

The Family Sexual Communication of Select Filipino Youth in Quezon City and Its Relation to their Sexual Outcomes

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Abstract

Previous studies have shown that parents play a significant role in forming their children's sexual outcomes, particularly through communicating about sexual topics. But for a country with inherited conservative values on sex, the Philippines, there is a dearth of investigation on (1) the extent of family sexual communication and (2) how it influences youth sexual outcomes, if at all. Hence, this paper asked: *What is the relationship between family sexual communication and sexual outcomes of Filipino youth?* This paper focused on youth from Quezon City, Metro Manila's epicenter of sexual diseases and unintended pregnancies' cases until the present. Guided by Isaacs' (2012) dissertation, this quantitative research measured the selected youth's family sexual communication through the frequency, quality, and content of sexual discussions and their sexual outcomes categorized by their partner's sexual communication, sexual self-efficacy, sexual beliefs, and sexual history using an online survey. In a dominantly female (52.7%), 20-25 years old (51%), lower-income (42.6%), and Catholic (79%) sample, sexual topics remain rarely discussed ($\bar{x} = 1.90$) and only in a fairly superficial manner ($\bar{x} = 1.90$), while their sexual outcomes are slightly inclined to unsafe ($\bar{x} = 2.7$, $sd = 0.38$). Correlational analyses show a weak positive relationship between the respondents' family sexual communication and their sexual outcomes ($\rho = 0.246$, $n = 385$, $p < 0.05$), finding that parents exhibiting protective sexual communication rather than permissive or none is likely to facilitate safe and healthy sexual outcomes of youth. The result of this study contributes to a relatively nascent investigation of parent-child sexual communication and its sexual health outcomes in the Philippines.

1. An examination of Filipino family sexual communication for safe sexual outcomes of youth

Filipino youth's birthrate and increasing proportion of those who have early sexual encounters has been consistently high over the years, proving that Filipino adolescents are vulnerable to unsafe sex and sexual exploitation.¹ This reflects to an increase in the cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like HIV and AIDS over the years.

Previous studies suggest that constant communication about human's sexual beliefs, history, self-efficacy, and sexual interactions with their partners can help to offset the influence of sexual discourse in the family, especially on youth (Calhoun & Friel, 2001; Bynum & Callands, 2008, as cited in Isaacs, 2012). Moreover, with the decline in sexual trends in the preceding years, western studies have

found that familial involvement can minimize the possibility of adolescents engaging in early sexual activities (DiClement et al., 2001; Miller & Whitaker, 2001; Resnick et al., 1997; Whitaker & Miller, 2000, as cited in Apsy et al., 2007). Yet, despite the vast literature on parent-child sexual socialization, there have been remaining inconsistent results on whether Family Sexual Communication (FSC) (i.e., frequency, quality, content) can transmit powerful sensual messages among youth (Apsy et al., 2007; Mmari et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2018). Such importance has led communication scholars to conclude that topics like FSC and youth sexual outcomes (i.e., sexual beliefs, history, partner communication, and self-efficacy) have remained understudied, particularly in the local setting.

Thus, anchored on Alyssa Marie Isaacs' (2012) familial sexual socialization, this paper focused on the FSC of Filipino youth's sexual outcomes, as several