



Research Article

The Impact and Importance of the Pre-Implementation of Sex Education in Catholic Schools

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the importance and impact of implementing sex education in Catholic schools. With this, the study can identify the effects if the students do not know properly about sex, specifically to prevent the risks of sexual health-related problems and teenage pregnancies. This study utilized quantitative research that uses descriptive survey research to acquire the student's perspective on sex education and the impacts and importance of implementing sex education. In this study, the researchers used an online survey platform, Google Forms, to provide questions that helped gather the needed data. The results indicate that all respondents agreed that sex education needs to be implemented in Catholic schools because it will be effective. It will help give us proper knowledge about sex. The study also found out the importance and possible effects of a lack of sex education and that most of the participants, roughly 12 people, indicated that their parents did not often discuss sex education at home. The research findings have contributed to understanding how important it is for the students to be open about this topic, be knowledgeable about sex, and learn about the consequences of sexual activities such as teenage pregnancy, HIV, and reproductive health. The research also reveals that sex education is necessary for every school and should be discussed and explained more often. This result has implications that support the previous research.

Keywords

Catholic school, impact, sex education, sexual health-related problem, teenage pregnancy

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The concept of sex education here in the Philippines is still considered taboo because many people believe that any information about sex should be provided only by parents. Teaching sex education is right-based and gender transformative. Also, it is more effective when it teaches appropriately by age. According to Guarnotta (2021), discussing sex with your children is essential. Children with open and positive conversations with their parents about sex are more likely to make safer decisions. Parents should approach sexuality as an ongoing conversation starting in toddlerhood. Parents can provide more in-depth information and guidance as children progress to adolescence. However, not all parents will talk to their kids about this subject. Because of this, young people do not know much about pregnancy and sexual health, which can lead to risky sexual behaviour and sexual violence like rape and sexual harassment. It also results in teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) caused by a lack of sexual education in schools. According to Kumar et al. (2017), sex education should be an integral part of the learning process beginning in childhood and continuing into adult life and its lifelong learning process. It should be for all children, young people, and adults, including those with physical learning difficulties or emotional difficulties.

Nowadays, most teenagers between 13 and 18 years old are involved in unprotected sexual activity, which leads them to be teenage parents. They are unaware of the potential consequences of their impulsive decisions and actions because they are not prepared for the responsibilities. The pre-implementing of sex education in Catholic schools is important because it focuses on preventing teenage pregnancies and other sexual health issues and instructing students or teenagers on dealing with pressures such as saying no or refusing to have sexual activity. Also, parents must be aware of and give consent to the sexual education that their children are receiving in schools. Sex education in schools is a matter of public health, not religious or political (Rabbitte & Enriquez, 2019). Overall, this research is all about sex education to be implemented in schools or, specifically, in Catholic schools. The target of this research is the issues of pregnancy and sexual health. Mostly, the beneficiaries of this are the teenagers and students in the schools.

The students can prevent HIV or AIDS. It is proven more effective in preventing sexually transmitted infections than education focusing solely on teaching abstinence until marriage. The second is the prevention of teenage pregnancies. Sex education teaches students to use contraceptives and makes them think thoroughly before having sex.

Lastly, it empowers against sexual harassment. Sex education helps teenagers understand themselves biologically and prepare to face the world, so they do not fall victim to sexual predators. It also empowers girls and boys to speak up if their sexual boundaries are violated. Sex education does not encourage teenagers to have sex but teaches them to be responsible enough to think about their actions' consequences and use contraceptives properly (Izugbara, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

