

National Identity in Moral Education Textbooks for High School Students in the Philippines: A Content Analysis

Sherlyne A. Almonte

Hiroshima University
Japan

The past two consecutive administrations in the Philippines saw the need for developing a greater sense of national identity among Filipinos. In response, the Education Sector strengthened the teaching of values on national ideals and Filipino heritage. One reform was the offering of Moral Education as an independent subject in the secondary education curriculum. In support of this, publishing companies developed textbooks on Moral Education, which teachers used, aside from the prescribed textbooks. To determine the extent and nature of the inclusion of national identity in these textbooks, this study analyzed the content of 12 sample textbooks. Findings suggest the need to improve the content of textbooks in terms of the values relevant in developing citizens with a strong sense of national identity needed for national development.

Key Words: national identity, moral education, philippines, secondary education

Nationalistic ideology culminated in the Philippines after a long anti-colonial struggle against Spain in 1896. The struggle gave rise to the Filipino national ideology known as *Filipinism*. The ideology serves as collective, unifying, and guiding force that freed the nation from colonial rule. It is the same ideology that has varied in degree, operating as a guiding force within the nation in order to uphold and maintain the autonomy, unity and identity under many past administrations. History shows that through the nationalistic ideology – *Filipinism*, the Filipino people struggled as a collective self having been identified as one with the nation. This ideology has been resuscitated as deemed necessary and relevant to the spirit of the times. Hence, time and again it has served as an awakening mechanism during different administrations.

Philippine society has experienced a variety of economic, political, and sociological upheavals as it trudges along the

way to development. As a developing country, it needs to surmount the problem of poverty that gave rise to some societal problems indicative of moral degradation. “The present predicament of Filipino women in their wish to alleviate the suffering of their families, criminality, graft and corruption, child prostitution, and the damaged and despoiled condition of the environment are some of the manifestations of moral degradation” (Shahani, 1992, p. 3). While these seem to be explainable in the name of economic necessity and in the midst of poverty, the two past administrations of Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos have paid great concern to the moral conditions of the Philippines. Both converged at a common point that the country is suffering from poverty in material sense engendered by, among other things, the poverty of the Filipino spirit. In line with this, the Aquino administration declared 1988 to 1998 as the Philippine Decade of Nationalism. This was continued under the National Moral Recovery Program of the Ramos administration in 1992. Both programs placed paramount importance upon nationalism or love of country or the Filipino ideology, *Filipinism*, as a response to the perceived need to regenerate the seemingly lost Filipino spirit. The programs reflected the recognition of the need to reawaken and strengthen the Filipino values of national identity to develop Filipinos who are willing to be involved in

Sherlyne A. Almonte, Ph. D. Candidate, Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sherlyne A. Almonte, Graduate School of Education, Bldg. A621, Hiroshima University, 1-1-1 Kagamiyama, Higashi-Hiroshima, 739-8524, Japan. Electronic mail may be sent to alshetra@yahoo.com.

the concerns of their society and responsible to their duties as citizens. The thrusts of the programs cohere with the findings of previous studies on the sense of nationalism and national identity among Filipino children. In the study of Nunez (1986), it is revealed that under varying valuing instructions, the school children's value development is low in the area of nationalism. The pre-test and post-test showed that the value of nationalism was not developed among Filipino children. Moreover, a study by Doronilla (1989) reveals that Filipino pupils have not developed the desired citizenship orientations relevant to national identification. She found that there is indeed a discontinuity on educational objectives and outcomes pertaining to socialization into national identity among Filipino children.

