

# **Attitudes of High School Students Towards Sex: Implications to Sex Education and Guidance**

**FRUCTUOSO C. BALITON**

*totsbaliton\_67@yahoo.com*

DepEd, Division of Leyte (Eastern Visayas)

*Abstract* - A major source of sexual learning is sex education classes in school (Levy 1992). In the absence of effective sex education, the immature adolescent must make major decisions without adequate knowledge (Bjorklund 1998). This descriptive survey-correlation method of research was undertaken to come up with findings on attitude towards sex of Villaba National High School students. It was also its purpose that this study may be instrumental in the proper guidance of the said students particularly in the area of adolescent sexuality. Simple frequency counts were used to determine their Attitude towards the various aspects of sexual relationships and average scores determined their Attitude towards the ten aspects of sexual relationships. Z-test was used to test the null hypothesis which states that, "there is no significant difference between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships," at the significance level of 0.05. This research finally concluded that there are differences between the attitudes of boys and girls

towards the various aspects of sexual relationships particularly on courtship, petting, pre-marital sex, and trial marriage or live-in. Z-test established a significant difference between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships.

*Keywords* - attitude towards sex, sex education, instruction and guidance, adolescent sexuality, sexual relationships.

## INTRODUCTION

Current issues on sex behavior are drawing interest and curiosity from among the present generation, especially among those who claim to be “liberated” people. The subject is almost in every issue of mass media and communication either in print, in picture, or over the air. Most adolescents are capable of and quickly become curious about the physical aspects of sex but few of them achieve the degree of emotional maturity that keep indulgence in the physical aspects of sex from causing them serious anxieties and conflicts (Gallagher 1983).

The adolescent-youth period is critical in the field of sexual adjustments because it is at this period that the initial venture in forming emotional attachments to the opposite sex begins. The adolescent's first love may be intense, consuming, almost overpowering; no doubt its intensity is in part a matter of lack of experience. The conflict between organic drives and the sex mores is not confined to the adolescent period. It is a lifelong struggle. In the absence of effective sex education, the immature adolescent must make major decisions without adequate knowledge (Bjorklund 1998).

A major source of sexual learning is sex education classes in school and the problem of sex instruction is made doubly difficult because on one hand so many adults are not sufficiently well adjusted sexually themselves to talk objectively and unemotionally about sex; on the other hand, there is even at the adult level a great amount of ignorance of even the simplest facts of sexual functioning (Levy 1992).

The Department of Education of the Philippines is mandated by Republic Act 9155, otherwise known as the “Governance of Basic

Education Act of 2001," that the principals, school administrators and teachers-in-charge (collectively referred to as school heads) must exercise instructional leadership and sound administrative management of the school.

As an instructional leader, therefore, the researcher believes that the school has a great and challenging role in the clarification of values to help clear out the haze of confusion and doubts, particularly on sexual relationships as this touches the core of individual's personality.

The youth of today needs information as they go through formation, particularly on matters of sex. Data on their Attitude towards sexual relationships would be a great help in diagnosing weaknesses and strengths on the subject of sex.

This study was undertaken in order to come up with findings on attitude towards sex of junior and senior students of Villaba National High School (VNHS), Division of Leyte, Region VIII (Eastern Visayas), of the Department of Education. Hopefully the results of this study may be instrumental in the proper guidance of the said students particularly in the area of adolescent sexuality.

The findings in this study may guide students on how to deal with problems concerning sex, particularly the juniors and the seniors of VNHS. With it, the writer hopes to provide the school with some data on the attitude towards sex of the students, thus helping the teachers, the guidance counselor, and parents diagnose youngsters in order to guide them properly.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To determine the attitudes of junior and senior students of VNHS toward the following aspects of sexual relationships which are courtship, going steady, dating, passionate kissing, necking, petting, pre-marital sex, free love or promiscuity, trial marriage or living-in, and extra-marital affairs; and,
2. To determine whether there exists a significant difference between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The respondents of this study were the third year and the fourth year students of VNHS during school year 2008 – 2009. There were 73 boys and 99 girls or a total of 172 students.

A data-gathering questionnaire which was adapted from the instrument used by Sister M. Carmela (1981) was prepared by the writer. It contained fifty (50) items divided equally into ten (10) aspects of sexual relationships which are courtship, going steady, dating, passionate kissing, necking, petting, pre-marital sex, free love or promiscuity, trial marriage or living-in, and extra-marital affairs.

