

**CONSERVATION VALUES OF SELECTED BACOLOD CITY HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR CORAL REEFS IN SAGAY MARINE
RESERVE, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL**

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ABSTRACT

Most studies on economic valuation take household heads as respondents since they earn money for the family and usually make most of the decisions. Other sectors of the society, especially the students or members of the youth, are rarely involved in these kinds of studies. Contrary to popular practices, this study considered the youth, particularly high school students, as the respondents of the survey. Through stratified and systematic random sampling, 400 respondents were chosen from five public high schools. Data was gathered from 80 students per school through a group administered survey. A protocol for a group-administered survey was constructed in order to ensure that data is collected in an unbiased, organized and systematic way. The willingness-to-pay of students in public high schools in Bacolod City for the conservation of the coral reefs in Sagay Marine Reserve (SMR) amounted to Php 3,156,894.02, per month. The selected mode of payment was through student government collection. The top reasons for their decision to pay were because of existence values, altruistic motive, and bequest value. Some of them were not willing to pay because they lacked funds, they did not trust the government, and/or they believe that the residents in coastal areas were the main reason why the resource is depleting. The factors that affected the students' willingness-to-pay were price bid, household size, monthly income and perceived importance. This study found that high school students can contribute resources either in money or in-kind, and in fact the monetary WTP was within their capacity and cash received. This study may be significant to the youth by amplifying their roles in the conservation of natural resources. The methods employed in this study may also benefit future researchers and policy implementers.