



Emerging Emic Perspective from Gender-Classified Junior High School Students with Formal Catholic Formation

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ABSTRACT:

The study aims to assess the emic perspective of gender-classified junior high school students with formal catholic formation. Particularly, the study aims: to determine as gender-classified their perception toward marriage and family, gender-sensitivity, and reproductive health as taught in the Christian living subjects. The descriptive research design was utilized using Fr. Cardin's See-Judge-Act paradigm substantiated by a set of questionnaires. The respondents of the study were grade ten (10) junior basic education students in a private university. When permission was given, the researcher distributed the instruments to be answered by the respondents. The instrument reveals the Christian living curriculum on sexuality and is divided into three parts; the first part presents Christian living lessons on marriage and family, the second part presents lessons on gender sensitivity, and the third part presents lessons on reproductive health. The data were treated statistically using the weighted mean and frequency. The study revealed that when gender-classified students have relatively adhered to the teachings of catholic education as taught in the Christian living subjects. Some were open to ideas and alternatives on marriage and family, gender sensitivity, and reproductive health that diverted from traditional teachings of Catholic education as respondents perceived it as already impractical and irrelevant. Males were open to homosexual relationships, civil unions, pre-marital sex, and cohabitation. Males were less adhering to catholic education than females. The study implies based on the respondents' emic perspective led the researcher to propose for a revision of the catholic education curriculum to be gender contextualized to develop students in the context of Catholic education appropriately.

Keywords: Emerging Emic Perspective, Gender-classified junior high school students, Formal Catholic education, Philippines

1. Introduction

Catholic schools are the most important locus for human and Christian formation in the Philippines according to the National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines (NCDP, 2007). It constitutes Catholic moral education, which is taught as part of the schools' curriculum, in the subject of Christian Living (CL). Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP, 2016) retains its high-quality standard to be at par with Catholic schools worldwide without compromising their evangelizing mission. Catholic schools have been making efforts to emphasize spiritual and human formation as an essential factor with academic professional training as the mark of an authentic Catholic education (Lapsley & Kelley, 2022). The school beyond the family and the parish provides the best opportunities for continued knowledge in religious education (NCDP, 2007), a reason why most parents would prefer to send their children to Catholic schools, trusting their quality education and believing that their children will be morally good and god-fearing (Imbarack & Guzman, 2021). Also, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP, 1955) believes that parents recognize that Catholic schools can provide the full Christian education of their children.

Meanwhile, sexuality is one of the most debated topics across many cultures and traditions. Marriage and family, gender sensitivity, and reproductive health are some aspects that need to be explored if not resolved (Faludi & Rada, 2019). Sexuality remains elusive and enigmatic from a political, religious, educational, business, and personal perspective because one proposes while the other opposes the product of which the people suffer (Prekatsounaki & Enzlin, 2023). In the Philippines the highest percentage of crime is related to it, in 2004 for instance, 51.7% crimes of death row inmates were rape or rape with murder (Johnson & Zimring, 2009). Nowadays, marriage especially church marriage as a traditional institution is slowly deteriorating if not fast outdated. The entrance of other forms of marriages aside from heterosexual marriages and the rise of violations from it scandalizes many religious and political authorities, while the government works on how to accommodate it. Many churches seek to oppose it; thus, the problem of gender sensitivity is at stake (Cornelio & Dagle, 2019).

One of the concerns related to sexuality is women's Reproductive Health (RH) which is passionately sponsored by secularism (Hindin & OlaOlorun, 2020). Though a lot are in favor of the RH including the highest and very important personalities and politicians, it on the other hand faces very strong opposition not only from some individuals but by the Catholic church hierarchy and Catholic educational institutions that only accept the RH if it uses a natural method that promotes the safety and respect the right and dignity of human person (Thorne et al., 2019).

Catholic schools and universities as part of promoting the wholeness of human dignity and supernatural rights offer courses on theology and have created a particular department in it while the secondary schools are teaching it as one of the subjects in the form of Christian Living (CL) or Christian Living Education. Aside from these, the university is offering other religious-related activities like the outreach program and other religiously

motivated charitable works. These programs help the students boost their faith and morals (Zalnur et al., 2022). Students are not only expected to pass the subjects but are also expected to practice what they learned. This integration of learning and practice in the same way is the integration of faith and life that helps the students become responsible in the community with others (Udemba, 2024). They are also expected to participate in the school masses. Masses are also introduced per department or college. All year level in the secondary school has schedules and sponsorships in the mass. There are also daily prayers, sponsorship for each level, and other related programs (Ryan, 2022).

In promoting the dignity of the human being, topics on human sexuality are integrated into moral education and are offered to the juniors or seniors depending on the school curriculum (Shibuya et al., 2023). Moral education is taught at this level as their textbook suggests and entitled. This education is particularly discussed and is taken from the Ten Commandments as its fundamental source. The Ten Commandments as the source of the juniors' or seniors' moral and religious education offers complete guidelines for the students to live morally upright and spiritually inspiring Christian lives (Milingo, 2020). The first three commandments suggest how to live a life about God and the rest offer how to live a life concerning fellow human beings. The sixth commandment in particular talks about sexuality, as it states: "Thou shall not commit adultery" (Tian, 2023).

