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Sexual Perception and Behavior: Gender Differences among Married Ilocanos

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Abstract**—**This study attempted to compare the sexual perceptions and behaviors of male and female married Ilocanos. Data were gathered from 1,374 married Ilocanos (687 husbands and 687 wives) from nine municipalities and one city of the First District of Ilocos Sur. Findings showed that the male and female married Ilocanos differ in their psychological and physical sexual perceptions, but they had common social and spiritual sexual perceptions. Moreover, they were consistent in their behaviors towards sex, except for their behaviour after sex without reaching orgasm, wherein the males feel bad after having sex without reaching orgasm, while the females simply sleep it off.

Keywords**—**Gender Differences, Ilocanos, Sexual Behavior and Perception.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE accessibility of information had opened the gates for a more liberal understanding of sex. With the aid of the internet, televisions, and magazines, people are now more open on discussions about sex. A number of studies have already been conducted about human sexuality; some were on sexually transmitted diseases, prostitution, homosexuality, contraceptive methods, and others. But no study has been conducted yet regarding the comparison of the sexual perceptions and behaviors of married male and female Ilocanos.

Filipinos, especially those living in urban areas such as Metro Manila, are more open towards discussions regarding their sexual preferences. For Ilocanos, however, the scenario is fairly different. Ilocanos still consider discussions about sexual perceptions and behaviors as taboo. Most married Ilocanos are not even open to their partners regarding their sexual preferences. They feel exposed when they talk about sex. Thus, they want to keep such delicate matters to themselves. What they do not know is that being open about sexual matters is more of conquering one's sexual fears rather than just exposing one's self to public scrutiny.

Casual sexual relationships, by their very nature, create fear— fear of pregnancy, fear of venereal disease, fear of being found out, fear of being caught, fear of hidden motives, fear of abandonment, fear of the lover's husband or wife, and fear of lost self-respect. Sexual fulfillment requires that we freely give and freely receive. Such freedom is impossible with fear. That is why the sexually promiscuous may know sexual pleasure, but they will never know true sexual joy--the ecstatic burst of body delight, emotional completeness, spiritual wholeness, and internal peace.

The sexual life of a couple is an important cause and effect of the vitality of marriage. A couple who relate to each other wholesomely as sexual partners are likely to be nourishing their other needs as well, be it spiritual or intellectual, psychological or physical. Thus, if all of these aspects are fully satisfied, their sexual relationship is also believed to be healthy.

Marriage is more than just wearing a ring on your finger. Marriage is an intimate and enduring relationship that grows over time and makes you a better person, says Harvard psychologist and psychotherapist Mark O'Connell, PhD. This is seen by O'Connel as a safe and boring choice and there has to be a more compelling reason to get married and to stay married and once experience points to the value of intimacy and personal growth [1].

When a relationship matures, sex matures. You now have the advantage of knowing each other well. Fear of rejection is replaced with trust and security. This allows you to move into a stage of experimentation and mutual growth. You can take the time to fine-tune your skills as a lover.

Based on research, expressing love and to escalate the depth of a relationship are two of the reasons for having sex [2].

Love and marriage is not one aspect but an amalgamation of things and sex is a major part of it. Without desire and passion the rest of a relationship can be poisoned [3].

Sexually deprived is much more than sex, it is the feeling of being wanted and desired by the man/woman that you are committed to for life. When unmet sexual needs go unrecognized, partners can pull the relationship apart which may lead to infidelity, divorce, and worse. The problem comes when sex and passion drop out of a marriage purely because caring for each other is so low on your list of priorities that you start to treat one another like roommates. Often, making time to have sex can end up being less about the physical act than about taking a moment to reconnect, share a laugh or a moment of affection and remember why you've committed to this person in the first place.

In the Philippines, it is worth noting that out of the 474,407 recorded marriages based on the latest figure from the National Statistics Office, 4,191 male Filipinos have already separated with their spouses, while 208 separated brides had claimed to have remarried. Though the statistics did not

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indicate the real cause of the marital separations, there is a great possibility that these may have stemmed from problems in the sexual interactions of the couples.