Each question asked for a feeling or belief about a particular behavior in certain situations involving sexual relationships. The respondents indicated their answers by writing the appropriate letter from the set of responses provided according to what they honestly feel or believe in as follows: **A** (ALL RIGHT), **D** (Dangerous), or **W** (Wrong).

[In interpreting the respondents' responses, codes were utilized. Coding was done to facilitate the analysis of the data.] A scale value of the preferred responses was established. The following were the scale value for each item:

- 4 - Permissive (the attitude that puts no restrictions to any sexual behavior).
- 3 - Liberal (the attitude that considers sex as something to be enjoyed as long as it does not put one into trouble).
- 2 - Healthy (the attitude that considers sex as a vital part of being a human being which may enhance or distort the personality of an individual depending on the kind of relationship he/she has with others).
- 1 - Conservative (the attitude that considers sex as something tolerated with uncomfortable feelings.).
- 0 - Scrupulous (the attitude that considers sex bad or dirty).

The descriptive survey-correlation method of research was used in this study. The questionnaire was used to gather the data. Data collection was undertaken personally by the researcher using the instrument adapted for the study. The distribution of the questionnaires

was made on March 10 – 14, 2009 during the Health Education classes of the respondents. The retrieval was done at the end of their class sessions.

Simple frequency counts were used to determine their Attitude towards the ten aspects of sexual relationships. [Courtship, going steady, dating, passionate kissing, necking, petting, pre-marital sex, free love or promiscuity, trial marriage or living-in, and extra-marital affairs.]

Average scores determined their Attitude towards the ten aspects of sexual relationships. Since each of the fifty (50) items in the questionnaire contained a healthy answer, and that the healthy answer had a value of 2, so respondents with a total score near 100 or an average score near 2 was considered to have more or less a healthy attitude towards sex. The following limits were established to classify the average scores:

2.46 – above	Permissive
2.16 – 2.45	Liberal
1.86 – 2.15	Healthy
1.56 – 1.85	Conservative
1.55 – below	Scrupulous

In testing the null hypothesis which states that, “there is no significant difference between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships,” the Z – Test was used that was tested at the significance level of 0.05

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **On Attitude towards the Various Aspects of Sexual Relationships**

Tables 1.1 to 1.10 present the attitude of junior and senior students of VNHS towards the various aspects of sexual relationships.

Table 1.1: Attitude towards courtship

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
If those involved are unmarried persons who exercise precautions so as not to lead each other into sexual intimacies.	ALLRIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If those involved persons exercise no restrictions on sexual intimacies.	WRONG DANGEROUS	Healthy	Liberal
If unmarried persons spend it in secluded and dimly lit places where they could be alone with each other.	DANGEROUS	Healthy	Healthy
If the unmarried persons spend it in the company of a number of people.	ALLRIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If it is showered over/by a person who is married to somebody else.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy

It can be gleaned from table 1.1 that boys have healthy Attitude towards all of the situations involving courtship while girls have liberal attitudes if those involved persons exercise no restrictions on sexual intimacies by indicating a dangerous answer to that particular situation.

Table 1.2: Attitude toward going steady

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
If those involved are unmarried persons who exercise precautions so as not to lead each other into sexual intimacies.	ALLRIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If those involved unmarried persons exercise no restrictions on sexual intimacies.	DANGEROUS	Liberal	Liberal
If being done by/with a person married to somebody else.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If being done by unmarried persons looking for a life partner.	ALLRIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If being done by adolescents who desire to be alone with each other.	DANGEIOUS	Healthy	Healthy

Table 1.2 shows that both boys and girls have indicated a dangerous answer if those involved persons exercise no restrictions on sexual intimacies. The classified attitude for such an answer is liberal. Their Attitude towards going steady in the other situations are healthy.

Table 1.3: Attitude towards dating

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
If those involved are unmarried persons who exercise precautions so as not to lead each other into sexual intimacies.	ALL RIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If those involved unmarried persons exercise no restrictions on sexual intimacies.	DANGEROUS	Liberal	Liberal
If the unmarried persons spend it in secluded and dimly lit places where they could be alone with each other.	DANGEROUS	Healthy	Healthy
If the unmarried persons spend it in the company of a number of people.	ALL RIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If it is done with/by a person who is married to somebody else.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy

Table 1.3 shows that both boys and girls have indicated a dangerous answer if those involved persons exercise no restrictions on sexual intimacies. The classified attitude for such an answer is liberal. Their Attitude towards dating in the other situations are healthy.