Sexuality, as the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE, 1983) said it is a fundamental component of personality expressed in human love. It characterizes man and woman on physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual levels. Oriented, elevated, and integrated by love is truly a human quality. In the light of the mystery of Christ, sexuality is a vocation of love enriched in the sacrament of marriage as tied to the order of creation and the transmission of life (Grey & Selling, 2020). Its nature and purpose should be taken care of. The document continues further that in today's climate of moral degradation and disorientation, the meaning of sexuality is reduced to a mere sexual pleasure that falsifies the intimate nature of a human being brought forth by his creator (Werner et al., 2023). The relationship of sexual intimacy that is reserved for marriage is forgotten among adolescents without reaching the realization of authentic love in marriage. The Sacred Congregation for Education therefore issued guidelines in sex education. With the advances of science in teaching, the council stated that children and young people be assisted in the development of their physical, moral, and intellectual endowments (Levand & Ross, 2021). In this dimension, education should bring children to the knowledge of respect for the moral norms necessary for the growth of human sexuality. The family, parish, school, Christian community, teachers, and materials should promote the development and full maturity of human beings. In accomplishing therefore this mission the contribution of schools and the church is delicate and be carried out in agreement with the family for the realization of full human maturity (Rubio & King, 2020).

It is expected that Catholic school students must follow what they have learned in school (Lapsley & Kelley, 2022). At the ultimate level, they are expected to live morally and become models to other students outside the school premises including their homes and in public places. Because of their distinctive advantages and sufficiently assimilated Christian values, they are personally committed to living authentic Christian values as lay apostles in their fields (Massaro, 2023). Hence, this paper will try to investigate whether Catholic schools and their students have indeed assimilated and lived out Christian values and how much the school influences the students' lives and perceptions of sexuality.

1.1. Objective of the Study

This paper determined the influence of the Catholic school's Christian Living Education Program on sexuality among junior high school students at a private university by using an emic perspective. Also, when gender-classified, it checked what emic perspective can emerge from the junior high school students' judgment on their Catholic formation specifically on marriage and family, gender and sensitivity, and reproductive health. Likewise, it formulated synthesis from the differences of emic perspective gained from the female and male judgment. Lastly, it identified what implications will the differences give to the existing Catholic formation program if there are differences from the emic perspectives of the Catholic teachings.

1.2 Framework of the Study

In this study, the researcher determined the influence of the Catholic Religious Education Program on sexuality among Grade 10 junior high school students at a private university especially on the students' perceptions toward marriage and family, gender sensitivity, and reproductive health. Christian Living and Religious Programs and Activities were analyzed to determine whether these factors were sufficient to educate and influence the students' perception toward sexuality and whether they assimilate morally in making decisions according to Catholic Education standards. The study employed the method of Fr. Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967), the See-Judge-Act framework. It was a preferred method because it has a social context. Meanwhile, this method of reflection has been reformulated by the Asian Bishops as "reflection-action-spiral." Many Christians do theology in such a method by allowing two faith experiences: the experience in the past interpreted in the bible and church tradition and the present-day experiences in a dialogue constantly progressing spiral movement (Wostyn, 2004).

Figure 1 shows the See-Judge-Act framework. *See*, is a way of analyzing the human experience or human Christian experience within the socio-cultural and historical context of the present (Caron, 2020). Socio-cultural means the immediate social experiences and cultural experiences of the person with whom the person belonged to and grew up. Historical, is a collection of the person's experiences that influence his life up to the present. Thus, socio-cultural and historical context are factors that influence his vision to see the particular experience (Brecht, 2019). *Judge* is to bring that particular experience into dialogue with the person's Judeo-Christian Tradition (JCT) or a dialogue with their faith (Caron, 2020). If a person is a Christian then his experience should be in dialogue with the Judeo-Christian Tradition. The person does this by asking which part of his faith helps him to bring good news to his life and his situation. This process or dialogue is an invitation to rediscover and reformulate the Christian message within their context which finally leads to action. *Act* or to translate is the acting out of the refocused (new) Christian message into an action which affects the persons' head, heart, and hands, bringing well-being to their situation (Caron, 2020). Finally, part of this action is the celebration.

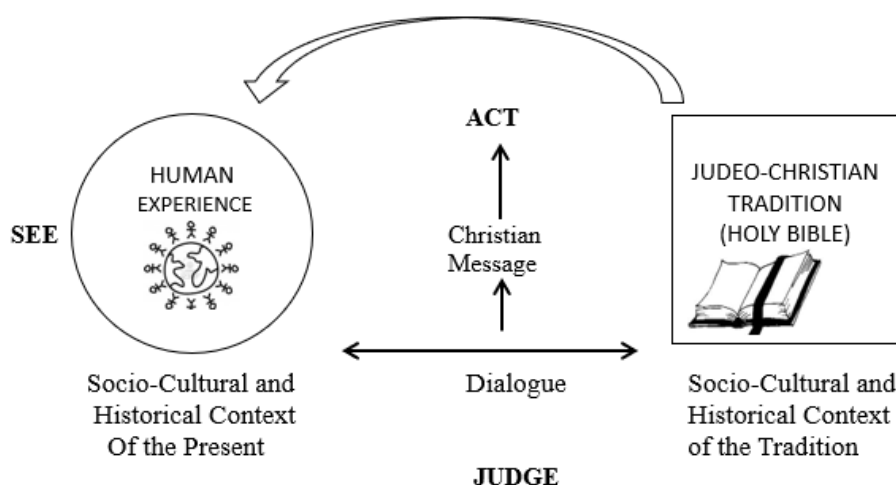


Fig. 1- The See-Judge-Act Paradigm of Fr. Cardijn

2.0 Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research design, particularly the descriptive approach. This design focuses on what can be measured statistically (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The process uses detailed questionnaires and is distributed to the respondents to collect information. Meanwhile, the descriptive approach was employed to define the various possible causes of the problem. This method enabled the researcher to identify the different variables concerning this study that will be statistically quantified. In the context of this study, this approach described the influence of Catholic Schools on Christian living education programs among students. Emic perspective was also used because respondents have received a common curriculum and instruction. The respondents of the study were 269 Grade 10 Junior High School students in a private university. They were determined using the purposive sampling method. This sampling was employed because this study can only be responded to by those who have received enough knowledge on the Catholic School Christian living education program.