Some of the common causes of extramarital affairs are the following: if the framework of a marriage is damaged or neglected, when one feel unattractive and unloved and seek that out to other people, if a person feels they are not getting enough love at home, and misunderstandings about the importance of sex [3].

Ilocanos are known to be very private and conservative. Thus, not much has been written about the sexual preferences of Ilocano couples. Ilocano couples are not comfortable in discussing their thoughts about sex in public, for fear of humiliation. It is for this reason that the researchers became interested on this topic. They wanted to explore the perceptions and behaviors of the typical Ilocano couple when it comes to sex.

Sex has always been the center of a couple's married life. The success of marital bonding could basically depend on the couple's sexual interaction and being able to experience the most satisfying marital relationship could largely depend on how one's partner behaves when it comes to sexual interactions.

This study was undertaken in order to provide knowledge and understanding about the very sensitive subject among couples—their perceptions and behaviors towards sex. For the professional nurses, this undertaking will hopefully lead towards the creation of a database, which they can utilize in determining appropriate interventions in relation to sexuality, because many nurses still consider such aspect as a gray area in their professional practice.

Data gathered in this study will broaden the knowledge of nurse counselors regarding sexuality, thus, enhancing their capacity to understand the relationship between sexuality and the Ilocano couples' health needs or illnesses vis-à-vis the context of the current living situation and affectionate sexual relationship. Results of this study will also broaden the perspective of students and nurse instructors regarding sexuality, so that they will feel more comfortable whenever they may be confronted with the subject.

Moreover, this study will hopefully facilitate the development of mutually mature exchange of sexual pleasures, responsible sexual relationship, and respect among couples. This will eventually lead to a deeper sharing of emotions, coupled with the concern not only for one's own—but as well as the partner's well-being and sexual responses. The findings of this study can be utilized for future research studies relating to man's sexuality. Furthermore, the results of this study can be used as a basis in exploring factors that might inhibit sexual responses including fear, shame, guilt, false beliefs, and other negative feelings related to sex.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the sexual perceptions and behaviors of the male and female Ilocanos who are already married.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. describe the respondents in terms of age, educational attainment, religion, monthly income, occupation, and number of family members;
2. determine the perceptions and behaviors of the married Ilocanos towards sex; and
3. find out the differences in the perceptions and behaviors between the male and female Ilocanos who are already married.

III. REVIEW/SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

When a person enters a married life, he faces challenging roles which are expected of him to perform. Among these things, of prime importance is his most intimate and personal relationship with his partner, which includes his sexual interchanges with her. During these sexual interchanges, behaviors are being manifested by the couple and such behaviors in their most intimate encounter are the couple's sexual behaviors [4].

Sexual behaviors are activities that produce sexual excitation. This excitation includes sexual fantasies and masturbation, and intrapersonal activities such as kissing and touching (foreplay), sexual intercourse, and oral-genital stimulation or oral sex.

In the simplest terms, a healthy relationship is one that makes you feel good about yourself and your partner. Not only do you enjoy being together, but you can express your true self, and allow your partner to do the same. All relationships are different, of course, but healthy ones have at least five important qualities in common. The acronym S.H.A.R.E. can help you remember these qualities.

- Safety: In a healthy relationship you feel safe. You don't worry that your partner will harm you physically or emotionally, and you don't feel inclined to use physical or emotional violence against your partner. You can try new things (such as taking a night class) or change your mind about something (such as engaging in a sexual activity that makes you feel uncomfortable) without fearing your partner's reaction.
- Honesty: You don't hide anything important from your partner, and can express your thoughts without fear of censure or ridicule. You can admit to being wrong. Acceptance: You and your partner accept each other as you are. You appreciate your partner's unique qualities (such as shyness or emotionality). You don't try to "fix" them - if you don't like your partner's qualities, you may want to examine your motivations for being with them.
- Respect: You think highly of each other. You do not feel superior or inferior to your partner in important ways. You respect each other's right to have separate opinions and ideas. This doesn't mean you have to tolerate everything your partner does or does not do (such as refusing to get help for a drinking problem). Enjoyment: A healthy relationship isn't just about how two people treat each other - it also has to be enjoyable [5].