Table 1.4: Attitude towards passionate kissing

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
If done by unmarried persons.	DANGEROUS	Healthy	Healthy
If done by husband and wife.	ALL RIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If done with/by a person married to somebody else.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
Between steadies.	DANGEROUS	Healthy	Healthy
Between persons who have officially arranged to get married to each other.	ALL RIGHT	Healthy	Healthy

As shown in table 1.4, the attitudes of the respondents toward passionate kissing are healthy in all of the situations.

Table 1.5: Attitude towards necking

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
Between persons not married to each other.	DANGEROUS	Liberal	Liberal
If done by/to a person married to somebody else.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If done by husband and wife.	ALL RIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
Between steadies.	DANGEROUS	Liberal	Liberal
Between persons who have arranged to get married to each other.	ALL RIGHT	Liberal	Liberal

Table 1.5 shows that the respondents have liberal Attitude towards necking if it is done between persons not married to each other and between steadies by indicating dangerous answers, and between persons who have officially arranged to get married to each other by indicating an ALL RIGHT answer. If necking is done by/to a person married to somebody else, the respondents indicated a wrong answer which is a healthy attitude. Also, the indicated ALL RIGHT as an answer if necking is done between husband and wife is a healthy attitude.

Table 1.6: Attitude towards petting

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
If done by person not married to each other.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If done by husband and wife.	ALL RIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If done by/to person who is married to somebody else.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
Between steadies.	DANGEROUS	Healthy	Liberal
Between persons who have arranged to get married to each other.	ALL RIGHT	Liberal	Liberal

Table 1.6 illustrates that boys have healthy attitudes in the first four situations involving petting but they have a liberal attitude if it is done between persons who have arranged to get married to each other by indicating an ALL RIGHT answer. In addition to the liberal attitude of girls toward the same situation, they have indicated a dangerous answer if petting is done between steadies which is also a liberal attitude.

Table 1.7: Attitude towards pre-marital sex

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
If done by person not married to each other.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If done by husband and wife.	ALL RIGHT	Healthy	Healthy
If done by/to person who is married to somebody else.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
Between steadies.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
Between persons who have arranged to get married to each other.	ALL RIGHT	Permissive	Healthy

As shown in table 1.7, the boys have a permissive attitude towards pre-marital sex if it is done between persons preparing for marriage by indicating ALL RIGHT as an answer while they have a healthy attitude towards the other situations. Meanwhile, the girls have healthy Attitude towards pre-marital sex in all of the situations.

Table 1.8: Attitude towards free love

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
For those not ready for marriage.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If one wants to do so as he/she pleases.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If one does it for fun.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If it is for financial/economic reason.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If one is searching for the right marriage partner.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy

As shown in table 1.8, the attitudes of the respondents toward free love are healthy by indicating wrong answers in all of the situations.

Table 1.9: Attitude towards trial marriage or live-in

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
For those not ready for marriage.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If one wants to be free in case he/she does not want the partner anymore.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If those involved want to test each other.	DANGEROUS WRONG	Liberal	Healthy
If there is intention to marry each other later.	ALL RIGHT	Permissive	Permissive
If it is for fun.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy

It can be gleaned from table 1.9 that the respondents have healthy Attitude towards trial marriage or live-in for those not yet ready for marriage, if one wants to be free in case he/she does not want the partner anymore, and if it is for fun by indicating wrong answers to the situations. They have a permissive attitude if there is intention to marry each other by indicating an ALL RIGHT answer to the situation. However, if those involved want to test each other, the boys have liberal attitudes by indicating a dangerous answer while the girls have healthy attitudes by indicating a wrong answer to the situation.

Table 1.10: Attitude towards extra-marital affairs

Statements	Responses	ATTITUDES	
		Boys	Girls
If it is for financial/economic reason.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If husband and wife agree on it.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If one wants to have a child.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If it is for fun.	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy
If it is to satisfy an emotional/psychological need	WRONG	Healthy	Healthy

Table 1.10 illustrates that the attitudes of the respondents toward extra-marital affairs are healthy by indicating wrong answers to all of the situations.

*On Attitude towards the Ten Aspects of Sexual Relationships*

Shown in table 2 are the attitudes of junior and senior students of VNHS toward the ten aspects of sexual relationships.

