect to the Philippine flag and national symbols) which scored 4.31. This indicator highlights students' mindfulness in treating national emblems with dignity. The Department of Education's *Makabansa* Core Values framework emphasizes that honoring the flag and other symbols is a reflection of one's pride in being Filipino and a commitment to upholding national values.

The indicator "*Alam at sinusunod ko ang mga patakaran ng paaralan*" (I know school rules and policies) scored 4.24, suggesting that students view rule-following as part of their civic duty. Lickona (2016) argues that character education must link discipline to democratic values, helping students understand that rules are not just constraints but structures that promote fairness and order. This score reflects students' growing understanding of governance and responsibility.

Indicators such as "*Kumakanta ako ng pambansang awit nang may paggalang at pagmamalaki*" (I sing the national anthem with respect and pride), "*Ipinagdiriwang ang mga pambansang okasyon at nauunawaan ko ang kahalagahan nang mga ito*" (I celebrate Philippine holidays and know their significance), and "*Kinikilala ko ang mga bayaning Pilipino at ang kanilang kontribusyon*" (I recognize Filipino heroes and their contributions), show active participation in cultural and historical commemorations. These behaviors align with Tan's (2018) view that national identity is strengthened through collective rituals and remembrance. Singing the anthem and honoring heroes are acts that connect students to the nation's past and inspire civic pride.

The relatively lower score for "*Tumutulong sa community service o outreach na mga Gawain*" (I help community service or outreach activities) may reflect logistical challenges or limited opportunities. However, it still indicates a willingness to contribute to the common good.

Branson (2015) emphasizes that social justice education must include real-world engagement, and schools can enhance this by creating more accessible and student-led outreach programs.

*“Ipinagmamalaki ko ang pagsasalita ng Filipino at paggamit ng mga lokal na wika”* (I take pride in speaking Filipino and using local languages) scored 4.14, underscoring the role of language in cultural identity. In a multilingual society, pride in speaking Filipino fosters unity and preserves heritage. Perida and Miguel (2023) argue that integrating values into language instruction deepens students’ appreciation for their cultural roots and strengthens national solidarity.

The indicator *“Iniwasan ko ang pagpalaganap ng maling balita o mapanirang tsismis online”* (I avoid spreading fake news or harmful rumors online) scored 3.97, reflecting students’ growing awareness of digital citizenship. In today’s media-saturated environment, responsible online behavior is a modern expression of civic duty. Goleman (2017) links ethical digital conduct to emotional intelligence and social responsibility, suggesting that students are developing critical thinking and discernment.

Overall, the average score of 4.13 places the demonstration of *Makabansa* values in the High to Very High category. This suggests that students are not only learning about patriotism but are actively living it. Garcia and Bual (2022) found similar trends in their study, where students rated *Makabansa* values as highly practiced, especially in ceremonial and linguistic expressions.

The data also highlights the importance of integrating patriotic values across subjects and activities. The DepEd Core Values framework encourages schools to embed *Makabansa* in all aspects of learning—from history lessons to extracurricular programs—ensuring that students encounter these values in diverse and meaningful contexts.

Respect for national symbols, as seen in the high scores for flag ceremonies and emblem etiquette, reflects a strong internalization of civic rituals. These behaviors are foundational to building national consciousness and should be reinforced through consistent practice and reflection.

Participation in cultural events and recognition of heroes connects students to the nation’s narrative. Tan (2018) emphasizes that commemorative practices foster historical empathy and civic identity, helping students see themselves as part of a larger national story.

Rule-following and discipline, when framed as civic responsibility, help students understand the role of governance in society. Lickona (2016) suggests that schools should teach rules as expressions of justice and community values, not just control mechanisms.

Community service, though slightly lower in score, presents an opportunity for growth. Branson (2015) recommends that schools create inclusive and student-led

service projects to foster engagement and leadership. These initiatives can deepen students’ commitment to social responsibility.

