

Relationships among Peer Communication about Sex, Psycho-social Maturity, Parent-Adolescent Communication, and Sexual Attitude in Male University Students

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was carried out to identify the relationships among peer communication about sex, psycho-social maturity, parent-adolescent communication, and sexual attitude. *Methods:* A total of 239 male university students were recruited through convenience sampling. Data were collected by using questionnaire on peer communication about sex, PSMI, PACI, questionnaire on sexual attitude. *Results:* In male university students, the peer communication about sex was more active when the sex attitudes which were inclined to seeking pleasure, permissible, and responsible was higher. Also, when psycho-social maturity was higher, parent adolescent communication was more open, and age of first sexual experience was younger, the peer communication about sex was more active. *Conclusion:* It may be positive aspect that the peer communication about sex is high for the students with active parent-adolescent communication and high responsibility for contraception. However, the fact that peer communication about sex is animated when the student is younger, has a lower age of first sexual experience, and has higher hedonic and permissible sex attitude, should be considered in many other views. Therefore, prior to activating the peer sex communication, it is important to establish a correct sexual attitude.

Keywords: Peer communication about sex, Psycho-social maturity, Parent adolescent communication, Sexual attitude

1. Introduction

Undergraduate students are in the process of gaining autonomy away from the restriction and restraint in according to rapid change of environmental and life pattern. Especially in this period, proper values about sex and establishment of morality are desperately in need. The proper sex attitude can be formed through sexual communication with the person who communicates most with himself [1]. Young males can easily share information about sexual health with their peers [2]. They are, therefore, able to receive support with sexual health problems from their peers [1]. Through this, it can be seen that influence of the peers is great upon sexual knowledge, attitude, and action in adolescence. According to the preceding research, the sexual attitude is formed positively through the peer sex communication [1], also physical and mental sexual attitude is more positive when peer sex communication is more comfortably carried out [3]. Sexual communication with parents, particularly mothers, plays a small protective role in safer

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sex behavior among adolescents [4]. It is suggest that parent communication is also an important factor in sex attitude and behaviors. Psycho-social maturity has an important meaning to healthy personal characteristic or functioning adaptively in a society [5]. Psycho-social maturity is closely related to self-esteem [5], interpersonal relationship [6], so this research will find out how psycho-social maturity of undergraduate students influence the peer sex communication. This research aimed to analyze the correlations among peer communication about sex, psycho-social maturity, parent-adolescence communication, sexual attitude of male university students. We will attempt to provide basic data about management and arbitration to help the proper peer sex communication to raise the positive attitude and responsibility by the male students themselves.

2. Method

2.1. Study design

This study is a cross-sectional descriptive study for identifying the relationships among peer communication about sex, psycho-social maturity, parent-adolescent communication, and sexual attitude in male university students.

2.2. Participants

A total of 239 male university students were recruited, who live in S city, I city, D city, K province, C province, and J province through convenience sampling.

2.3. Measurement

2.3.1. Questionnaire on peer communication about sex

For measuring peer communication about sex, the parent-child sexual communication scale of Clay [7], that was adapted by Ha [8] was used. The questionnaire includes 18 questions, using a 5-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicated higher level of peer communication about sex. The Cronbach's alpha value was .87.

2.3.2. Psycho-social maturity inventory (PSMI)

Psycho-social maturity inventory (PSMI), developed by Roh [5], was consisted of 42 items and 7 factors, using a 5-point Likert scale. Seven factors include self-actualization& work commitment, positive sense and calmness, autonomy, social responsibility, aesthetic sensitivity, respect and consideration, and family love and long-lasting relationship. The Cronbach's alpha was .88.

2.3.3. Parent-adolescent communication inventory (PACI)

For measuring parent-adolescent communication, the Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (PACI) of Barnes and Olson [9] revised by Kil [10] was used. The questionnaire includes 20 questions in two areas (10 questions about father-adolescent communication, 10 questions about mother-adolescent communication), using a 5-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha was .87.

2.3.4. Questionnaire on sexual attitude

Sexual attitude was measured using the tool modified by Choi [11] from the original Multi-dimensionality of Sexual Attitude Questionnaire developed by Hendrick [12]. This scale consisted of 18 items and 4 factors using a 5-point Likert scale. 4 factors include conservative type, pleasure seeking type, permissible type, and sexual responsible type. The Cronbach's alpha was .78.

2.4. Data collection

The total 239 male university students were met face-to-face by 12 trained research interviewers. Research interviewers delivered mobile survey and asked participants to input by themselves by mobiles. All participants signed on the written agreements before they participated in the present study, and they were assured that the information would never be used for any other purpose.

2.5. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS/WIN 22.0 program. General & sexual related characteristics were analyzed using a frequency and %. Mean differences by general & sexual related characteristics were analyzed ANOVA or t-test. Correlations among variables were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

3. Results

3.1. General and sexual related characteristics

General and sexual related characteristics of the participants are described in Table 1. 121 participants (50.6%) were 21~24 years old and 87(36.4%) participants were in freshman. 88 participants (36.8%) were living in Chungcheong Province. For major, about half of students majored in engineering (35.5%) and humanities (20.1%), and 71(29.7%) participants believe in Christianity. For sexual related characteristics, those who had experienced dating were 205(85.8%), and those who had experienced intercourse were 145(60.7%). For age of first sexual experience, 84(58.0%) of participants were experienced aged 19 to 22.