Table 2: The attitudes of junior and senior students of VNHS toward the ten aspects of sexual relationships

Attitudes	Boys		Girls		Difference
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Healthy	15	20.55	31	31.31	(10.76)
Liberal	34	46.57	51	51.52	(4.95)
Permissive	24	32.88	17	17.17	15.71
TOTALS	73	100	99	100	

The data shows that 15 or 20.55 percent of boys and 31 or 31.31 percent of girls have healthy Attitude towards the ten aspects of sexual relationships. Thirty-four or 46.57 percent and 51 or 51.52 percent of boys and girls, respectively, have liberal attitudes. There are 24 or 32.88 percent boys and 17 or 17.17 percent girls who have permissive attitudes. The overall pattern so far indicates that the liberal attitude has the highest frequency and/or percentage for both boys and girls respondents.

*On Differences between the Attitudes of Boys and Girls on the Ten Aspects of Sexual Relationships*

Table 3 presents the differences between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships.

Table 3: Differences between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships

Data	Boys	Girls
Mean scores	2.38	2.26
Standard deviations	0.26	0.21
Number of cases	73	99
Z – Test	<b>3.24</b>	
Interpretation	<b>Significant</b>	

The data suggest that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships since the absolute value of computed  $Z$  at the significant level of 0.05 is greater than the critical region  $Z$ , which is 1.64.

The null hypothesis which states that, "there is no significant difference between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships," is therefore, rejected.

## CONCLUSIONS

As established by the results of the study, this research finally concluded that the following are the differences between the attitudes of boys and girls toward the various aspects of sexual relationships.

On courtship, boys have healthy attitudes, if those involved persons exercise no restrictions on sexual intimacies, while girls have liberal attitudes. If petting is done between steadies, boys have healthy attitudes while girls have liberal attitudes. Boys have permissive Attitude towards pre-marital sex, if it is done between persons preparing for marriage, while girls have healthy attitudes. On trial marriage or live-in, boys have liberal attitudes while girls have healthy attitudes if those involved want to test each other.

The significant difference between the attitudes of boys and girls on the ten aspects of sexual relationships is on the ranking of the different attitudes in terms of frequency or percentage. Liberal attitude has the highest number for the boys, followed by permissive attitude, and healthy attitude. For the girls, on the other hand, the liberal attitude is followed by healthy attitude, then, permissive attitude.

The difference in terms of percentage is also significant with permissive attitude in favor of the boys. Healthy attitude are in favor of the girls and liberal attitude.

The researcher recommends that further investigation be made particularly on the following: (1) The causes of less shared sex attitudes in comparison to more shared sex attitudes; (2) The factors that may have caused prevailing sex permissiveness; and, (3) The factors that may have caused a significant difference of sex attitudes between boys and girls.

## IMPLICATIONS TO SEX EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

The findings of this study seem to imply certain directions for sex education and guidance for the junior and senior students of Villaba National High School, which are the following:

1. Since 24 or 32.88% of boys and 17 or 17.17% of girls were considered having permissive attitudes which the researcher considers as far from being healthy, there is a need to guide and instruct them religiously towards healthy sex values.
2. Since there is a difference of 15.71% on the permissive attitude in favor of the boys, therefore they need more attention than the girls on the areas of sex values.
3. Effective school year 2009 – 2010 the researcher will designate two Guidance Counselors a male teacher for the boys and a female teacher for the girls.

## LITERATURE CITED

Best, J. W.

1990 Research in education. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.  
Bjorklund, D

1998 Straight or Gay? Medical aspects of human sexuality, 93-98.

Carmela, Sister M. (Cabactulan, J. N.)

1981 The sex attitudes of male and female high school students in Leyte: Rural and urban cases. Unpublished Thesis, Leyte State College, Tacloban City.

Gallagher, R.

1993 Understanding your son's adolescence. Boton: Little Brown and Company.

Levy, M. R.

1992 Life and health: Targeting wellness. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, Inc.

Morgan, C. T.

1997 Attitudes and prejudices, a brief introduction to psychology.  
New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Republic Act 9155

2001 An Act Instituting a Frame Work of Governance for Basic Education, Establishing Authority and Accountability, Renaming the Department of Education, Culture and Sports as the Department of Education, and for other purposes.

Pursuant to the international character of this publication, the journal is indexed by the following agencies: (1)Public Knowledge Project, a consortium of Simon Fraser University Library, the School of Education of Stanford University, and the British Columbia University, Canada; (2) E-International Scientific Research Journal Consortium; (3) Philippine E-Journals; and (4) Google Scholar.