Language pride, as reflected in the use of Filipino, strengthens cultural identity and unity. Perida and Miguel (2023) advocate for values integration in language education, noting that linguistic pride enhances students’ sense of belonging and national pride.

Digital responsibility, as seen in the avoidance of fake news and gossip, is a vital modern expression of *Makabansa*. Goleman (2017) argues that ethical online behavior is part of emotional and civic intelligence, and schools must teach students to navigate digital spaces responsibly.

In conclusion, Grade 7 learners demonstrate a robust and multifaceted expression of *Makabansa* values. Their behaviors reflect respect for national symbols, participation in cultural rituals, adherence to rules, pride in language, and emerging digital ethics. These findings affirm the effectiveness of values education and highlight areas for further support and innovation.

#### ➤ *Proposed School Program to Intensify the Development of the Core Values: Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan and Makabansa*

The “Buhay-Kagitingan: Core Values in Action” program is a timely and strategic initiative that aligns with the evolving priorities of the Philippine educational system, particularly under the recalibrated MATATAG Curriculum. It reflects the Department of Education’s mandate to embed the core values of *Makadiyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan, and Makabansa* into the lived experiences of learners—not just as abstract concepts but as guiding principles for behavior, decision-making, and community engagement.

Lucas and Yambao (2025) emphasize that values education must go beyond cognitive instruction and instead foster ethical behavior through experiential learning. Their study on the impact of values education in Metro Manila schools found that students who engaged in reflective and participatory activities—such as journaling, service projects, and peer mentoring—demonstrated stronger moral reasoning and empathy. This supports the rationale behind Buhay-Kagitingan’s quarterly focus, which allows students to immerse themselves in each core value through themed activities.

The program’s structure also resonates with the findings of Garcia and Bual (2022), who observed that values integration across subjects and school events significantly enhances students’ internalization of moral principles. Their research revealed that students who participated in values-based programs showed higher levels of respect, civic engagement, and environmental awareness. The quarterly breakdown—“Pananalig at Paglilingkod,” “Pakikipagkapwa at Pagkakaisa,” “Kalikasan Ko, Sagot Ko,” and “Bayan Ko, Mahal Ko”—offers a scaffolded approach that builds character progressively throughout the school year.

Moreover, the inclusion of student-led initiatives and community partnerships reflects Branson's (2015) advocacy for social justice education, which empowers learners to become agents of change within their communities. By involving students in Bayanihan projects, civic talks, and environmental campaigns, the program cultivates leadership and accountability—traits essential for nation-building. These activities also promote intergenerational learning, as students interact with local leaders and community members, deepening their understanding of Filipino identity and civic duty.

The use of Values Journals is particularly noteworthy. Narvaez (2015) argues that moral development is best supported through reflection and narrative, allowing students to process their experiences and articulate their values. Journaling not only reinforces learning but also provides educators with qualitative insights into students' growth. This aligns with the program's goal of making values a lived experience, as students document their journey through spiritual, social, environmental, and patriotic lenses.

The Buhay-Kagitingan program is grounded in both pedagogical theory and empirical evidence. It responds to the challenges of passive values instruction by offering a dynamic, student-centered model that integrates character formation into every facet of school life. With support from teachers, families, and community stakeholders, this initiative has the potential to cultivate a generation of learners who are not only academically competent but also morally grounded and socially responsible.

## V. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings across the four core values—*Makadiyos*, *Makatao*, *Makakalikasan*, and *Makabansa*—carry several important theoretical implications for values education, adolescent development, and curriculum design in the Philippine context:

The consistently High to Very High ratings suggest that values are not merely understood cognitively but are being internalized and enacted. This supports constructivist theories of learning, particularly Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that values are shaped through social interaction and cultural immersion. The data implies that when values are embedded in everyday school life, they become part of students' identity and behavior.

The findings align with Kohlberg's stages of moral development, indicating that Grade 7 learners are transitioning from conventional to post-conventional reasoning. Their ability to reflect, show empathy, and act responsibly suggests that they are beginning to evaluate actions based on internal principles rather than external rewards. This reinforces the importance of providing moral dilemmas, reflective tasks, and peer-led initiatives to deepen ethical reasoning.

