

Title: Drug Taking, Alcohol Drinking, Smoking and Sexual Practices of PNU Students, SY 2005-2006: Implications to Guidance and TEducation

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Abstract

The study sought to: 1) determine the nature, extent and causes of the drug taking, smoking, alcohol drinking and sexual practices of the PNU college students; 2) Describe the students' attitudes towards sex-related activities such as pre-marital sex, live-in arrangement and same sex marriage; and 3) Determine the implications of the findings of the study to guidance and teacher education.

The descriptive survey method with a 36-item researcher-made questionnaire as the main data-gathering instrument was utilized in the study. Three hundred eighty-six (386 – 54 male and 332 female) students who graduated in March 2006 served as the respondents of the study. The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling technique, since the researchers included only those who were available when they administered the instrument. The respondents represented 18 majorships/specializations with mathematics majors getting the biggest representation of 65 or 47.15% of the total number of respondents.

Findings of the Study

- 1) On Cigarette Smoking – Majority of the respondents (205 or 53.11%) have never tried smoking. Only 16 (4 males and 12 females) are currently cigarette smokers. The foremost factors that led them to smoke were: a) curiosity; b) pakikisama or to please peers, and c) peer pressure.
- 2) On Alcohol Drinking – More than three-fourths of the respondents (295 or 76.42% – 47 male and 248 female) have tried alcohol drinking. Currently, 93 or 24.09% (20 males and 73 females) are alcohol drinkers, although majority of them said they only drink when there is an occasion. Only three (one male and two female) revealed that they are regular alcohol drinkers. These drinkers drank either with family members, other relatives or school friends. Their main reasons for drinking were: a) pakikisama, curiosity and peer pressure, the same reasons they gave for smoking but in different order.
- 3) On the Use of Prohibited Drugs – In this regard, PNU is very lucky that there were only 7 or 1.81% (2 males and 5 females) of the respondents who were only occasional drug users. Their reasons for taking drugs were pakikisama and curiosity also.

- 4) Sex-Related Practices of the Respondents - Almost all of the respondents (374 or 96.89%) have had crushes, most of them had crushes on people of the opposite sex, although 7 of them – 5 males and 2 females had crushes belonging to the same sex. Some the respondents admitted (70 or 18.13%) that they were bisexual or attracted to both sexes. Majority of the respondents (280 or 72.54%) had experienced having boy/girlfriends. Majority of the respondents had their first girl/boyfriends when they were teenagers (13 to 19 years old), but there was one female respondent who claimed that she had her first boyfriend at the very young age of 8, another 14 of them had their first girl/boyfriend before they became teenagers. When asked how long courtship took place, most of the respondents (131 or 64.53) answered less than one year, 33 or 16.26% answered that no courtship happened. Many of the respondents (196 or 65.33%) had been involved in group dates. Majority of them (245 or 84.78%) went out alone with their girl/boyfriends. Although they had been going out alone with their girl/boyfriends, only 81 or 28.42% admitted that they had gone all the way with their girl/boyfriends. In this aspect, there was a bigger percentage of male respondents (50%) who had gone all the way as compared with the 24.69% of the female respondents. The male respondents started having sexual intercourse with their partners earlier (age 12 for 2 respondents, and others at ages 13 to 15). Among the female respondents, the youngest ones who engaged in sexual intercourse for the first time were four 16 year olds. Among the respondents who had experienced sexual intercourse, 13 of them did it with a partner of the same sex. The sexual intercourse was “something that they did not plan to happen” for 35 of the respondents, “something that they wanted to happen” for 30 respondents, and “something that they didn’t want to happen but went along with it” for 20 respondents. Although most of them claimed that they had only one sex partner so far, several of them admitted that they have had several sex partners. One male respondent has had 9 sex partners, one male and one female respondent answered that that they had already experienced sex with six different partners, another male respondent had sex intercourse with five different partners, while 24 of the other respondents have had 3 to 4 different sex partners, so far.
- 5) Attitudes of the respondents towards certain sex-related activities – Although there were some respondents who approved and strongly approved the four sex-related issues included in the study, most of them, both male and female, either disapproved or strongly disapproved of the following issues: a) “same sex” marriage; b) two people living together as husband and wife but not legally married; and c) a woman engaged in sexual intercourse before marriage. Only the female respondents disapproved of the issue on “a man engaged in sexual intercourse before marriage.” .
- 6) Implications of the findings of the study on guidance and teacher education – To address problems related to the above-mentioned issues, a well-structured and organized student personnel program can be put in place to equip the students with the skills to make decisions that they will not regret later in their lives, and to solve their problems without turning to different vices or drugs. The PNU’s Office of Student Affairs and Student Services (OSASS) should coordinate and monitor the university student services program to promote the welfare of the students; provide adequate

services that respond to their varied needs; enhance their intellectual, cultural, and social development; assist them in the decision-making process; and develop their intrapersonal, interpersonal and social relations (PNU Student Handbook, 2005)

The results of the study are imperative in realizing the objectives of the OSASS. Programs can further be enhanced by focusing on providing social support and coming up with relevant programs to facilitate students' understanding of the idea of pakikisama, the effects of succumbing to curiosity, and making intelligent choices in their relationships.

Guidance counselors handling guidance-related subjects can include various group activities that will process students to become equipped in problem-solving and become critical thinkers. Although few students actually admitted that they were smoking, drinking alcohol, taking prohibited drugs and engaging in pre-marital sex, discussions on these topics could further help the students consider other choices in terms of prioritizing issues, handling conflicts and standing by their convictions.

The data provided from this study can serve as initial needs assessment of the problems and issues college students experience, as well as what they need to cope with the pressures around them.

More importantly, guidance activities addressing these issues can, in time, open more concerns that brought about the issues in the first place, like family problems, financial problems, insecurity, etc. In return, the students can become more capable of meeting challenges that may face them when they graduate and become teachers who will need to guide their students.