To evoke a sense of national identity, an individual who is part of a nation must not only have knowledge of national character but a sense of national consciousness as well, that would enable him/her to have an understanding of his/her continuous task for the nation. In this vein, it is necessary to strengthen the understanding of national identity among Filipino youth. In as much as it cannot be strengthened and cultivated in isolation with the virtues and values of the nation, Moral Education is the subject where it can be significantly enhanced. The low sense of nationalism and national identification become the great concern of government leaders. The Philippine government and its education sector unite in the task of providing measures in response to the manifest problems in the country. Efforts to heighten Filipino's values of national identity led the Department of Education Culture and Sports (DECS) to design programs intended to strengthen the teaching of those values in school. Among the reforms was the offering in 1989 of Moral Education known as Values Education, as a separate subject at the secondary level. "The aim was to develop an enlightened commitment to national ideals by cherishing, preserving, and developing moral, spiritual and socio-cultural values as well as the desirable aspects of Filipino heritage" (Mogol, 1999, p. 8).

In support of the reform, DECS prescribed textbooks for Values Education classes in all year levels. However, aside from the prescribed textbooks, teachers have also the freedom to use other textbooks to supplement their classes. These textbooks are chosen from a huge variety of textbooks published by different publishers. But are these textbooks responsive to the program of the government, that is, strengthening the sense of national identity and do they contain the values emphasized by the DECS in the Moral Education program?

"A research tool used to determine the presence of certain

words or concepts within text or set of texts wherein researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages is known as content analysis" (CSU-Department of English, 2001, pp. 2-3). Moreover, content analysis also "provides an understanding of the content of a communication on instructional materials against objectives" (Weber, 1990, p. 3). To provide the DECS and the publishers, therefore, with pertinent information on the dimensions of the corresponding values manifesting national identity, this study analyzed the content of textbooks used in Moral Education by high school students in the country.

Method

Sample

Textbooks included in the study were randomly selected among the variety of textbooks available for teachers of Moral Education in public and private secondary schools. The sample was obtained using the stratified random sampling. This was done by asking the teachers about the textbooks they were using in class aside from the prescribed textbooks. Based on their response the textbooks for four-year levels published by fourteen publishers were classified into three strata (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd commonly used textbooks) per year level. A random number table was then used to select specific textbooks in each stratum. Three textbooks were selected in each year level, bringing the sample to 12.

Procedure

The analysis was done both qualitatively and quantitatively, however, the latter method is more dominant than the former. The qualitative analysis focused on the nature and manner of presentation of the national identity in the textbooks. The quantitative method involved tallying the frequency of occurrence of references to national identity and determining the differences of their occurrence using one-way ANOVA, which was further tested using multiple analysis based on Ryan's method. The content analysis was based on the parameter designed by Doronilla (1989), consisting of sixteen orientations defining national identity with specific application to Philippine case. The set of orientations was used in this study because its design took into consideration the Philippine context. It has included the basic understanding of national identity vis-à-vis some other definitions but significantly it considered the unique

experience of the Philippines as a nation and the Filipino people.

The set orientations below defining national identity was designed by Doronilla (1989) based on Clifford Geertz's proposed dichotomous scheme for analyzing the basis of the various definition of national identity. According to Geertz (1971), "there are two forms of nationalist idealizing, which may be integrated and not necessarily contradictory with each other: the essentialist and epochalist definitions. The former is focused on the indigenous way of life in which local norms established social institutions and the unity of common cultural experience to form a collective identity. The latter on the other hand, is focused on the historical processes by which the country has developed to its present state, with these very processes being used to define the commonalities in the historical experience of ethnic groups that comprise the national community" (Doronilla, 1989, p. 43). In this vein, the two groups of orientation namely, group B and group C take account of the essentialist perspective. Specifically, orientations under group B reflect the repertoire of shared values, traditions and the prism of collective personality and distinctive culture. Orientations under group C show the recognition and acceptance of other ethnic groups that constitute the national community. Orientations show the commitment to cultural values of ethnic groups as well as the individual transcendence from ethnic loyalties in favor of loyalty to national community. The orientations under group A and group D take account of the epochalist view. Specifically, orientations under group A reflect the territorial boundaries wherein its territorial resources including its members as manpower, are located and related to the nation's unique historical pilgrimage. Orientations under group D reflect the commitment of the members to the nation-state through their functions in society and attachment to national structure.