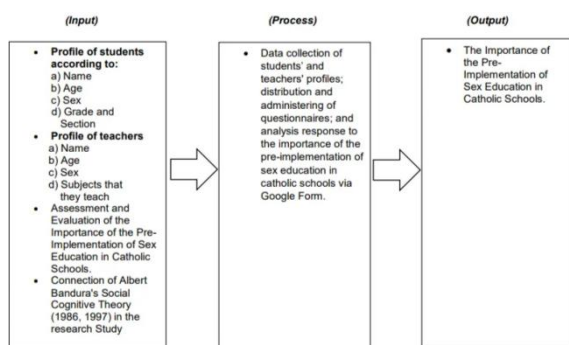
The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) started as the Social Learning Theory (SLT) in the 1960s by Albert Bandura. It developed into the SCT in 1986 (Decker, 1986). SCT proposes that learning occurs in a social context, with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between the person, environment, and behaviour. This theory is about the unique way individuals acquire and maintain behaviours while also considering the social environment in which they perform the behaviour. But Social Cognitive Theory has its limitations. The theory assumes that applying the changes in our environment will automatically lead to changes in each person when this may not be true. Also, this theory focuses on the processes of learning.

There is a connection in this theory between the pre-implementation of sex education, and the theory talks about the individual's behavior when it changes. In contrast, the pre-implementation of sex education talks about the possible effects on the community when it teaches the students. Because of the high percentage of teenage pregnancy and sexual assaults, sex education will impact those who can experience this kind of experience. Sex education teaches teens many things that they can apply in their daily lives. The researcher will determine whether teaching sex education to students at a Catholic school is effective in reducing the number of teenage pregnancies and sexual assaults. The Social Cognitive Theory will be imperative in helping the researchers. Because it focuses on behavior, the researcher will see how sex education affects the students and the teachers' perspectives on implementing sex education. It is essential because they will learn to lessen insensitive jokes on their students. Notably, the researcher will see the impact of sex education on the students and if they will take it positively or negatively.

Conceptual Framework

This research presents conceptual frameworks based on the IPO (Input-Process-Output) Model to identify the factor or significant variable contributing to the pre-implementing sex education in Catholic schools. It has the inputs for the research study, like the names, ages, and grade levels of the students and teachers, as well as the subjects they teach to get their thoughts on the research study. It also has the procedures for how the questionnaires will be given out and the outputs and instructions on running the research study to get a specific survey result. This model will help the researcher analyze and determine the importance of having sex education in Catholic schools.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of the Study



Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to let people know the impact and importance of the pre-implementation of sex education in Catholic schools. These days, so many young people are getting pregnant because they are not getting proper teaching when it comes to intercourse. The researchers hope that sex education will be taught in schools to reduce or avoid having an enormous responsibility at such a young age. More precisely, the researchers aim to answer the following:

1. How does the lack of knowledge about sex education impact young people's lives?
2. How is sex education beneficial for preventing early teenage pregnancies?
3. What is the importance of having sex education in Catholic schools for young people?

METHODS

Research Design

This study is descriptive research. The goal of descriptive research design is to get information that can be used to describe a phenomenon, situation, or population systematically (Cupid Ltd., 2021). Implementing sex education in Catholic schools will use the people in the school, such as teachers and students. The high cases of teenage pregnancy have an impact on this study. Sex education helps people gain the information and skills to make the best decisions about sex and relationships (Planned Parenthood). The information taught in sex education can be applied in our daily lives.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample and sampling techniques that the researchers will use are probability sampling and stratified sampling techniques. The researchers will have an easy way of collecting data since it is divided among the students and teachers in Catholic schools who will answer the questionnaire surveys for the research study about pre-implementing Sex Education in Schools. Also, it will lead to better insights and more specific results.

Research Instrument

In this study, the researcher uses survey questionnaires created through Google Forms to be distributed to Catholic school students and teachers to collect the data. The researcher will prepare several questions for respondents. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: Part A, respondents' personal information; Part B, with multiple-choice questions; and Part C, open-ended questions to get specific results about the respondents' opinions on implementing sex education in Catholic schools. Also, to ascertain their level of knowledge about sex education. On the other hand, the researchers ensure that the collected data from the respondents will be confidential. Researchers will study and analyze the data they gather to make it easier to judge the results.