In gathering the data, the researcher utilized a validated and reliability-tested researcher-made questionnaire to measure the level of influence of Catholic education in the lives of the students. The researcher carefully developed the questionnaire based on meticulous investigation and analysis of the related literature and studies. Questions were made on the Catholic schools' Christian living education program and from a Catholic perspective on sexuality as presented in the related literature and studies. The recent issues on sexuality were also instrumental in the development of this study. The Questionnaire is generally based on Catholic education on sexuality and is divided into 3 parts and has 10 questions in each part. Part 1 is formulated concerning the perception toward marriage and family, gender sensitivity in Part 2, and reproductive health in Part 3. In this set of questionnaires, the respondents will be asked to express their level of agreement using the scale model of the questionnaire where each of the following values is given with the respective equivalence: 5 Strongly Agree, 4 Agree, 3 Neither agree nor disagree, 2 Disagree, 1 Strongly disagree.

In data analysis, weighted mean, and frequency distribution were used to analyze the study. Weighted means were used to measure the answers of the respondents in the Judge area of the questionnaire. Frequency distribution was used to count in the Act area which served to validate the Judge area in determining the accuracy of the respondents' answer, whether they have really assimilated the Catholic formation in their lives vis-à-vis, the area of See, or have truly responded to their Catholic formation or education from the school. In determining the quality of the responses, interpretation was used to assess the responses of the respondents on their perception of the Catholic School's curriculum and instruction in Christian Living. In the Act area, frequency count was used and matched or compared with the judge to determine the validity of the responses. Lastly, the researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). The researcher addressed the general principles of respect for people, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice. Particularly, it addressed issues of vulnerability, privacy, and confidentiality.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 Emerging Emic Perspectives from Junior High School Students' Judgment on their Catholic Formation when classified according to Gender

Emic Perspective in Marriage and Family. The respondents' perspective shows that they have high regard for the sacredness of marriage, males ($M=4.25$) (AO) and females ($M=4.35$) (SA). Females (SA) however have a slightly higher level of agreement compared to males (AC) which may state that females are likely to adhere to the teachings of the Catholic school. However, female respondents tend not to put it into practice. Only a little higher than fifty percent which is Sixty-nine percent (69.06%) of females said that they will live by it, which is lower compared to males (73.08%), females' respondents also have a high percentage (30.94%) say that they will not follow it. There is a huge gap between the agreement of the respondents and their actions. The perception as regards this teaching goes against the actions of female respondents.

Marriage as a contract between male and female only, as perceived by both gender groups is relatively lower compared to item number one. Males ($M=3.94$) and females ($M=3.66$) are like to have an open view about marriage (AC). Males (64.62%) and females (71.22%) said yes to heterosexual marriage which entails around a quarter of each gender group 29.23% of males and 23.02 % are open to homosexual marriage or unions, with a greater percentage in males. Marriage loyalty between husband and wife is still perceived in high regard, as male respondents ($M=4.50$) and females ($M=4.58$) an overwhelming 85.38% of them are loyal in deeds, the same with females 82.73%. The level of agreement for both genders is consistent with their actions. True enough, the respondents agree that mutual love and loyalty to both partners are necessary. Moreover, item number five validates that indeed the respondents strongly agreed (SA) to live their marriage in the church till the end. Church marriage as perceived by the respondents remains respected.

On the contrary, both males and females are neutral to the idea that civil unions can be an alternative to church marriage. Many of them accept civil unions but disagree with the church's view of it as sinful ($M=2.86$ for male [NAD] and $M=2.70$ for female [NAD]) it is not surprising why many perceived civil unions as an alternative to church marriage (Lasio & Serri, 2019). This data is supported by the CBCP report, that church marriage is declining (Danzuka, 2022). In terms of action, males and females prefer not to have civil unions (62.31% for males and 70.50% for females), still a great percentage say will have civil union especially male respondents (36.92%) compared with females (25.18%). This proves that church marriage remains desirable but given an alternative, those who cannot afford are forced to have a civil union usually for convenience (Lawler & Salzman, 2022). The study conducted by the PCW (2007) proved that Filipinos as an alternative chose civil marriage. As presented, most of the female are inclined to have church weddings than their male counterpart. Item 6 is supported by item number 7, in an almost undecided point though most of the respondents agree yet remain open to other options (AC) ($M=3.10$ for males). A disturbing result is shown in the idea of premarital sex and live-in. both gender groups showed unclarified ($M=3.10$ for males, 3.22 for females). This suggests that students become more open despite Catholic teachings, because of that, students regardless of gender, are most likely prone to engage in these kinds of acts as they believe that sexual relationships and live-in are not sinful (59.23% [male], 74.84% [female]) as supported by Freitas (2015).

Adultery and concubinage like the latter are also alarming (Nascimento, 2022). Only a few of the respondents see it as gravely sinful (3.81 [male] and 3.85 [females]). While maintaining agreement with the faith, respondents are also open to other relationships which may lead to adultery (Schneider, 2025). Male (73. 85%) respondents are rather loyal to their female partner and females (69.06%) are more inclined or liberated. In items number 9 and 10, the respondents strongly agree that marriage is for the good of family and children which also coincides that many of them will tend to the needs of their family and children (Wallerstein, 2019). Indeed, the respondents consider the sense of belongingness or family significant. Marriage for most of the respondents is about having a family of their own jeopardizing the concepts of marital sex and loyalty which does not align with their faith (Lamanna et al., 2022). As presented by the overall weighted mean males and females agree (AC) with the church teaching on marriage ($M=4.03$ for males and $M=4.04$ for females). On the other hand, there is a great contradiction between their perception and action. This implies that the influence of Catholic education on the formation of students is not applied. These may be brought by the influences of peers, and social media around them.