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The Ilocano couples' perceptions towards sex could readily influence how they behave in their sexual endeavor. They express their sexuality through a variety of behaviors and these behaviors involve physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions as well.

The physical dimension is comprised of those perceptions which are related to the body's responses, while the psychological dimension includes perceptions which are related to a variety of emotional responses.

The social dimension includes a person's understanding or perceptions about sex which are related and influenced by norms, culture, and standard. It is a perceptual dimension which comes as a product of the couple's interaction with their environment. The spiritual dimension, on the other hand, includes understanding and perceptions about sex which are directed to the supernatural force and religious beliefs.

The Ilocano couples' perceptions and behaviors towards sex could influence the totality of their sexual relationship. Although good sexual relationship encompasses primarily a biological or physical perspective, having a good sexual relationship could also mean success in all other aspects of married life, and the ability to enjoy this kind of relationship develops with knowledge and understanding of the experience [4].

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive research design. It mainly described the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and their perceptions and behaviors towards sex.

The respondents of this study were comprised of 1,374 married male and female Ilocanos (687 husbands and 687 wives) from nine municipalities and one city of the First District of Ilocos Sur. The sample size was determined using the Yamane's Formula and was proportionally distributed among the ten municipalities/city.

The data gathering instrument used in the study was composed of three parts which are as follows: Part I was comprised of a questionnaire developed by the researchers which was used to gather information regarding the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; Parts II and III contained the questionnaire-checklist adopted from Rafols [4] and these parts mainly gathered data on the respondents' perceptions and behaviors towards sex.

Data gathered in this study were analyzed using the frequency, percentage, and rank.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents in terms of selected socio-demographic factors is summarized as follows:

On Age. Most of the male, as well as the female respondents, belong to the 21-30 age bracket. There was only one male respondent and one female respondent who belong to the more than 60 age bracket.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF THE MALE AND FEMALE ILOCANOS IN TERMS OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Socio-Demographic Variables	Male		Female	
	f	%	f	%
Age				
61 and above	1	0.1	1	0.1
51-60	40	5.8	34	4.9
41-50	147	21.4	128	18.6
31-40	244	35.5	251	36.5
21-30	255	37.1	273	39.7
Total	687	100.0	687	100.0
Educational Attainment				
College Graduate	144	21.0	212	30.9
College Level	127	18.5	114	16.6
High School Graduate	150	21.8	141	20.5
High School Level	129	18.8	126	18.3
Elementary Graduate	85	12.4	59	8.6
Elementary Level	42	6.1	21	3.1
No Schooling	10	1.5	14	2.0
Total	687	100.0	687	100.0
Religion				
Roman Catholic	507	73.8	507	73.8
Iglesia ni Cristo	57	8.3	57	8.3
Jehovah Witnesses	39	5.7	39	5.7
Others	84	12.2	84	12.2
Total	687	100.0	687	100.0
Monthly Income				
More than P4,000	160	23.3	125	18.2
P3,001-P4,000	164	23.9	185	26.9
P2,001-P3,000	126	18.3	104	15.1
P1,000-P2,000	98	14.3	62	9.0
P1,000 and below	139	20.2	211	30.7
Total	687	100.0	687	100.0
Occupation				
Professional	150	21.8	129	18.8
Skilled	287	41.8	263	38.3
Semi-Skilled	164	23.9	142	20.7
None	86	12.5	153	22.3
Total	687	100.0	687	100.0
No. of Family Members				
7 and more	107	15.6	107	15.6
5-6	266	38.7	266	38.7
3-4	223	32.5	223	32.5
1-2	89	13.0	89	13.0
No Child	2	0.3	2	0.3
Total	687	100.0	687	100.0

On Educational Attainment. Most of the married male Ilocanos are high school graduates. On the other hand, 30.9 percent of the married female Ilocanos are college graduates. There are 1.5 percent of the male respondents and 2.0 percent of the female respondents who never had any formal schooling.

On Religion. The majority of the male and female respondents are Roman Catholics. There are only 26.2 percent of the respondents who belong to other religious sects.

On Monthly Income. Among the male respondents, the greatest percentage (23.9%) was comprised by those who earn a monthly income of Php 3,001-4,000. On the part of the female respondents, the greatest percentage (30.7%) was comprised by those earning a monthly income of Php 1,000 and below.