Table 1. Demographic & sexual related characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	N(%)
Age (year)	≤20	74(31.0)
	21-24	121 (50.6)
	≥25	44 (18.4)
Grade	Freshman	87 (36.4)
	Sophomore	67 (28.0)
	Junior	54 (22.6)
	Senior	31 (13.0)
Place of Residence	Chungcheong Province	88 (36.8)
	Gyeonggi Province	67 (28.0)
	Seoul Metropolitan City	43 (18.0)

	Incheon Metropolitan City	17 (7.1)
	Others	24 (10.1)
Major	Engineering	84(35.5)
	Humanities	48 (20.1)
	Aeronautics	34 (14.2)
	Sociology	23 (9.6)
	Art and Sporting	20 (8.4)
	Science	18 (7.5)
	Health	12 (5.0)
Religion	None	118 (49.4)
	Christianity	71 (29.7)
	Catholicism	26 (10.9)
	Buddhism	18 (7.5)
	Others	6(2.5)
Experiences of Dating	None	34(14.2)
	Have	205(85.8)
Sexual Intercourse	None	94(39.3)
	Have	145(60.7)
Age of First Sexual Experience (year)	Middle School(13-15)	10(7.0)
	High School(16-18)	44(30.1)
	19-22	84(58.0)
	≥23	7(4.9)

3.2. Differences in peer communication about sex according to demographic and sexual related characteristics

Mean differences of peer communication about sex by general and sexual related characteristics were described in [Table 2]. Differences by age were significant among the groups ($F=3.21$, $p=.042$). By post hoc test, less than 20 years old students had higher than others in levels of peer communication about sex. The sexual intercourse experience group had the higher score than none experience group ($t=5.88$, $p<.001$). And for age of first sexual experience, the group of 23 years old or older had the higher score than the group of less than 22 years old ($F=7.49$, $p<.001$). That is, peer communication was active when the first sexual experience age was 23 years younger. In levels of peer communication about sex, there were no significant differences by grade, major, parents-adolescent communication, and experience of dating.

Table 2. Differences in peer communication about sex according to demographic and sexual related characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	M±SD	F or T	p
Age(yr)	≤20 ^a	3.36±0.59	3.21	.042 (a>c*)
	21-25 ^b	3.33±0.53		
	>25 ^c	3.10±0.58		
Grade	Freshman	3.36±0.56	1.53	.209
	Sophomore	3.35±0.57		

	Junior	3.20±0.56		
	Senior	3.18±0.57		
Major	Humanities	3.17±0.56	0.84	.544
	Sociology	3.22±0.72		
	Engineering	3.34±0.53		
	Science	3.20±0.52		
	Health	3.38±0.43		
	Aeronautics	3.38±0.62		
	Art and Sporting	3.38±0.53		
Father-adolescent communication	Open	3.36±0.54	2.47	.127
	Closed	3.23±0.50		
Mother-adolescent communication	Open	3.40±0.49	1.02	.360
	Closed	3.28±0.47		
Sexual Intercourse	Have	3.35±0.56	5.88	<.001
	None	3.12±0.58		
Experiences of Dating	Have	3.30±0.52	1.88	.155
	None	3.13±0.66		
Age of First Sexual Experience (yr)	Middle School (13-15) ^a	3.37±0.51	7.49	<.001 (d<a,b, c*)
	High School (16-18) ^b	3.56±0.53		
	19-22 ^c	3.30±0.51		
	≥23 ^d	2.59±0.68		

*Tukey test

3.3. Relationships between peer communication about sex, psycho-social maturity, parent-adolescent communication, and sexual attitude

Variables correlated with the peer communication about sex were described in table 3. The peer communication about sex had positive correlations with parent-adolescent communication's open type, sexual attitude 3 types (pleasure seeking type, permissible type, and sexual responsible type for contraception), psycho-social maturity, age of first sexual experience. But there were not correlations with parent-adolescent communication's closed type and sexual attitude 1 types (conservative type).

Table 3. Correlations among peer communication about sex, psycho-social maturity, parent-adolescent communication, sexual attitude and sexual related characteristics

Variables	Parent-Adolescent Communication				Sexual Attitude				Psych o- social Matur ity	Age of First Sexual Experien ce
	Father-ado lescent (open) $r(p)$	Mother-a dolescent (open) $r(p)$	Father-ad olescent (closed) $r(p)$	Mother-a dolescent (closed) $r(p)$	conserva tive type $r(p)$	pleasu re seekin g type $r(p)$	permis sible type $r(p)$	sexual responsi ble type $r(p)$		
Peer Communi cation about Sex	.191 (.003)	.138 (.033)	.003 (.966)	-.025 (.705)	.054 (.301)	.240 (.000)	.208 (.001)	.185 (.004)	.154 (.017)	-.271 (.001)

4. Conclusion

In male university students, the peer communication about sex was more active when the sex attitudes which were inclined to seeking pleasure, permissible, and responsible for contraception was higher. Also, when psycho-social maturity was higher, parent adolescent communication was more open, and age of first sexual experience was younger, the peer communication about sex was more active. Particularly, when age was younger and first experience period was less than 23 years old, peer communication about sex was animated. The aspect that the peer communication level about sex is high for the students with active parent-adolescent communication and high responsibility for contraception may be positive. However, the fact that peer communication about sex is animated when the student is younger, has a lower age of first sexual experience, and has higher hedonic and permissible sex attitude, should be considered in many other views. That is, if male students would experience the sexual behavior with hedonic and permissible attitude before proper values and attitudes towards sex are not established, it might be activated improper peer communication about sex. Therefore, before activating peer sex communication, it is important to establish the proper sexual attitude so that impulsive sexual actions are not developed into continuous or regular actions in adolescence. For this, arbitration programs is needed to help the male students raise the positive sexual attitude and responsibility needed for sexual agent, learn gender equal emotion and sex recognition ability, and help them take responsibility of sexual action.

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