


# Chapter 7

## Exploring Tertiary Student Awareness of Basic Human Rights

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### ABSTRACT

*Human rights are essential for enabling individuals to live with liberty, respect, and dignity, and ensuring these rights promotes global peace and prosperity. This is a responsibility in which education plays a crucial role by raising awareness among youth. Thus, this study aimed to identify the human rights literacy level of the tertiary students. Specifically, this study sought to know the students' level of knowledge in terms of the human rights documents, concepts, and violations using descriptive method of research with the use of a quantitative technique of data gathering. Significant finding revealed that students have a moderate human rights literacy level which differed in terms of their sex. Females were shown to score higher compared to males. Although moderate can be considered a positive level, it still leaves room for improvement. This research contributes to the worldwide accounts and deliberations about human rights contextualized in the field of education.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of Human Rights has transitioned politics and greatly impacted the development of democracy, and along with it comes the awareness of every individual with their right to live with freedom and dignity (Tural & Şahan, 2023). Human rights as defined in the Encyclopedia Britannica volume six, are sets of

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values that are universal in nature and are equally claimed by all human beings. It is a natural right that refers to the essential freedoms and basic liberties of individuals that without which, individuals can never live with respect and dignity (Hussain & Akhtar, 2023). It provided a holistic framework of human rights awareness that is mainly focused about, through and for the rights of every human being in this world (Robinson, Quennerstedt, & Phillips, 2020). Based on these perspectives, human rights can be understood as the inherent and universal freedoms, values, and entitlements that protect human dignity and equality which enable all human beings to live with respect and participate meaningfully in society. This understanding highlights not only the legal and political significance of this concept but also its role in shaping individual awareness, collective responsibility, and the continuing efforts for advancement of democratic life.

## **1.1 Review of Related Literatures and Studies**

The Philippines, as a democratic country guarantees its people to enjoy these human rights and privileges (Tadem, 2021). These are stipulated in its Constitution's Bill of Rights which protects and safeguards its citizens from violations of government, individuals, or group of individuals (Gavilan, 2015). Accordingly, it is a constitutional provision given to the people which cannot be taken away by the government, and that the latter has the duty to protect. However, despite these institutionalized bills, there still have been high incidents of human rights abuses in various forms that are reported (Bersamina, 2020). For Padil, Ahmad, and Nudin (2023), the main reason for such occurrences is the lack of awareness of the large sample of the population about their basic human rights. In addition, students who are still learning are vulnerable to such abuses from authority (Yu, Jack, & Chan, 2024).

This is where educators must take into consideration how they can help students in enhancing their awareness of their rights (Hosada, 2025). According to UNESCO (2024), in enhancing the literacy and promoting individuals' basic rights, education plays a significant role. For this organization, inculcating this awareness is in itself, a form of demonstration of individuals' commitment to human dignity, promotion of an adequate standard of life to everyone, and for the promotion of world peace and prosperity. Since its declaration, the United Nations, along with the various agencies, have clarified that intrinsic in human rights education are the components of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, that also are consistent with the principles of human rights that gives power to individuals and groups in addressing oppression and injustices (United Nations, 2023). Moreover, center to human rights education is the establishment of cultures of human rights within the environment where the specific individual belongs (Hongbo, 2020). Thus, it can be said that education and awareness are mediums in approaching social injustices and are the precondition in

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