Scoring and Analysis

This study used One-Way Analysis of Variance-ANOVA to compare the four groups of orientations in all the textbooks and in every year level. Furthermore, the data was further tested using the multiple analysis based on Ryan's method. The aim was to compare the extent of the inclusion these orientations and find out their significant difference in all the textbooks and in every year level. A score was given for every occurrence of orientation in the textbooks. To ensure accuracy, the scoring was done twice.

Set of Orientations Defining the Concept National Identity, with Specific Application to the Philippine Case

A. Ethnocentrism

1. Preference for one's nationality over all others – Any expression on preference to Filipino nationality and reason for preference over all other nationalities.
2. Generalized pride in one's country over all others – Any statement on pride and reason to be proud of the country. This included aspects such as, the people, manpower, culture, and extent of development in the long array of historical events, natural resources, technology and influence to other countries.
3. Support of nationalism prior to internationalism – Any expression on different aspects such as, economics, political, social, educational, cultural and historical that relayed priority on nationalism. Included here were expressions about international activities and their benefit to national development and the active role of the Filipino citizens in the different parts of the world in order to contribute to the development of the country.
4. Commitment to the goal of development – Any expression regarding the endeavors of the Filipino people to strive for development and maintenance of independence. Considered here were references to economics, political, social, educational, cultural, historical and technological aspects.

B. Valuing of cultural aspects reflective of national identity

5. Valuing the special qualities of the people – Any references to Filipino qualities such as cheerfulness and a fun-loving approach to life, genuine and deep love for family, sense of gratitude, hospitality, sensitivity to people's feeling demonstrated in the Filipinos' ability to empathize with others and helpfulness or mutual assistance.
6. Valuing their characteristic way of life – Any expression regarding the Filipino way of life. This included family life, interpersonal relations, clothing or ornaments and various activities associated with Filipino values such as saying prayers before and after meals, kissing the hands of elders in the family at 6:00 P.M.
7. Valuing national traditions – Any expression on various religious, historical, legal, customs and other traditions such as celebration of different fiestas and commemoration of important historical events.
8. Valuing their cultural products – Any expression on the importance of different Filipino arts, culture, scientific and technological products, literature, architecture and Filipinos

who excel and became famous in their field.

C. Loyalty to the national community beyond ethnic loyalties

- 9. Recognition of the membership of other ethnic groups – Any expression on the enumeration and explanation of different ethnic groups.
- 10. Personal acceptance of individuals who belong to other ethnic groups – Any statement pertaining to personal acceptance of ethnic groups.
- 11. Recognition of cultural affinities of one’s ethnic group – Any statement that leads to the understanding of the relationship of one ethnic group to another, and its influence and ties to each other.
- 12. Acceptance of the membership of other ethnic groups – Any statement pertaining to the acceptance of the individuals who belong to different ethnic groups as constituents of the whole Filipino national community.
- 13. Commitment to the idea of national integration – Any statement on the concern for the improvement and development of those who belong to different ethnic groups and their integration to the national community. Also falling under this category were plans, actions and considerations for integration of all ethnic groups as equals and as important contributors to nation building.

D. Commitment to the role requirements of citizenship

- 14. Pride in national symbols – Any expression that dealt with attachment and pride to national symbols such as flag, historical places, historical figures, and national flowers.
- 15. Deriving personal identity with the nation – Any expression that gave importance on personal identification with the different aspects of the nation such as, political, social, economic, historical and cultural aspects. An example is taking pride on participating in the restoration of freedom and democracy, like the blood people power revolution.
- 16. Commitment to the duties of citizenship – Any expression that focused on the duties and responsibilities of the citizens to the nation. Included here were active participation to civic organization, community projects, participation in caring for the community, environment and natural resources, campaign for candidacy in any type of election and passive or disengaged citizenship like paying taxes, voting, obeying the rules, regulations and laws.