The results affirm the theoretical foundation of holistic education, which integrates cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of learning. The strong performance in *Makadiyos* and *Makatao* values suggests that students benefit from programs that nurture both intellect and character. This supports the educational philosophy of Noddings (2005), who advocates for a curriculum of care that prioritizes relationships, empathy, and moral responsibility.

Bandura's social learning theory is evident in the way students demonstrate values through observed behaviors—respecting elders, avoiding bullying, and participating in civic rituals. The findings imply that when teachers, peers, and community members model core values, students are more likely to adopt and replicate them. This underscores the need for consistent adult modeling and peer mentorship in school settings.

The data supports the theoretical stance that values education is most effective when integrated across subjects and contextualized within students' lived experiences. The success of the *Buhay-Kagitingan* program illustrates how thematic, experiential learning fosters deeper engagement. This aligns with the principles of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1997), which emphasizes reflection, dialogue, and real-world application as catalysts for personal growth.

## VI. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The practical implications of the findings on Grade 7 learners' demonstration of the core values—*Makadiyos*, *Makatao*, *Makakalikasan*, and *Makabansa*—highlight the need for schools to reinforce and expand values education through experiential, inclusive, and student-centered approaches. For *Makadiyos*, the strong spiritual and moral foundation among learners suggests that schools should continue integrating reflective practices such as journaling, interfaith dialogues, and gratitude activities into daily routines and subject areas. These strategies can deepen students' personal spirituality and respect for diverse beliefs.

In terms of *Makatao*, the data indicates that students are developing empathy, fairness, and social responsibility, though collaboration and advocacy remain areas for growth. Schools can respond by embedding cooperative learning, peer mentoring, and role-playing exercises into classroom activities to strengthen interpersonal skills and moral courage. Creating safe spaces for dialogue and conflict resolution can also help students navigate complex social dynamics more confidently.

The consistent commitment to *Makakalikasan* values calls for more hands-on and student-led environmental initiatives. Schools should expand sustainability programs such as campus greening, recycling drives, and conservation campaigns, while integrating environmental themes into science, TLE, and homeroom guidance. These efforts can help translate ecological awareness into long-term habits and community impact.



For *Makabansa*, learners' strong civic and cultural engagement suggests that schools should continue promoting patriotic rituals, historical awareness, and digital citizenship. To deepen community involvement, schools can partner with local organizations for service-learning opportunities and enhance media literacy programs to foster responsible online behavior. These initiatives will help students connect national pride with active civic participation.

Finally, the success of the *Buhay-Kagitingan: Core Values in Action* program demonstrates that values education is most effective when it is experiential, thematic, and student-driven. Schools should institutionalize the program by aligning it with curriculum goals, training facilitators, and involving families and communities in its implementation. Regular evaluation and adaptation will ensure its sustainability and relevance, ultimately cultivating morally grounded, socially responsible, and patriotic learners.

Based on the findings from the *Buhay-Kagitingan: Core Values in Action* program and the demonstrated behaviors of Grade 7 learners across the four core values, several future research directions emerge that can deepen understanding and improve implementation of values education in Philippine schools.

## VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

While the findings of the study on Grade 7 learners' demonstration of core values offer valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the results and guide future research.

First, the study is limited by its reliance on self-reported data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias. Students might respond in ways they believe are expected or favorable rather than reflecting their actual behaviors, potentially inflating scores on certain indicators. This affects the accuracy of the data in capturing genuine internalization of values.

Second, the scope of the study is confined to a specific grade level and educational setting, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The behaviors and attitudes of Grade 7 learners may not represent those of students in other grade levels, schools, or regions, especially considering cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional differences.

Third, while the study provides descriptive statistics, it does not explore causal relationships or deeper qualitative insights. Without interviews, focus groups, or observational data, the study cannot fully explain why certain values are more strongly demonstrated than others, nor can it capture the nuances of students' moral reasoning or emotional development.