Table 1- Emic Perspective in Marriage and Family

See	Judge				Act			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Marriage and Family	M	D	F	D	M	F	M	F
1. Marriage in the church as a sacrament united by God cannot be separated by man.	4.25	AC	4.35	SA	73.08%	69.06%	23.85%	30.94%
2. Marriage is a contract between male and female only.	3.94	AC	3.66	AC	64.62%	71.22%	29.23%	23.02%
3. Marriage requires loyalty between husband and wife	4.50	SA	4.58	SA	85.38%	82.73%	11.54%	11.51%
4. Marriage demands loyalty and mutual love in respect to both partners.	4.52	SA	4.61	SA	82.31%	84.89%	14.62%	8.63%
5. Once married, a husband or wife must live with it till death.	4.38	SA	4.41	SA	80.77%	82.01%	16.15%	11.51%
6. Civil Marriage and Unions are sinful	2.86	NAD	2.70	NAD	36.92%	25.18%	62.31%	70.50%
7. Any sexual relationship before marriage like live-in is sinful.	3.10	NAD	3.22	NAD	36.92%	17.27%	59.23%	74.82%
8. Having an extra-marital affair is gravely sinful.	3.81	AC	3.85	AC	22.31%	22.30%	73.85%	69.06%
9. Marriage is for the creation of a family and the good of children.	4.39	SA	4.48	SA	83.85%	90.65%	13.85%	3.60%
10. Married couples have the primary responsibility in the upbringing of their children and family.	4.56	SA	4.52	SA	83.08%	89.93%	13.08%	4.32%
Overall Mean	4.03	AC	4.04	AC	64.92%	63.53%	31.77%	30.79%

Note: SA (strongly agree), AC (Agree and Open for Change), NAD (Neither Agree nor Disagree), DC (disagree and Open for Change), SD (Strongly Disagree)

Emic perspective on gender-sensitivity. On the perception toward gender sensitivity, equality in the matter of dignity between males and females, the

respondents perceive both with strongly agree (SA) (M=4.55 for males and M=4.62 for females), which means that the respondents have truly assimilated their Catholic formation, and also supported by the fact that the respondents' decision and action which 86.15 % of males and 84.89% of females are doing it. Consequently, the respondents recognize from each individual the innate value of each person's dignity as taught by the Catholic education which tells that human dignity is given by their creator (Lapsley & Kelley, 2022). The respondents who adhere to the idea that it is only men and women that were created, showed lower results (M=3.75 for males and M=3.89 for females) which means that while men and women are equal in dignity, the respondents also recognize the existence of LGBT communities. This acceptance however is contradicted in action. Males (66.15%) are slightly unaccepting of the LGBT while females are more accepting toward the LGBT as proven by their answer 71.22%, which tells that males' superiority remains strong from males formulated Catholic education or males are more receptive to the LGBT (30.77%) than females (20.86%).

As to the purpose of sexual identities both males and females agree to its purpose toward marriage with both having mean scores of (AC) 3.99 for males and 3.76 for females. The percentage however is quite low and open for a possible use for pleasure. Female respondents are more liberal and open to embracing other identities and for pleasure like the LGBT while males are rather firm compared with the females as supported by Richters et al. (2014).

Concerning work, male and female respondents have the same answer (AC). Both believe that in their partnership, males are slightly dominant (M=3.64 for males and M=3.53 for females), and equality in the performance of their work exists which is validated by their actions (33.85% for males and 30.94% for females). Exclusivity of works does not exist anymore (Williams, 2023). Male-related works and female-related works, which used to be perceived as exclusive are no longer seen, as both female and male respondents disagree with it (M=2.87 for males and M=2.77 for females), Both males and females apply equality in work as supported by Khabarova (2023).

In vocation and call to holiness, both gender groups strongly agree that both genders have equal degrees of involvement. They adhere to the teaching of Catholic education that males and females are both called to serve the Lord and or are called toward the holiness of life. In Act, females are less interested and committed (68.35%) to the holiness of life rather than males, this, is perhaps because Catholic educational institutions that are popular are male-dominated and have influenced female perception as supported by Harford and O'Donoghue (2021). Males (71.54%) are more adhering in action because of the male-influenced Catholic education and instruction (O'Connor, 2020).

In expressing one's gender, modesty should be observed. Both male and female agree that expression of oneself must be done with modesty and shall be free from indecencies or any scandalous expression. The score (M=3.90 male, M=3.97 female) suggests the possibility for homosexual expression and relationships which is accordingly accepted by the respondents. As presented in the act, 74.62% of males and 74.10% of females affirm that indeed homosexual relationship at some point is openly expressed with some reservations, those possibly engaging in it are 22.31 % of males and 17.99% of females. Branding and stereo-typing or respecting the good name or integrity of others is also evident among males (M=4.22 [males], M=4.46 [females]). In Act, however, 20% of males and 16.55% of females are stereotyped and involved in name-calling and labeling as supported by Charlesworth and Banaji (2022). At some point, however, it is not that alarming because in general males and females remain respectful of the good name of each one. Moreover, acceptance of one's own sexual identity is necessary for one to be respected by others, as it can be the basis for others so that respect will be given to the person without asking for it. Based on the latter, male and female respondents strongly agree with it (M=4.22 [male], M=4.53 [female]). Homosexuals or LGBT are generally tolerated as shown, by males (M=3.97) and females (M=4.03). Males are more open-minded towards homosexuality and perhaps relationships, Males are also more balanced in their perception and actions toward the opposite and same-sex compared to females who are more firm and assertive of their identities as opposed to the study by Metin-Orta and Metin-Camgöz (2020). Catholic education resulted in a set of open-minded individuals (Ryan, 2022).