Results

Using the set of orientations as parameters in this study, national identity was analyzed, assessed and understood as its

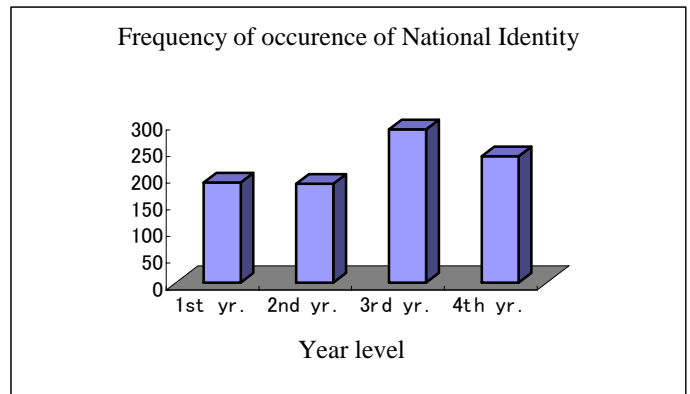


Figure1. Average frequency of occurrence of national identity in the three textbooks per year level.

inclusion extends and deepens in Moral Education textbooks. A score was given on every expression pertaining to national identity and the frequency of manifestation of the concept was marked and tallied. The generated data was presented in graphs to show the extent of the inclusion of the concept in all the textbooks and in every year level. The result of the generated data tested using one-way ANOVA was presented in a table.

Figure 1 shows that the inclusion of the concept does not increase as the year level increases hence there is no increasing trend of inclusion of national identity in the textbooks. Instead, the average frequency of occurrence shows that the inclusion of national identity in the textbooks follows no pattern or trend. Third year textbooks had the highest inclusion of the concept, followed by textbooks in fourth year. The remarkable increase of the inclusion of the concept in the third year level is due to the theme of Moral Education. The concentration of Moral Education for this year level is on “relating to the community” which facilitates a greater inclusion of Citizenship and the individual’s role in relation to his or her immediate community and the entire nation as well. The said concentration is one of the dimensions of national identity, which is part of the parameter used in this study.

The generated data showed that the inclusion of the concept is affected by the theme or focus of Moral Education in every year level. Along with the objectives of the New Secondary Education Curriculum (NSEC), specific learning continuum for Moral Education program in four-year secondary education was designated. It deals with the four major relationships that human person normally has and the values that are required in these relationships. “Respectively, from first to fourth year level the themes are; relating with oneself, relating to others, relating to community and