Data Gathering Procedure

In this research, the researcher will use Google forms to collect the thoughts of the students and teachers in a Catholic school about implementing Sex Education in Schools. The gathering procedure will take four phases that will be discussed.

First Phase

The researcher will make a questionnaire to help them conduct their research. There will be two questionnaires, 1 for students and 1 for teachers. The researchers aim to get the point of view of the educators and those who will benefit from implementing sex education. The questions will be entered into a Google form that students and teachers at Espiritu Santo Parochial School can.

Second Phase

The questionnaire will be distributed to the teachers and students at school. It may take 2-4 days to reach the number of respondents the researcher targets. While waiting for the survey results, the researcher will assemble other things needed for the study, such as graphs, to help analyze the data gathered.

Third Phase

After gathering the data, the researcher will start analyzing the results. It may take 4–7 days because the study has two questionnaires, and the researcher will need to understand each point of view of the students and teachers. Analyzing every data gathered will give the researcher thoughts on what other people think about implementing Sex education.

Fourth Phase

When the data is analyzed, the researcher can finally evaluate or conclude it. It ensures that all the questions from the Google forms will help the researcher conduct this study. The researchers finally see the pros and cons of implementing sex education in Catholic schools. Furthermore, in the end, the study will prove that it is essential to implement sex education in Catholic schools.

Data Analysis

This part presents the result of the study using a scientific method in accordance with the respondents' insight about sex education implementation in Catholic schools. The researchers will evaluate and summarize the collected data through descriptive analysis as the study is quantitative. The information gathered during data collection will assist researchers in finalizing the data and explaining the specific findings of the significance of teaching sex education in Catholic schools.

Ethical Considerations

This study ensures that the researcher's conditions are mentally and emotionally ready for this research. Also, this research topic is agreed to do this research that talks about the importance of Sex education. They will make sure that sex education is necessary to teach students and not just for extracurricular activities. They also ensured that they considered every grade and age in conducting this kind of study. It will be sensitive on this topic because it also discusses cases of sexual illiteracy, such as teenage pregnancy and sexual abuse. The researcher has nothing against the Catholic Institute. It is not promoting the students to have sex at a young age, but sex education is making them think seriously about having sex.

Furthermore, sex education teaches them how to say no if they are not ready, teaches them the proper use of contraceptives, and helps to protect them from sexual abuse. It may also lead them to be less curious when it comes to sex.

RESULTS

The Impact of the Lack of Knowledge about Sex Education on Young People's Lives

This section of research data is according to research problem number 1. The researchers used Google Forms to see if the students in grade 12 had sufficient knowledge and were willing to discuss sex education.

Table 1
Parental Discussions on Sex Education at Home

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Yes, especially when we watch television, movies, and YouTube videos	1	5.00	4
No, because it is a sensitive topic to talk about with my parents.	3	20.00	3
Sometimes, when we watch news related to rape, and sexual abuse.	12	60.00	1
Never talked about it with my parents.	4	15.00	2
Total	20	100.00	

Table 1 shows that if their parents discussed sex education in their home, among 20 respondents, 60.00% or 12 respondents sometimes answered when they watched news related to rape and sexual abuse. 20.00% or three respondents answered no because it is a sensitive topic to talk about with their parents; 15.00% or four respondents answered never talked about it with their parents; and 5.00% or 1 answered yes, especially when they watch television, movies, and YouTube videos.

Based on the results shown in the table, most students answered that sometimes their parents discuss sex education at home.

Table 2
Feelings of Discomfort and Awkwardness in Discussing Sex

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Yes	2	10.00	3
No	9	45.00	1
Sometimes	9	45.00	1.5
Maybe	0	0.00	4
Total	20	100.00	

Table 2 indicates how many respondents feel uncomfortable or awkward talking about sex. The table says that two respondents answered yes, nine answered no, and nine answered sometimes.