On Occupation. The greatest percentage of the male (41.8%) and female (38.3%) respondents are skilled workers. However, there are 12.5 percent of the male respondents and 22.3 percent of the female respondents who do not have any job at the moment this study was conducted.

On Number of Family Members. The greatest percentage of the male (38.7%) and female (38.7%) respondents have 5-6 family members. There are only two male and female respondents who are without a child.

Differences in the Sexual Perception of the Male and Female Married Ilocanos

The differences in the perceptions of the male and female Ilocanos towards sex was measured in terms of psychological, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Psychological Perception. Table 2 reveals that among the male married Ilocanos, the dominant psychological perception regarding sex is that a happy marriage consists of a happy sexual relationship.

TABLEII
MALE AND FEMALE ILOCANO ADULTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL PERCEPTION TOWARDS SEX

Psychological Perceptions	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. The sexual act is a pleasurable experience designated for a married couple only.	562	81.8	2	618	90.0	1
2. Men/Women ought to be aggressive in bed to please their wives/husbands.	465	67.7	3	507	73.8	3
3. Unsatisfied sexual needs can create problems within a married life.	357	52.0	5	292	42.5	5
4. Men/Women tend to be irritable when they don't reach orgasm in an intercourse.	429	62.4	4	318	46.3	4
5. A happy marriage consists of a happy sexual relationship.	585	85.2	1	524	76.3	2

On the other hand, among the female married Ilocanos, the dominant psychological perception regarding sex is that the sexual act is a pleasurable experience designated for married couples only. However, both the male and female married Ilocanos were least concerned about the perception that unsatisfied sexual needs can create problems within a married life.

The table further shows that there are more females who believe that men ought to be aggressive in bed to please their partners. On the other hand, there are more males who perceive that women tend to be irritable when they do not reach orgasm.

The perception of the male Ilocanos that a happy sexual relationship results to a happy marriage may be due to their conviction that sex is the primary and ultimate way of expressing their love to their partners. Beyond recreation and procreation, sex, for them, is a means or a language of knowing one's partner intimately. In addition, the male respondents agreed to the observation that their female partners are irritable when they do not reach orgasm in an intercourse. This could indicate the lack of openness between the couple, particularly on matters involving sex. They are ashamed to tell their respective partners what they feel, even though they have already been married for quite some time.

The results also support the conservativeness of the Filipina, for they firmly believe that sex outside marriage is considered undesirable. They believe that the sexual act is only intended for married couples. This indicates that the Filipino values of the couples are still intact despite the influence of western civilization. Furthermore, female Ilocanos believe that their male partner should do most of the work in bed, in order for the female to be pleased and aroused. This could be because they were used to being pampered by their husbands back when they were still being courted.

It is worthy to note that unsatisfied sexual needs do not seem to create much problems within the married life of the male and female Ilocanos. This means that sex is not the center of their married life. It might be that they are more concerned about the preservation of their married life despite the different challenges that beset them.

Physical Perceptions. It could be gleaned from Table 3 that among the male-respondents, the dominant physical perception regarding sex is that the length of foreplay should be adequate in order to increase sexual responsiveness.

TABLEIII
DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF THEIR PHYSICAL PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SEX

Physical Perceptions	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Regular intercourse increases the man's/woman's ability to reach orgasm	438	63.8	3	378	55.0	3
2. The length of foreplay should be adequate to increase sexual responsiveness.	515	75.0	1	412	60.0	2
3. Varied sexual positions enhance sexual stimulation.	430	62.6	4	240	35.0	7
4. The success of a sexual encounter depends on the woman's and man's ability to reach orgasm	509	74.1	2	447	65.0	1
5. The man/woman has the ability to have multiple orgasm in a single sexual intercourse	368	53.6	6	318	46.3	5.5
6. A man/woman always reaches orgasm every time he/she engages in sex.	365	53.1	7	361	52.5	4
7. Sex during pregnancy is just alright as long as the man doesn't feel any discomfort	414	60.3	5	318	46.3	5.5
8. Sexual intercourse during menstruation is just alright	235	34.2	8	86	12.5	8

For the female, the dominant physical perception is that the success of a sexual encounter depends on the ability of the woman and the man to reach orgasm. However, both male and

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female respondents believed the least on the perception that sexual intercourse during menstruation is just alright.