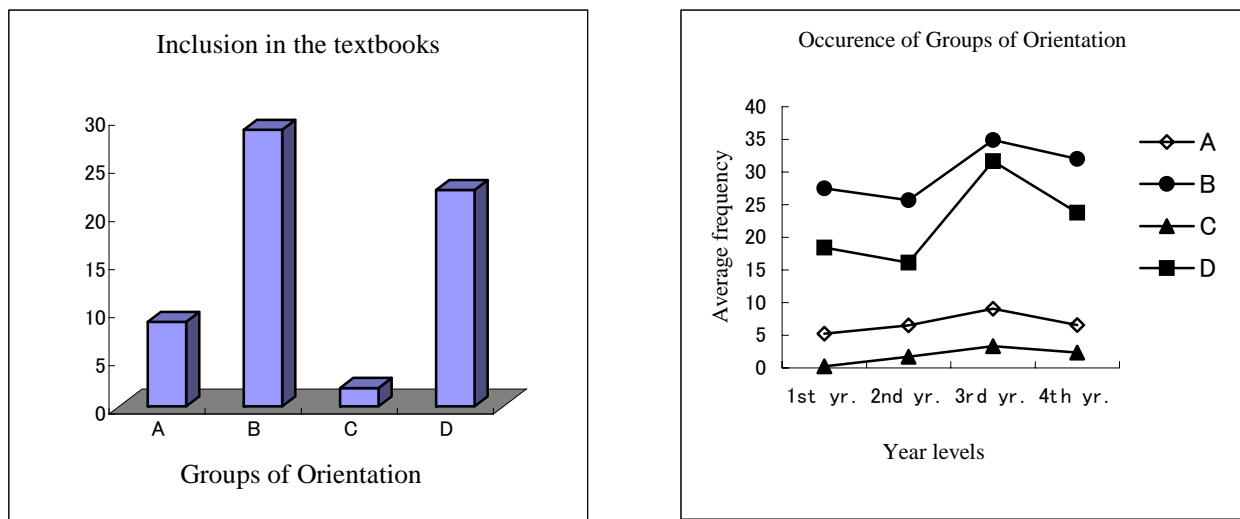


Figure 2. Inclusion of national identity dimensions in all the textbooks and in each year level.

Note. A – Ethnocentrism, B – Valuing of cultural aspects reflective of national identity, C – Loyalty to the national community beyond ethnic loyalties, D – Commitment to the role requirements of citizenship.

relationship to supernatural beings. The focus does not imply the compartmentalized teaching of values in the different curriculum years, it simply underscores the teaching of appropriate values vis-à-vis the theme of particular year” (DECS, 1988, pp. 2-3). In this regard, the curriculum allows for flexibility in order to meet the aim of developing enlightened commitment among the youth to national ideals and their vital role to nation building and development. Based on the generated data, the concept of national identity is taken into consideration in the textbooks along with the themes in the different year levels. However, a focus on certain dimensions of national identity was noted in every year level as shown in the graphs below.

Data showed that there are differences in the distribution of frequencies in the four groups of orientation. The manifestation of national identity was concentrated on Groups B – Valuing cultural aspects reflective of national identity and D – Commitment to the role requirements of citizenship while less concern was given on Groups C – Loyalty to the national community beyond ethnic loyalties and A – Ethnocentrism. The following are the observations on the groups of orientations:

A. *Ethnocentrism* – It was observed that very few expressions pertaining to the first two orientations (Preference for one’s nationality over all others and Generalized pride in one’s country over all others) were given in the textbooks. Also, very few and subtle expressions showing the

goodness of being a Filipino vis-à-vis other foreign nationals were in the textbooks.

- B. *Valuing cultural aspects reflective of national identity* – This group contains the orientations that frequently occurred in the textbooks. These are, valuing the special qualities of the people and valuing their characteristic way of life. The textbooks gave great emphasis to the qualities and way of life through the expressions of basic beliefs and values in the daily lives of the Filipinos. This is probably due to the nature of the subject the textbooks are intended to support. There may have been different themes based on the curriculum but Filipino qualities and way of life were included in every theme. For example, the theme of spirituality was exemplified among others through the practices of a typical Filipino family. A typical Filipino family was oftentimes presented as religious and God-fearing. On the other hand, valuing national traditions (historical, cultural, and legal) and valuing their cultural products (language, art, and literature) also gained a relatively high frequency of occurrence. These are expressed through celebrations, festivals and major systems of beliefs in the Philippines. The presentation of the Filipino qualities, way of life, culture and tradition was done in a favorable and positive way.
- C. *Loyalty to the national community beyond ethnic loyalties* – Oddly, the books that were content analyzed have almost neglected to include orientations under this group. There are frequencies of occurrence that were marked but they were

almost negligible considering the number of books and numbers of pages as well as the year levels.

D. *Commitment to the role requirements of citizenship* – The three orientations under this had a high frequency of occurrence in the textbooks. Pride in national symbols and deriving personal identity from identification with the nation have a relatively high inclusion rate whereas commitment to the duties of citizenship (active citizenship, non-political aspects of citizenship) is one of the highest among the orientations in terms of inclusion.

The one-way ANOVA was used to determine if the inclusion in the four groups of orientation of national identity measured in terms of frequency of occurrence was significantly different in the textbooks and if these orientations were significantly different in the textbooks across year levels.