Based on the results shown in the graph, most of the respondents are not uncomfortable, and sometimes they are uncomfortable talking about sex.

Table 3
The Negative Impact of Movies and Social Media on Sexual Risk Behaviors

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Yes, because of the portrayals that may influence young people to engage in sexual activities.	11	55.00	1
No, it does not have a negative effect.	1	5.00	4
Maybe	4	20.00	2
Sometimes	4	20.00	2.5
Total	20	100.00	

Table 3 discusses whether movies and social media harm sexual risk behavior. According to the collected data, 55% (11 out of 20) of the respondents agreed that movies and portrayals have a negative effect because they may influence young people to engage in sexual activities.

Furthermore, both maybe and sometimes got the same number of people who think sometimes it contributes. Lastly, one person says no; it does not have a negative effect.



Figure 2
Perspectives on Optimal Teaching Approaches for Students

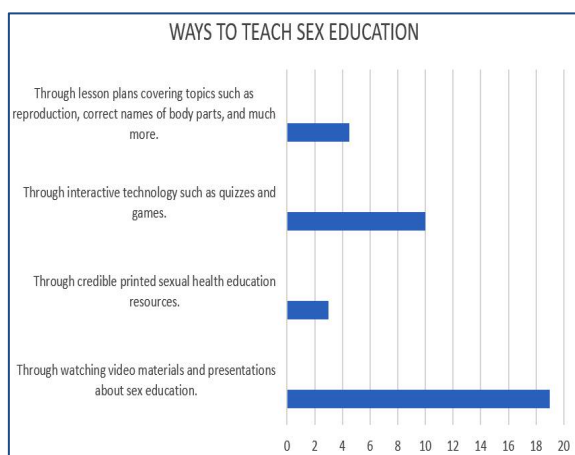


Figure 2 talks about how the students want to learn about sex education. Most respondents chose to teach it "through watching video materials and presentations." Students want to learn it entertainingly. The second option on the list is interactive technology, such as quizzes and games. The third is that respondents, through lesson plan 5, choose it. Last in the lead is printed material. Only three people chose it.

The Benefits of Sex Education in Preventing Early Teenage Pregnancies

This part of the research data was related to the second research problem. The grade 12 students responded to the benefits of sex education in preventing teenage pregnancies.

Figure 3
The Relationship Between Lack of Sex Education and Early/Unintended Pregnancies

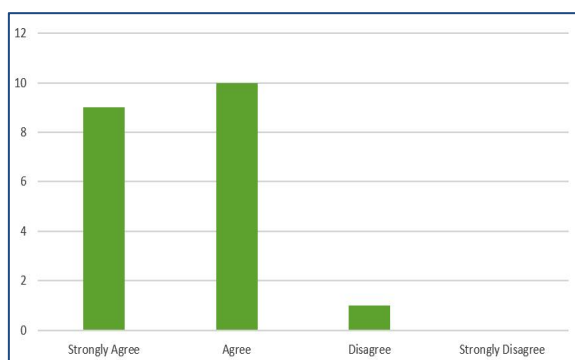


Figure 3 discusses whether the students think a lack of sex education results from early and unintended pregnancies. 10 out of 20 students agree that it results from a lack of sex education, 8 out of 20 strongly agree, meaning the respondents think it is the reason, and 2 out of 20 disagree.

The respondents' response to the question: How do you think sex education can help reduce incidents like teen pregnancy and sexual harassment? Does it really help or not? The results that the researcher obtained all talk about avoiding teenage pregnancies, health, and learning how to say no or give consent to someone. The respondents agree that sex education has helped in reducing the incidents of teenage pregnancies and sexual harassment.