Table 2- Emic Perspective on Gender-sensitivity

See		Judge			Act			
					Yes		No	
Gender-sensitivity	M	D	F	D	M	F	M	F
1. God created man and woman equally with dignity.	4.55	SA	4.62	SA	86.15%	84.89%	11.54%	7.91%
2. God has created only man and woman.	3.75	AC	3.89	AC	66.15%	71.22%	30.77%	20.86%
3. Gender identities are oriented toward the purpose of marriage and family.	3.99	AC	3.76	AC	73.08%	67.63%	23.85%	24.46%
4. Male and female are created in the image and the likeness of God with the mission to multiply.	4.25	AC	4.33	SA	76.92%	82.01%	18.46%	10.79%
5. Male is the first creation of God and female is his helper since the beginning.	3.64	AC	3.53	AC	61.54%	61.15%	33.85%	30.94%
6. Male works are exclusive for males only because God chose them for them.	2.87	NAD	2.77	NAD	46.15%	41.01%	49.23%	51.08%
7. Man and Woman are both	4.27	AC	4.43	SA	71.54%	68.35%	18.46%	16.55%

called to live a holy life.								
8. One's gender should be expressed modestly according to the purpose of God.	3.90	AC	3.97	AC	74.62%	74.10%	22.31%	17.99%
9. Respect the good name of others and avoid stereotyping.	4.22	AC	4.46	SA	76.15%	74.82%	20.00%	16.55%
10. Respect and acceptance of one's sexual identity.	4.22	AC	4.53	SA	80.00%	81.29%	16.92%	11.51%
Overall Mean	3.97	AC	4.03	AC	71.23%	70.65%	24.54%	20.86%

Note: SA (Strongly agree), AC (Agree and Open for Change), NAD (Neither Agree nor Disagree), DC (disagree and Open for Change), SD (Strongly Disagree)

Emic Perspective on Reproductive Health. Reproductive Health is a crucial point when husband and wife make decisions as to what they perceive as good for their health (Grace et al., 2021). Catholic education instructs Catholic students according to what the Church teaches (Lapsley & Kelley, 2022). Husbands and wives, especially women, regardless of two opposing sides make crucial decisions for their health that oftentimes cross paths against the Catholic teachings, from what is moral and what is legal; that is promoted by the state (Thorne et al., 2019). The respondents in this survey agree (AC) (M=3.54 for males and M=3.53 for females) to the Catholic instruction on the right of husbands and wives to choose for their reproductive health. Catholic instruction indeed influenced the respondents, yet only 59.23% of males and 69.06% of females expressed their willingness to follow what they have received from catholic instruction. In this sense, almost 50% of the respondents are open to alternatives that are available by the state and others. Males are more open to alternatives than females (Grace et al., 2019). Moreover in determining the number of children, both males and females agree (AC) (3.16 [male], 3.22 [female]) to the methods proposed by Catholic education. Without closing their minds to other alternatives, the respondents welcome the state's interventions to try alternatives like artificial methods which is at some point contrary to the doctrine of Catholic education on natural family planning (Thorne et al., 2019). Males value sexual obligations more than females. Thus, more males (71.54%) are committed to fulfilling such tasks than females (58.27%). Item number 3 asked both partners about their sexual obligation, male agreed a bit higher (M=3.76) than females (M=3.44), and male agreement was intensified by a huge percentage of males 71.54% feel that sexual obligation is necessary while female is only 58.27%. Males are more committed or more sexually active than females and see the need to do it to satisfy their partner's needs as part of their marriage. Respondents do not conform to the idea that parents alone are responsible for making their children aware of their sexuality (M=3.58 for males, and M=3.25 for females). This means that males and females perceived it as not their sole obligation (Rabbitte & Enriquez, 2019). The school in part has the greater obligation to educate their children in matters related to human sexuality. Rightly so, a child's development is not healthy if the child is not exposed to socialization with children of their age (He et al., 2024). Children are more open to expressing themselves with their peers than toward their parents. In the development of healthy sexuality both aspects, family and peers are necessary to be involved (Thorne et al., 2019).

Loyalty to the partner is the answer to avoid STI (Fatiah et al., 2025). Male respondents agree with it (M=4.05) while females are more liberated (M=3.98) and perceive that artificial contraception may also be effective. This implies that females can be open to extra-marital relationships (Mayeli, 2025). In Act, however, the reverse is reflected in their actions as more males (23.8%) than females (21.58%) are more likely open to having multiple sexual partners. This shows that males are good deceivers or to some extent polygamous as supported by Mufarochah et al. (2025). Females in the same way are not far from males as it is only a little than 2% difference. Therefore, to avoid STIs, despite unfaithfulness, loyalty remains the solution (Fatiah et al., 2025). Inconsistencies were seen in the idea of premarital sex (Ghaffari et al., 2020). Both groups strongly agree (M=4.00 for males and M=4.08 for females) that sex should be done within marriage. But when it comes to actions, both males (33.08%) and females (24.46%) are open to pre-marital sex. This proves that indeed pre-marital activity and unwanted pregnancy are rampant among adults which may result in STI, unwanted pregnancy, and worse, abortion for their unreadiness or fear of parental responsibility (Fatiah et al., 2025). Indeed, young men and women by their age are curious as to what is happening to their bodies. This is confirmed by males (31.54%) and females (33.09%) who are open to experimentation to satisfy their longing for pleasure as supported by Laan et al. (2021).

Natural means of making a child as taught by the Catholic education is the only acceptable way (Massaro, 2023). With so many problems that exist nowadays, especially with the reproductive system of women and some men, other means of producing a child are made available with the help and discoveries of new technology (Robertson, 2021). The respondents see those as options in case problems may exist. Though most of the respondents are loyal to the teachings (M=3.57 for males and M=3.82 for females), they are still willing to explore other methods when the need arises as supported by Thorne et al. (2019).