Fourth, the study does not account for external influences such as family environment, media exposure, or peer dynamics, which play a significant role in shaping values. These contextual factors could either reinforce or

contradict school-based efforts, and their absence from the analysis limits the depth of interpretation.

Lastly, the program's implementation and impact may vary depending on teacher facilitation, school leadership, and community involvement. Differences in how the *Buhay-Kagitingan* program is executed across classrooms or schools could affect student engagement and outcomes, yet these variables were not controlled or examined in the study.

Recognizing these limitations is essential for refining future research and improving the design and delivery of values education programs. Let me know if you'd like help drafting a formal limitations section for your paper.

## VIII. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

First, future studies could explore the longitudinal impact of values integration on students' character development. Tracking learners over multiple grade levels would provide insights into how sustained exposure to programs like *Buhay-Kagitingan* influences moral reasoning, civic engagement, and personal growth over time.

Second, researchers may investigate the effectiveness of specific pedagogical strategies—such as journaling, peer mentoring, and experiential learning—in promoting each core value. Comparative studies across different schools or regions could identify which methods yield the most meaningful internalization of *Makadiyos*, *Makatao*, *Makalikasan*, and *Makabansa*.

Third, there is a need to examine the role of teacher modeling and school culture in shaping students' values. Qualitative research involving classroom observations and interviews could uncover how educators' behaviors and institutional practices reinforce or hinder values formation.

Fourth, future research could assess the influence of external factors—such as family background, media exposure, and community involvement—on students' demonstration of core values. Understanding these dynamics would help schools design more responsive and inclusive programs that bridge home and school environments.

Lastly, studies could focus on digital citizenship and values education in online spaces, especially in light of findings related to misinformation and ethical behavior online. As students increasingly engage in virtual learning and social media, research should explore how values like respect, responsibility, and patriotism are expressed and challenged in digital contexts.

These directions can guide educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers in refining values education to be more evidence-based, culturally grounded, and future-ready. Let me know if you'd like help turning these into a formal research proposal or study framework.

## IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### ➤ *Based on the Preceding Findings, the Researcher Concludes:*

- Grade 7 learners exhibit a deeply rooted spiritual and moral foundation, consistently demonstrating Maka-Diyos values through respectful, inclusive, and reflective behaviors.
- Learners show a strong sense of empathy and fairness, actively practicing Makatao values in their interactions, with collaboration emerging as an area for continued growth.
- Students display meaningful environmental awareness and responsibility, reflecting Makakalikasan values in both personal habits and school participation.
- Grade 7 learners express Makabansa values through patriotic rituals, cultural pride, and civic responsibility, with potential to deepen engagement in community service.
- The *Buhay-Kagitingan* program effectively transforms core values into lived experiences, fostering holistic character development aligned with national educational goals.

### ➤ *Based on the Findings and Conclusions, the Following Recommendations are Given:*

- Strengthen spiritual formation by integrating more inclusive and reflective activities such as interfaith dialogues, spiritual journals, and values-based storytelling across subjects. Encourage participation in school-led religious events by making them more student-centered and culturally relevant.
- Enhance collaborative and advocacy skills through structured group projects, peer mentoring, and role-playing scenarios that promote empathy and fairness. Provide safe spaces for students to practice conflict resolution and stand up for others in guided settings.
- Expand environmental programs by involving students in planning and leading sustainability initiatives like campus greening, zero-waste campaigns, and eco-entrepreneurship. Increase visibility and accessibility of school-led activities to boost participation and long-term commitment.
- Deepen civic engagement by integrating community service into the curriculum and offering student-led outreach opportunities. Reinforce digital citizenship and media literacy to help learners navigate online spaces responsibly and ethically.

- Institutionalize the program by embedding it into school improvement plans and aligning it with homeroom guidance and subject integration. Regularly evaluate its impact through student reflections, teacher feedback, and community involvement to ensure sustainability and relevance.

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