Teenage pregnancy—many of the answers say that it is the result of having less knowledge about sex. It is the curiosity of the teens. It is the consequence of their curiosity. "Sexual education is helpful, most especially to young adults. Different scenarios may occur, intended or not intended. Sex education can help to avoid wrong interpretations when it comes to sex. Also, many cases of sexual harassment have been reported. Young women can somehow know how to protect themselves and avoid giving themselves to the wrong people." It also stated that sex education could reduce sexual harassment because students have enough information to know when someone is harassing or taking advantage of them. Also, some respondents answered that sex education could lessen sexually transmitted illnesses.

The Importance of Sex Education in Catholic Schools for Young People

Figure 4
Understanding the Significance of Sex Education in Adolescent Learning

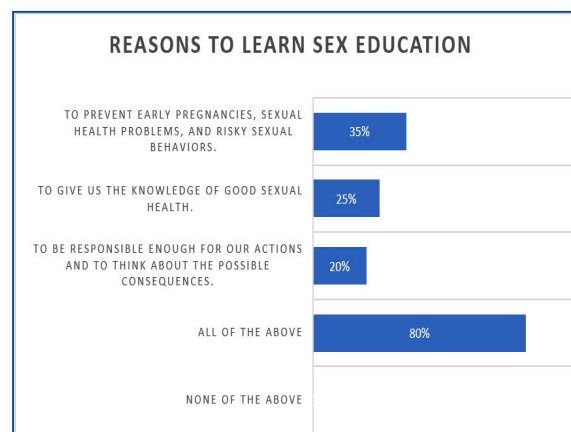


Figure 4 contains the response to the question, "As a student, why do you think you need to learn about sex education?" Seven people said they did not want to have children or did not want to have them right away. They also said they did not want to get sexually transmitted diseases or do dangerous sexual things. Five people mentioned learning about sexual health as a goal. Four people said it was so we would learn to be accountable for our acts and consider the results. There were sixteen "all of the above" responses. To conclude, most respondents answered all the reasons and importance of why they needed to learn about sex education.

Table 4
The Effectiveness of Sex Education in Catholic Schools from Students' Perspectives

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Yes, because it will help give us proper knowledge about sex.	15	75.00	1
No, because not all parents want to give consent to teaching their children in school about sex education.	1	5.00	3
Maybe effective.	4	20.00	2
Not particularly effective.	0	0.00	4
Total	20	100.00	

Table 4 indicates the effectiveness of having sex education in Catholic schools. Among 20 respondents, 15 answered yes; only one answered no, and four answered maybe. To summarize, respondents consider that having sex education will be effective because it will help give us proper knowledge about sex.

Figure 5
An Inquiry into the Knowledge of Different Contraceptive Methods

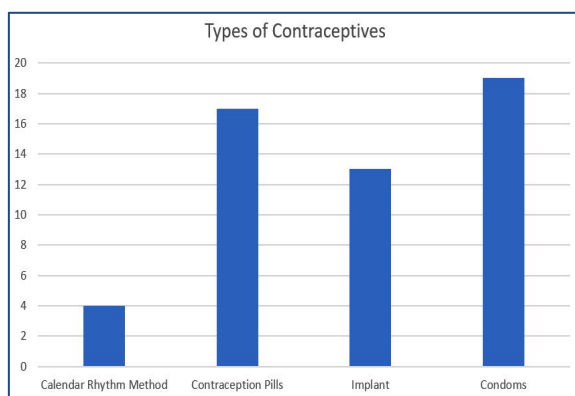


Figure 5 shows what contraceptives are familiar to the students. The most common item the respondents know is condoms. It got 19, while the second on the list is contraception pills. The third is the implant. While the last is the calendar rhythm method.

The respondents' response to the question: Does sex education need to be implemented in Catholic schools? Yes or no? and why? All of the respondents agreed that sex education needs to be implemented in Catholic schools. The respondents explained how important it is to have sex education in Catholic schools. Some respondents stated that having sex education will help the students become more knowledgeable about sex and aware of the possible consequences, such as teenage pregnancy. One participant stated, "aside from educating students, it is also a way for students to be open about the topic because it is normal and not taboo." Another one also stated that "Catholic schools are responsible for providing students with accurate and comprehensive information about sexuality, contraception, and healthy relationships to help them make informed decisions about their sexual health and behaviors."

