

Perception of Students Towards Pre-Marital Sex

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to identify the perceptions of students towards pre-marital sex among the Grade 12 students of Holy Name University. The study was anchored with the Social Cognitive Theory and Freudian Theory. The researchers used simple random sampling to give the respondents an equal chance to be selected and selected 240 students, 120 male and 120 female students. Thus, a survey questionnaire was used to gather data. The gathered data were analyzed and interpreted using t-test of independent sample.

The respondents perceive that pre-marital sex is prohibited by the church and is not advisable. The researchers were able to draw conclusion that the respondents are uncertain of the society's acceptance to pre-marital sex. The researchers also concluded that both male and female respondents have the same perceptions towards pre-marital sex. The influence of the church and the wider community's perception of pre-marital sex as a sin has profound impact on shaping the attitudes and behavior of these individuals. While personal convictions may vary, it is clear that the teaching of the church and the communal norms play a pivotal role in guiding their decisions regarding intimate relationships. The emphasis on abstinence before marriage, driven by moral and spiritual considerations, underscores the power of cultural factors in shaping individual's perspectives. For these students, the act of refraining from pre-marital sex is not just about adhering to rules, but also about upholding their faith, maintaining a sense of belonging within their community, and adhering to a set of values that they hold dear.

Keywords: pre-marital sex; perception

1. Introduction

Pre-marital sex has its roots in the subtle public displays of affection that are increasingly evident among today's youth, such as holding hands, sitting closely, and hugging. Moreover, acts of fornication (pre-marital sex) are not deemed acceptable by the Catholic Church. Even for those who don't share these religious beliefs, it's acknowledged that fornication and homosexual acts can lead to significant harm, including the spread of serious diseases and the erosion of the sanctity of marriage and family. This erosion can subsequently contribute to issues like abortion, single parenthood, absent fathers, and an environment that might not be conducive to the optimal upbringing of children. There is a compelling need to assess the attitudes and responses of university students. In this context, the aim is to provide recommendations for proactive measures and to shed light on this prevailing issue.

2. Literature Review

Teenagers have individual influence factors to engage in sex. According to Benda and Leon (1995), students are learning and developing into a mature individual in the academe. Students become more sociable and interactive with other students and become a part of the population susceptible to pre-marital sex since they are developing the social and physical health accompanied by curiosity, fantasies and sexual desires.

Looking into the environmental influence factor. According to National Association of Social Workers, parents, peers, and the media are one factors of a teenager's involving in sexual activities. The relationship between the parents and the teenager are more likely to affect the teenager to engage in sex.

According to Fox (1981); Furstenberg (1981); Herceg-Baron and Furstenberg, (1982) the socialization of attitudes and behavior and learning the appropriate custom in sexual behavior begin early in life more specifically influenced by the family and parents. The family is the primary foundation of the teenagers' sexual attitudes and behavior because it provides representation, social, economic and standards of sexual conduct.

A person in the adolescent stage is more likely to be curious, yearning, and is learning to be open-minded. According to Freudian theory it is an essential part in the development of the human being. The fifth stage in Freudian's Stages of Psychosexual Sexual Development is the Genital stage which ranges from 12 and above, where the person is developing a strong sexual desire to the opposite sex and the average age of first intercourse is around 17 years old. The Freudian theory supports that a person develops an individual factor that influences the person to engage in sex.

Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) states that learning occurs by observing the environment or by actions of others. Bandura categorized observation learning in three and the third is "Symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, television programs, or online media." It shows and supports that the environment around the person, influences the person like media. What the person sees in media like the internet and other explicit images and videos, can be a factor for the teenager to engage in sex.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the perception of the students towards pre-marital sex. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex?
- 2) What are the respondents' perceptions towards pre-marital sex?
- 3) Is there a significant difference of the perceptions of students towards pre-marital sex in terms of sex?

4. Methodology

A descriptive research design was used to determine the perception of 240 grade 12 students towards pre-marital sex. The study was conducted at Holy Name University. The study utilized a survey questionnaire and used to assess the perception of the participants towards pre-marital sex. The questionnaire went through pilot-testing wherein it was answered by students out from the population of the study and the results were given to a statistician which was then accepted.

The researchers sent a letter to the assistant principal of the Senior High School Department. To determine if there is a significant difference of the data gathered, the researchers used the t-test to be able to interpret the respondents' perception of the study and to determine whether there is a significant difference between the perception of the male and female respondents.

5. Results and Discussions

This part deals with the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the data gathered from the Grade 12 students of Holy Name University in their perceptions and factors that influence them toward pre-marital sex. Data was gathered from the 240 Grade 12 students of Holy Name University.

Table 1. Perceptions of Grade 12 Students Towards Pre-Marital Sex

Questions	Male		Female	
	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Description	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Description
The church prohibits pre-marital sex.	4.18	Agree	4.36	Strongly Agree
The school prohibits pre-marital sex.	4.08	Agree	4.11	Agree
My family prohibits pre-marital sex.	4.17	Agree	4.17	Agree
It is acceptable to engage in pre-marital sex.	2.27	Disagree	1.90	Disagree
Pre-marital sex is advisable.	2.19	Disagree	1.79	Strongly Disagree
It makes a person happy.	2.95	Uncertain	2.46	Uncertain
It can make a relationship stronger.	2.95	Uncertain	2.21	Disagree
It is accepted as sin.	4.09	Agree	4.03	Agree
Pre-marital sex is a violation to God's commandments and church laws.	4.24	Strongly Agree	4.38	Strongly Agree
Pre-marital sex is accepted in the society.	2.99	Uncertain	2.81	Uncertain
TOTAL:	3.74	Agree	3.99	Agree

The table shows the perceptions of the Grade 12 students towards pre-marital sex. The perceptions of the students on most of the items do not vary. However, the male and female respondents' have the same perceptions as to church prohibiting pre-marital sex and whether pre-marital sex is advisable which can make the relationship stronger. However, the female strongly disagrees the statement that pre-marital sex is advisable. In addition, the table shows that respondents are uncertain of whether pre-marital sex is accepted by the society.

Table 2. The Significant Difference Between Students' Perception Towards Pre-Marital Sex When Group According to Sex

Variables	Computed t-value	Critical Value	Decision on H ₀	Interpretation
Perception & Sex	0.006	1.833	Accepted H ₀	No significant difference

Table 2 shows the relationship between the students' perception towards pre-marital sex when groups according to sex. The computed t-value is 0.006, the p-value of 0.833 which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, this implies the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference of the students' perception when grouped according to sex. The students had the same perception perspective on pre-marital sex, considering the diverse stances like religious belief, social media influences and community values.

6. Conclusion

The researchers were able to draw important conclusion from the data that there is a similarity in perceptions towards pre-marital sex between both male and female respondents. Despite of social media influences still the students perceive that premarital-sex is prohibited and not advisable. This implies that regardless of gender, the participants share similar viewpoints and beliefs regarding the acceptability of pre-marital sexual activities. The stance taken by many students against pre-marital sex rooted in their deeply held religious beliefs and the values upheld by their community. The influence of the church and the wider community's perception of pre-marital sex as a sin has profound impact on shaping the attitudes and behavior of these individuals. While personal convictions may vary, it is clear that the teaching of the church and the communal norms play a pivotal role in guiding their decisions regarding intimate relationships. The emphasis on abstinence before marriage, driven by moral and spiritual considerations, underscores the power of cultural factors in shaping individual's perspectives on sensitive topics such as sexuality. For these students, the act of refraining from pre-marital sex is not just about adhering to rules, but also about upholding their faith, maintaining a sense of belonging within their community, and adhering to a set of values that they hold dear.

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