The rights and value of human life belong only to God (Massaro, 2023). This means that abortion is vehemently forbidden. Influenced by Catholic education the respondents give high regard to the importance of life. Males (M=4.00) and females (M=4.27) are not willing to do abortions. Unless necessary, by fear or out of pressure abortion is the last option for the 23.85% of males and 12.95% of females who are not yet prepared to become parents. Overall, reproductive health as taught by Catholic education has a slightly high impact on the respondents as both male and female of only 63.92% and 63.31% have answered confirmed their obedience to it. This suggests that the respondents are open to other options that are available when circumstances push them to consider. This provides a reason why the reproductive health bill in the Philippines made it through into the House of Representatives and the Senate became a law and was ratified by the Supreme Court.

Table 3- Emic Perspective On Reproductive Health

See	Judge				Act			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Reproductive Health	M	D	F	D	M	F	M	F

1. Only husband and wife have the right to choose and decide what is good for their reproductive health.	3.54	AC	3.53	AC	59.23%	69.06%	37.69%	25.90%
2. In determining the number of children parents can only choose natural methods like the calendar method recommended by the church.	3.16	NAD	3.22	NAD	58.46%	58.27%	36.15%	31.65%
3. Sexual obligation between husband and wife must be fulfilled.	3.76	AC	3.44	NAD	71.54%	58.27%	26.15%	33.81%
4. It is the parents' responsibility at home to teach their children about sexuality.	3.58	AC	3.25	NAD	56.15%	56.83%	39.23%	33.81%
5. Parents' responsibility includes taking care of their children to have a proper sexual orientation.	3.68	AC	3.59	AC	56.92%	62.59%	37.69%	28.78%
6. Faithfulness to both partners is the answer to avoid contamination from any Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).	4.05	AC	3.98	AC	71.54%	70.50%	23.08%	21.58%
7. Young men and women should refrain from having sex until marriage to avoid STIs and unwanted pregnancy.	4.00	AC	4.08	AC	63.08%	67.63%	33.08%	24.46%
8. Reproductive organs are solely for the purpose of Procreation and not for pleasure and experiment.	3.58	AC	3.77	AC	63.85%	57.55%	31.54%	33.09%
9. Human bodies are sacred other forms of making a child aside from natural means between mother and father are forbidden.	3.57	AC	3.82	AC	66.92%	52.52%	29.23%	38.13%
10. The value and rights of human life belongs only to God.	4.00	AC	4.27	AC	71.54%	79.86%	23.85%	12.95%
Overall Mean	3.69	AC	3.69	AC	63.92%	63.31%	31.77%	28.42%

Note: SA (Strongly agree), AC (Agree and Open for Change), NAD (Neither Agree nor Disagree), DC (disagree and Open for Change), SD (Strongly Disagree)

3.2 Formulated Synthesis from the Differences of Emic Perspective Gained from the Female and Male Judgment

Differences are inevitable between males and females. In the first set, (marriage and family) males opt to live their church marriage, which shows that they still have high respect for it. Marriage once contracted is a serious thing that must be dealt with seriously as 73.08% of them are willing to commit to it and with a high perception of mean that is equal to 4.25 (AC). Males accept that marriage is only between male and female yet the possibility of engaging in homosexual relationships is open since only 64.62% of them live out their contract between their female partners. Moreover, they are also open for civil union, live-in, and premarital sex which contradicts the Catholic teaching as supported by Ojiambo (2021).

Females, on the other hand, give more respect to the unity between males and females in marriage rather than having homosexual relationships as found in the study of Conroy et al. (2020). Their respect for marriage as a traditional institution joined for the good of the family remained firm especially as regards the upbringing of the children (SA) with 90% of them abiding by it. Indeed, true to Catholic education, marriage is to have children and take care of them (Sander, 2019).

On gender sensitivity, males perceived that gender identities are oriented toward the purpose of marriage and family (73.08%) compared to females. It does not take away the fact however that identities can also be used for pleasure (Mufarochah et al., 2025). Females are unlikely to accept homosexuals (71.22%), as they believe that there are only two identities, and these are men and women. This implies that they do not accept homosexuals as created by God. True to their stand, females believe that only man and woman can multiply and produce offspring because sexual identities are not for pleasure but for a purpose (Conroy et al., 2020).

Reproductive health as one of the controversial bills passed in the Philippines law has divided the nation from its political to religious aspects. Reproductive health as a matter of choice is crucial to the health of those who patronize it (Thorne et al., 2019). It is a decision that husband and wife must talk about as it may endanger their health. It is from this that each crosses paths against their religious affiliation, from what is legal to what is moral (Grey & Selling, 2020). Accordingly, people have difficulty in making decisions. Male respondents in this survey perceived that sex is an obligation for married partners and it must be consummated. Males (71%) fulfilled this obligation following Catholic education which taught that sex must be consummated. Females are less willing toward the consummation of sex as it may impregnate them. Males agree that reproductive organs are to be used only for the creation of children and not for seeking pleasure (63.85%). More so, that male prefers to have a natural way of producing a child rather than resort to any artificial means which may cast doubt on their paternity and might be unhealthy to the growing fetus (Robertson, 2021).

On the other hand, female respondents to protect themselves from destruction, agree (M=4.08) with Catholic education not to have pre-marital intimacy before marriage. Most females (67.63%) are willing to preserve their health. The spread of STIs is due to unscrupulous sex, especially to the young who are adventurous and only want to experience it which sometimes results in to lack of control. Females are very careful of their bodies not because they do not engage in pre-marital intercourse but because they do not want to be pregnant when they are not yet ready, and to avoid contamination from STI (Fatiah et al., 2025). In addition, females value the importance of life over males. Females (4.27) perceive the value of the life of a fetus inside their womb and are willing (79.86%) to have it seen alive until birth. Pregnancy is a serious thing for women because it involves not only their health but also the life inside them (Bagherzadeh et al., 2021).