In addition, there are more male Ilocanos who perceive that regular intercourse increases the man's/woman's ability to reach orgasm, and that varied sexual positions enhance sexual stimulation. They also perceive that a man/woman has the ability to have multiple orgasms in a single sexual intercourse, and that each partner always reaches orgasm every time he/she engages in sex. They also perceive sex during pregnancy to be alright as long as the man does not feel any discomfort.

These data indicate that the respondents believe that sexual satisfaction can be attained only if one reaches orgasm. The said results also indicate the playfulness of the males. They prefer to have a lengthy foreplay for them to increase their sexual arousal and to prepare their partners towards climax. As much as possible, they want to locate the erogenous zones of their partners to increase their degree of satisfaction. On the other hand, the females find it fulfilling to see their partners reach orgasm. They try to do everything they can to please or satisfy their partners. It is important to note that both partners find it unhygienic to have sexual intercourse during menstruation.

Social Perceptions. The respondents are consistent in their perception that it is the man's/woman's duty and obligation to satisfy his/her wife's/husband's sexual needs.

TABLEIV
DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF THEIR SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SEX

Social Perceptions	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. A man/woman should communicate his/her sexual concerns to his/her wife/husband.	559	81.4	2	472	68.8	5.5
2. Talking about sex with friends is embarrassing	405	59.0	6	472	68.8	5.5
3. Display of affection like embracing, hugging or kissing should never be done in public	416	60.6	5	558	81.3	3.5
4. The husband/wife could initiate the need for sex if he/she wants to	498	72.5	4	558	81.3	3.5
5. The sexual act could be done not only within the bedroom specially if there are no people around	385	56.0	7	240	35.0	7
6. It is the man's/woman's duty and obligation to satisfy his wife's/husband's sexual needs	582	84.7	1	627	91.3	1
7. Sexual affair outside marriage is a strong ground for a married man/woman to separate from his wife/husband.	519	75.5	3	610	88.8	2

In addition, both the male and female respondents agree that the sexual act could be done not only within the bedroom, especially if there are no people around.

Moreover, more male Ilocanos perceive that a man/woman should communicate his/her sexual concerns to his/her wife/husband. Conversely, more female Ilocanos believed that talking about sex with friends is embarrassing and display of affection should never be done in public. They also believe that the husband/wife could initiate the need for sex if he/she wants to and that sexual affair outside marriage is a strong ground for a married man/woman to separate from his wife/husband.

Such results are in line with the Ilocano value regarding the obligation of the married couple to satisfy their partner's sexual needs. The couple must submit themselves to their partner to gratify their partner's sexual desires. For the Ilocanos, it is always the woman who surrenders herself to the man. But conservative as they are, they still prefer to have the sexual act in the comforts of their bedrooms, which they consider as their love nests. As much as possible, they want their sexual activities to be private.

It is also noteworthy that the female Ilocanos are not in favor of extra-marital affairs. They believe that sexual affair outside marriage is a strong ground for the married woman to separate from her husband or vice versa. Sex talk with others is also taboo for them. On the other hand, the male Ilocanos believe that the partners should be open to one another regarding their sexual concerns in order to avoid any misunderstandings regarding this delicate topic.

Spiritual Perception. Table 5 reveals that most of the male and female Ilocanos have a common perception that sexual abstinence is the best way of controlling the number of children in the family. Both male and female respondents also agree that sex should only be done for the purpose of procreation. It is further shown in the table that more female Ilocanos perceive sex as the first sin of man, that premarital sex is a sin, and that masturbation is a sinful act.