DISCUSSION

According to the findings of this study, every single respondent believes that an absence of sex education is to blame for unwanted pregnancies. According to the information sought, it has been discovered that almost all of the respondents feel uneasy and are not open to discussing sex education in their own homes with their families. Every single person who participated in the survey shared the opinion that sex education classes ought to take place in schools and ought to make use of audiovisual materials and presentations. This study discovered that engaging in sexually risky activities results from misusing social media platforms. It gives rise to a new line of inquiry, which is how the use of social media influences the sexual behaviors of students.

In conclusion, sexual education is essential, particularly for today's young generation, who are very good at keeping secrets hidden. Recent research shows that how students use social media dramatically affects how they act sexually. Because of this, comprehensive sexual education programs must incorporate social media into their curriculum to better equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The researchers, therefore, conclude that the lack of sex education significantly impacts young people's lives. It began with their inability to communicate appropriately at home. Based on our survey, the parents need help discussing it correctly in their homes. They need more knowledge about it. The portrayals in movies or on social media trigger them because they do not know what to do when encountering one. The young people are ready to talk about it in a way that they will learn from and enjoy while learning it. They want it to be entertaining, like watching videos and presentations to present it to them.

In the second statement problem, it is asked if sex education is beneficial to preventing teenage pregnancies. According to the survey, the respondents say that they agree that the lack of sex education is the result of early and unintended teenage pregnancies. Also, the respondents think that sex education helps young people in different aspects. First, it avoids teenage pregnancies because sex education teaches about contraception, methods for having safe sex, and when to tell if they are truly ready for it. The second is sexual harassment. They can tell if someone is harassing them. The young ones will know how to protect their bodies from someone exploiting them. Lastly, in health aspects, sexually transmitted diseases can be lessened because sex education teaches them how to take care of themselves when having intercourse.



Lastly, in the third statement of the problem, what is the importance of implementing sex education in Catholic schools? The respondents in the survey agreed that students should learn about sexual education for many reasons. To prevent teenage pregnancies and risky sexual behavior, one must have a lot of knowledge and be aware of the consequences of each action. 75% of respondents in the survey research acknowledge that sex education will be effective in teaching in Catholic schools. Many students know about sex, but not in the proper way. Implementing sex education can help the students become more knowledgeable about sex and aware of the possible consequences, such as teenage pregnancy.

Recommendations

For students, it is essential to take sex education seriously. Sex education will not be implemented to teach the students to have sex but to educate them to be knowledgeable enough about sexual health and to be mindful and responsible for their actions. Also, do not abuse the teachings of sex education because it is essential for every student to be aware of the possible effects of not knowing sex, which can lead to risks and harmful things such as rape, teenage pregnancy, and HIV.

The teachers are teaching sex education with the preferred teaching modality of the students and using appropriate words, vocabulary, and scientific terms in teaching sex to relieve some of the students' discomfort and awkwardness. Parents need to be open and discuss this at home because parents are the teachers to guide their children about sex and the risks and effects if their child does not know about sex and is curious to try it; they also need to teach their child to respect and value themselves and others and learn how to refuse, say no, and accept no.

For future researchers, critically analyze the relevance and importance of sex education and convince students, teachers, parents, and schools to implement and learn sex education with studies and evidence. If the school considers teaching it in Catholic schools, they must consider several restrictions. They should consider the teachings of the Bible. It should continue to be respectful of the school and its religion. Also, if they include it in the school schedule, it should be included rather than as an extracurricular activity. Many students are already exhausted from their standard classes. Moreover, it will add to their tiredness if it is separate from their regular classes.

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Author(s)' Statements on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

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