Results showed significant differences in inclusion of the groups of orientation in the textbooks ($F(3,8) = 29.49, p < .05$). There is a significant inclusion of the four groups of orientation manifesting the concept national identity in the four-year levels, nevertheless there is no significant interaction between the groups of orientation and the year level. There were groups of orientation that were not significantly included in the textbooks in every year level. This could be attributed to the concentration of contents or focus in each year level, which led to the neglect of some groups of orientation. More specifically, the results showed that the inclusion of Group B – Valuing of cultural aspects reflective of national identity ($M = 28.75; SD = 10.44$) was significantly higher than Group C – Loyalty to the national community beyond ethnic loyalties ($M = 1.92; SD = 3.01$) and Group A – Ethnocentrism ($M = 8.78; SD = 6.86$). Results also showed that the inclusion of Group D – Commitment to the role requirements of citizenship ($M = 22.50; SD = 11.62$) was significantly higher than Groups C and A.

Comparing the inclusion of the groups of orientation in the textbooks for the different year levels, significant differences were also obtained. In the textbooks for first year, results showed that Group B ($M = 26.33; SD = 9.45$) was significantly higher than Groups C and A ($M = 0.27; SD = 0.09$ and $M = 6.78; SD = 3.25$, respectively). Results also showed that Group D ($M = 18.44; SD = 9.11$) was higher than Group C.

Significant differences were also observed in the textbooks for second year. More specifically, the results showed that the inclusion of Group B ($M = 26.78; SD = 8.87$) was significantly higher than Groups C ($M = 1.73; SD = 1.89$) and A ($M = 7.89; SD = 4.39$).

Textbooks for third year also showed significant differences of inclusion. Specifically, the result showed that

Table 1. *Analysis of Variance for the inclusion of National Identity*

Source	df	F	p
Between Orientations			
Year Level (Y)	3	0.67	0.59
O within-group			
Error	8		
Within Orientations			
Groups of Orientation (G)	3	29.49	0.00****
G x Y	9	0.41	0.92
G x O within-group			
Error	24		

Note. O = Orientations. $p < .05$, **** $p < .001$

Group B ($M = 29.89; SD = 8.65$) was significantly higher than Groups C and A ($M = 3.33; SD = 4.30$ and $M = 11.67; SD = 7.83$, respectively). Results also showed that Group D ($M = 31.67; SD = 13.92$) had significantly higher inclusion than Groups C and A.

Inclusion of national identity was also significantly different in the textbooks for fourth year. More specifically, Group B ($M = 32; SD = 11.64$) was significantly higher than Groups C and A ($M = 2.33; SD = 2.50$ and $M = 8.78; SD = 3.77$, respectively). Results also showed that Group D ($M = 23.78; SD = 4.62$) was higher than Group C.

Discussion

There should be an increase in the inclusion of relevant reflection of Filipino identity for national development vis-à-vis the relationship of the Philippines to other countries. On the other hand, support of nationalism prior to internationalism and commitment to the goal of development through national self-reliance, with specific reference to the country's de-colonization goals were to a certain extent, manifested in the textbooks. Some of its expressions are related to how one can contribute to the pursuit of continuous development and independence of the Philippines from the intervention of other powerful countries. Some textbooks emphasized the role of the Filipino in the world. The Filipinos were illustrated as workers in the different parts of the world not entirely due to the preference for internationalism but due to a sense of nationalism. The emphases given were on the goal of improving the life of families and helping the country in general through remittances. This would possibly mold the idea among the young of the nobleness of working outside the country and the idea that loving one's country does not

necessarily mean staying within the territorial boundary. On the contrary, the territorial boundary remains within every Filipino as he/she aims at helping in the development of the nation. Furthermore, this provides a perception of Filipino identity in an international context and allows for an understanding of Philippines' interrelationships with the destination countries of overseas Filipino contract workers.