TABLEV
DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF THEIR SPIRITUAL PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SEX

Spiritual Perceptions	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Sex is the first sin of man.	346	50.4	3	464	67.5	4
2. Sex should only be done for the purpose of procreation.	305	44.4	5	335	48.8	5
3. Premarital sex is a sin.	316	46.0	4	575	83.8	2
4. Masturbation is a sinful act.	377	54.9	2	489	71.3	3
5. Sexual abstinence is the best way of controlling the number of children in the family.	528	76.9	1	644	93.8	1

Such results indicate that the male and female Ilocanos are still bound by the customs and traditions of the predominantly Catholic Filipino nation. They still believe in the natural way of family planning and that the sexual act is exclusively for married couples only. They also consider any other method of controlling the number of children in the family as a sin and believe such to be against the teachings of the Church. Moreover, sex for them is considered sacred. For the female

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Ilocano, virginity is considered to be the best gift she can give to her husband. This may be because Christian teachings are inculcated in them, not only in school but also at home since their early childhood.

Differences in the Behavior of the Male and Female Ilocanos Toward Sex

The differences in the behavior of the male and female Ilocanos toward sex were measured in terms of their reasons for not having sex, manner of indicating eagerness to have sex, manner of expressing desire for sex, behavior when tired but partner wants to have sex, ways of enhancing sexual excitation, preferred sexual positions, orgasmic experience during intercourse, number of orgasms experienced during intercourse, frequency of sexual intercourse, behavior after having sex without reaching orgasm, and behavior after intercourse.

Reasons for Not Having Sex With Partner. Table 6 shows the distribution of the respondents' responses in terms of their reasons for not having sex with their partners.

TABLEVI
REASONS FOR NOT HAVING SEX WITH PARTNER

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Drunken Partner	290	42.2	4	361	52.5	3
2. Offensive or undesirable odor of the partner	274	39.9	5	34	5.0	9
3. Argument	230	33.5	7	94	13.8	5
4. Tiredness	330	48.0	3	240	35.0	4
5. If he/she wakes me	174	25.3	8	77	11.3	6.5
6. Illness	372	54.1	2	498	72.5	2
7. During menstruation	414	60.3	1	507	73.8	1
8. Bad mood	234	34.1	6	77	11.3	6.5
9. Financial problems	126	18.3	9	52	7.5	8

The table reveals that most of the male and female Ilocanos abstain from having sex during the female partners' menstrual period. For the male Ilocanos, financial problem is the least reason for them not to have sex with their partners. On the part of the female Ilocanos, the offensive or undesirable odor of their respective partners is the least of their concerns. In addition, more male Ilocanos cite argument, tiredness, bad mood, and his partner waking him up, as reasons for not having sex. In contrast, more female Ilocanos mention drunken partners and illness as the reasons for refusing to have sex.

Sex during menstruation should have been the most effective way of birth control. However, male and female Ilocanos consider it unhygienic to have sex during menstruation. The findings further imply that financial problems are not a hindrance for the couple to have sex despite their meager monthly income. This could due to the fact that sex is one of the many ways of easing their stress. As was earlier mentioned in this study, Filipinos believe that a happy sexual relationship results to a happy marriage. Illness decreases the libido of an individual, thus, a person suffering from any kind of illness may not be interested to have sex.

Manner of Indicating Eagerness to Have Sex. The distribution of the respondents in terms of their manner of indicating eagerness to have sex is presented in Table 7.

Caressing is the most common way of showing eagerness to have sex as claimed by both the male and female Ilocanos. The least thing that the male Ilocanos do in showing their eagerness to have sex is doing nothing. On the other hand, informing their partner that they want to have sex is the least thing that the female Ilocanos do if they want to indicate their eagerness to have sex. The table further reveals that more male Ilocanos show their eagerness to have sex by being affectionate or by asking their partner if she wants to have her favorite food. On the other hand, more female Ilocanos indicate their eagerness to have sex by taking a shower and making themselves beautiful.

TABLE VII
MANNER OF INDICATING EAGERNESS TO HAVE SEX

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Cares for her/him	587	85.4	1	575	83.8	1
2. Make self handsome/ beautiful	246	35.8	4	369	53.8	3
3. Take a shower	325	47.3	2	421	61.3	2
4. Be affectionate	261	38.0	3	232	33.8	4
5. Ask her/his favorite food	170	24.7	5	137	20.0	5
6. Inform her/him that you want to have sex	145	21.1	6	17	2.5	7
7. Do nothing	35	5.1	7	26	3.8	6

These data indicate that the respondents believe that preparing one's self well and having foreplay are vital in the sex play. One cannot just tell a partner to have sex with him immediately or as he desires. Filipinos, particularly Ilocanos, are romantic by nature, thus, they will always try to find ways to stimulate their respective partners. The female Ilocanos prefer to smell good and look gorgeous to get the attention of their partner. However, male Ilocanos show their eagerness by giving kind words or preparing things to appease their partner, like offering flowers, chocolates, etc. They seem to be driven by the saying that the best way to a woman's heart is through lots of tender loving care.