In general, however, male and female respondents while consenting to Catholic education as regards reproductive health do not close their stance for more alternatives that are available. The results show that only a little high from half of the respondents submit to the teachings of catholic education as regards reproductive health (males [63.92%], females [63.31%]). Presented by the result, Catholic education must consider both sexes to be present in the formulation of religious education curricula and materials. Males and females should participate in a rigorous formulation to come up with a nearly perfect and unbiased curriculum. There is a need to reformulate or revise the curriculum and instructional materials following the culture of time or signs of time (Lumen Gentium), a curriculum that favors the formation of the people's development (Milingo, 2020). Experts in many fields like psychology, science, counseling, and theology have to help each other for religious education to have a humanly systematic curriculum and not just a piece of doctrinal theology (Ryan, 2022; Fernando et al., 2025). The See-Judge-Act method is a preferred methodology to formulate a new or revise the curriculum and instructional materials. In Addition, school administrators should take a look at it as it is the essence and the reason for the school's existence and continued progress (Udemba, 2024; Fernando et al., 2024).

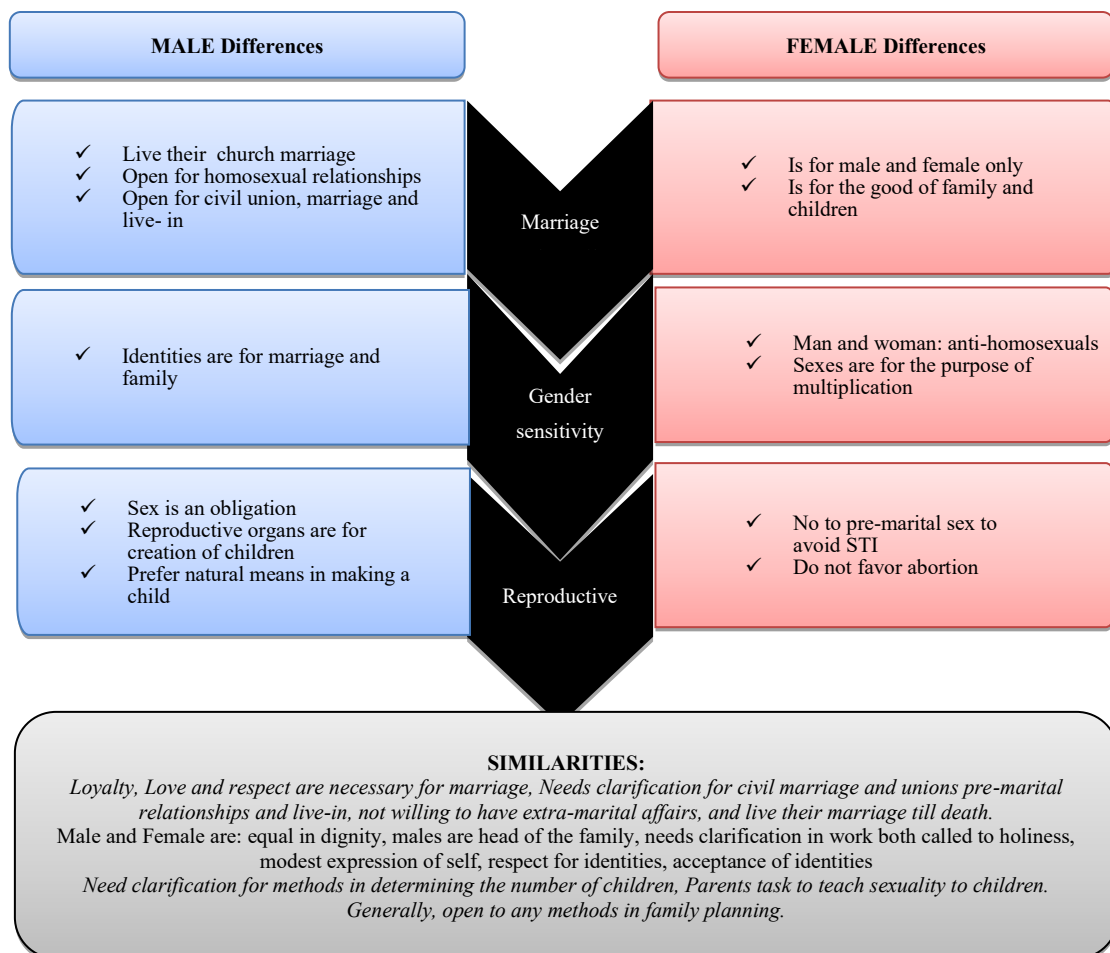


Fig. 2. Synthesis of judgments from the respondents based on emic perspective

3.3 Implications of Emic Perspective to the Catholic Formation Program

The result implies the respondents perceive Catholic education on marriage and family with fondness ($M=4.03$ [male], $M=4.04$ [female]). On the other hand, their perception is not accompanied by their action rather the respondents choose to cross boundaries to become realistic. Both genders who have consented to their perception are only 64.92% for males and 63.53% for females, a slightly higher 50%. It shows that more and more Filipinos are going away from the traditional values of Maria Clara or conservatism. In items 6 and 7, the respondents have gone away from the concept of sin in civil marriages and unions, and live-in and pre-marital sex as sinful, both sexes give a NAD response. It emerges therefore that teachings on marriage and family in matters of the latter must be revised and improved because civil unions and pre-marital intimacy are becoming popular, and the people are carried away with it. Catholic education needs to find effective strategies and materials to bring back and keep people from engaging in what is perceived as sinful.