The textbooks could have also shown how Filipino qualities, way of life, culture and tradition can also be seen as weakness and engender poverty and slow development. For example, close family ties as one of the Filipinos' greatest strengths, could possibly become a weakness in extremity. "Excessive concern for the family creates an in-group to which the Filipino is fiercely loyal to the detriment of concern for the larger community or for the common good. It also acts as a block to national consciousness" (Shahani, 1992, p. 14). There must be an elaboration on the fact that no matter how good Filipino values are, they are susceptible to extreme interpretation that could lead to weakness of the Filipino character. Values that are seen as strengths may operate on the arena that leads to weakness of national character and thus hamper national development. Moreover, the presentation of the weakness must be done in a cautionary and awakening manner that paves the way for self-analysis and self-reflection in relation to national development. According to Shahani (1992), "for the Philippines to progress as a nation, values such as, patriotism and love of country as well as the habit of self-reflection and self-analysis are fundamental to overcome the deep rooted weaknesses, to eliminate the widespread poverty and to survive as prosperous and sovereign nation" (p. 66).

The expressions and narratives of valuing national traditions and cultural products were done in a mere informative manner. "In as much as the Filipino culture is characterized by an openness to outside – adapting and incorporating the foreign elements into their image of themselves" (Shahani, 1992, p. 4), the textbooks could also be presented in a way that could provide a foundation for the young generations' commitment to national traditions and cultural products in the midst of development and influences brought by globalization. It is important to consider how national tradition and cultural products could be maintained in the midst of various influences as the nation progresses.

A total neglect for the ethnic communities in the country as well as the historical rootedness of every Filipino would lead to ignorance of, who the Filipinos are and where they come from. It would also lead to neglect of a sense of brotherhood and consideration of the ethnic groups as part and parcel of the

Filipino nation. Specifically, there was a very low frequency of occurrence of Orientations 10, 11, 12, and 13, personal acceptance of individuals who belong to other ethnic groups, recognition of cultural affinities of one's ethnic group with other ethnic groups, acceptance of the membership of other ethnic groups in the Philippine national community, and commitment to the idea of national integration of all ethnic groups, respectively. In terms of the aim of national integration, solidarity, and unity, the inclusion of these aspects must be strengthened in order for Filipino students to heighten their awareness and acceptance of ethnic groups in the country. It is necessary for Filipino students to become conscious of the affinity among ethnic groups, to consider those groups as part of the whole nation, as constituents of the Filipino national community and Filipino national identity. According to Karl Deutsch (1966), "nationality is the observable ability of certain groups to share with one another a wide range of whatever might be on their minds, and their observable inability to share these things nearly as widely with other groups" (Doronilla, 1987, p. 289). The textbooks seemed to have neglected this aspect. This suggests the need to increase the range of information on this topic. Otherwise the goals and objectives of the Master Plan for Basic Education, "Modernizing Philippine Education" (1996- 2005), that is, strengthening indigenous culture, arts and sports will remain rhetoric.

The most salient political function of national identity was manifested in the textbooks. "This includes legitimization of common legal rights, duties of legal institutions, social order and solidarity" (Smith, 1991, p. 16), which define the peculiar values and character of the nation and reflect the customs and mores of the people. Under this group, the importance of the social and legal role and rights of the citizens were emphasized. Admirably, a greater emphasis was given specifically to the role of the citizens in the protection of the environment.

The above findings, however, may have limitations. For one, the study had one encoder. Thus, a replication of this study having more than one encoder is needed to gain a fair degree of reliability. Second, as indicated earlier, there is a set of parameters used in defining the concept national identity. The sixteen orientations in the parameter may have not fully defined the concept. There might be some other aspects of national identity that were not covered by the parameter. It would, therefore, be interesting to explore the parameter vis-à-vis the changing nature of national identity. Third, this study did not ascertain the extent to which the teachers use the textbooks in the teaching process and the impact of the textbooks upon the learners' sense of national identification.

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