Some additional factors are to be addressed in the emotional or psychological aspects of the spouses that force them not to have church weddings (Udemba, 2024). Their unwillingness to follow comes not from what they have agreed upon but from what is at stake in their real life that may have provoked them to divert from ideal to popular. In this case, psychological issues on emotions are important to be settled (Milingo, 2020).

On gender sensitivity, the existing curriculum does not explicitly discuss it. It emerges from the respondents that there is an imbalance between males and females as regards work, both gender needs clarification or some point (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2022). Males are deemed to be still dominant and superior. This effect springs from the fact that Catholic education is formulated exclusively by an all-male society that has imposed some unacceptable biases on women (O'Connor, 2020).

Of the 3 sets, reproductive health receives the lowest responses of agreement from both males and females. RH is perceived to be good as regards to the sexual health problems. The overall weighted mean score presents both males and females to have a mean score of 3.69 (AC). This shows that the respondents are confused and divided in their stance on Catholic teaching about RH and implies that the respondents are more concerned about what they need in terms of their health. They are practical people rather than idealistic. They knew the concerns of their health and their need as it is their bodies that are at stake. They rather choose to cross paths with what they knew about their Catholic education than to put themselves in danger (Udemba, 2024). Indeed, they are right, Catholic education is formulated not by health experts but by theologians (Ballano, 2025). Education must be more understanding and flexible to the needs of the bodies, especially with women's bodies, as the body is sacred. Moreover, Catholic teaching on RH needs more time for clarification and reformulation that may fit the needs of men and women. It needs somehow a focus on psychology and a balance of spirituality instead of discussing what is sinful. Morality in some way is about what is right and wrong (Foot, 2020). It will be wrong if the needs of the body are neglected just because it is taught by the school (Udemba, 2024). It is moreover sinful if the body that is the temple of the spirit and is created by God is to be abandoned because of adherence to the principle of Catholic education. It should be kept in mind that some of these Catholic educations are not "Dogmas" that are unchangeable; these are teachings that are also subject to change. It is good to read the signs of the time (Lumen Gentium) to deal with the people's needs (Ryan, 2022).

Catholic education shall not forget that it is not the spirit that brings damnation to itself but the body due to its weakness from which it is forced to do what it is not supposed to do. It is the body that does everything that can destroy the spirit or the whole humanity of the person. Therefore it is the body without neglecting the need of the spirit that shall be dealt with understanding and care. Catholic instruction needs adjustment, development, and integration or revision from theological, philosophical, and doctrinal teaching with psycho-spiritual lesson (Acero et al., 2025)

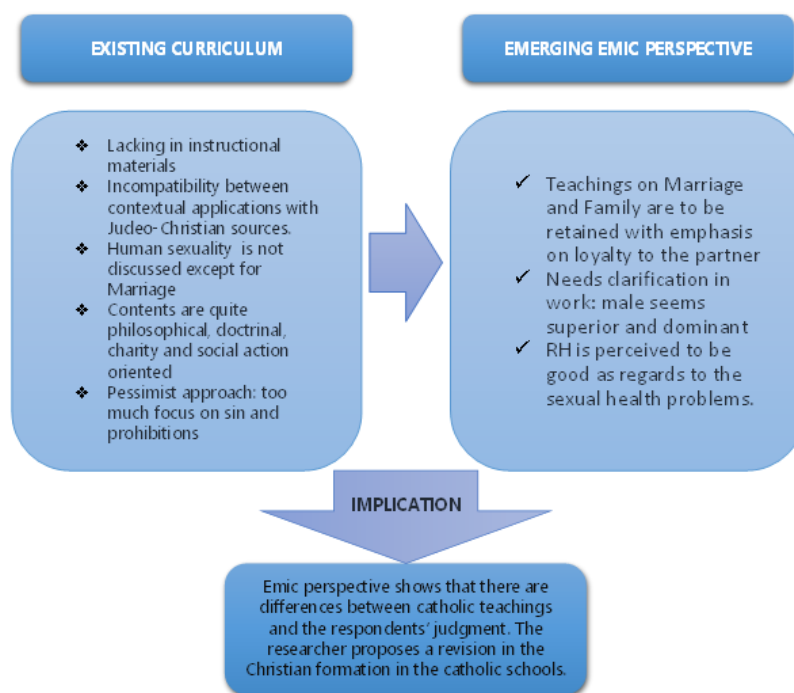


Fig. 3. Implications of Emic perspective to the Catholic Formation Program

4.0 Conclusion

The researcher's exploration of the junior high school emic perspective of marriage and family, gender-sensitivity, and RH ushered him to this conclusion: Because the existing Catholic education in Christian Living at the university junior high school does not: (1) Teach human sexuality and, (2) reveals inconsistencies between junior high schools way of life with their adherence to CLE, therefore, the Catholic education curriculum must be improved. To effectively implement the new revision of curriculum and instruction training and orientation for the preparation of those who are involved in the implementation is organized. First, the Department head together with academic coordinators, area leader, and Christian living teachers should orient themselves with the content of the revised curriculum and instruction. The Catholic schools are also invited to attend the seminar so that they may take into consideration the revision of their curriculum to have an effective Christian formation for heterogeneous audiences. Textbook writers should consider attending the seminar before writing so that there will be effective classroom instruction. Catholic Educational Associations for Christian formation considering their authoritative position should consider adapting this curriculum as a norm for formal Christian formation in catholic schools. Non-formal Christian formation in public schools should adapt this curriculum to enhance students' awareness and development of faith and human sexuality. Finally, this seminar is psycho-spiritual; thus, all those interested in attending are invited, this may help them discover and develop their understanding of themselves.

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