Partner's Manner of Expressing Desire For Sex As Perceived By Their Partner. The distribution of the respondents in terms of their partner's manner of expressing desire for sex as perceived by their partner is presented in Table 8.

The male and female Ilocanos unanimously perceive caressing one another as the most effective manner of expressing their desire to have sex. Showing their private parts (penis/vagina) to express their desire to have sex is done the least by most of the male and female Ilocanos. Moreover, as perceived by their partners, more male Ilocanos signify their intention to have sex by verbalizing it or giving their partner a meaningful stare. Conversely, as observed by their partners, more female Ilocanos show their desire to have sex by taking a shower or doing some household chores.

TABLEVIII
HUSBAND'S/WIFE'S MANNER OF EXPRESSING HIS/HER DESIRE FOR SEX AS PERCEIVED BY THEIR PARTNER

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. She/He tells it directly	387	56.3	2	369	53.8	3
2. She/He gives a meaningful stare	146	21.3	4	77	11.3	5
3. She/He caresses me	417	60.7	1	584	85.0	1
4. She/He takes a shower in the evening	205	29.8	3	386	56.3	2
5. She/He helps in household chores	115	16.7	5	215	31.3	4
6. She/He shows her vagina/penis	78	11.4	6	26	3.8	6

These results indicate that no matter how romantic Ilocanos are, they are still subtle in indicating their desire to have sex. According to the female Ilocanos, the male Ilocanos show their willingness to have sex through their steamy glances or by naughtily telling it straight to them. For the male Ilocanos, they know that their partner is in the mood for love when they take a shower and put on their provocative lingerie.

Women are not prevented and have not attempted to shut sex out of their lives. The arousal of her natural desire is less spontaneous than in the case of the man. But still, the success of the sexual act between couples depends, to a great extent, upon the husband—his expression of affection, his own desire, his insight, understanding, and skill as a lover.

Behavior When Tired but Partner Wants To Have Sex. The distribution of the respondents in terms of their behavior when tired but partner wants to have sex is presented in Table 9.

TABLEIX
BEHAVIOR WHEN TIRED BUT PARTNER WANTS TO HAVE SEX

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Inform her/him that you are tired	476	69.3	1	472	68.8	1
2. Give in to have sex	176	25.6	2	172	25.0	3
3. Refuse to have sex	61	8.9	7	94	13.8	4.5
4. Help her/him masturbate	118	17.2	6	9	1.3	7.5
5. Ignore her/him	128	18.6	4	86	12.5	6
6. Sleep late	165	24.0	3	9	1.3	7.5
7. Sleep early	123	17.9	5	283	41.3	2
8. Pretend to be busy so she'll/he'll forget it.	55	8.0	8	94	13.8	4.5

Both the male and the female Ilocanos inform their partner that they are tired in case when their partner wants to have sex with them. For the male Ilocanos, the least thing that they do is to pretend to be busy so their partner will forget about having sex. However, the least act that the female Ilocanos do is to either sleep late or help her partner masturbate. Further scrutiny of the table shows that more male Ilocanos simply give in to sex or they just ignore their partner. On the contrary, more female Ilocanos either sleep early or refuse to have sex.

Such results indicate that the male and female Ilocanos are frank in terms of telling what they feel to their partner. Moreover, it also reflects the respect that each partner has over the other. They do not want their partners to be offended or they do not want to fool their partner by pretending to be busy or sleeping early. This way, misunderstandings between couples are avoided.

Sexual development results from the interplay of many factors. Contrary to some myths that have prevailed for centuries, it has become clear that the sexual responses of men and women do not have that much difference and the women's sexual capacity is at least equal to that of the men.

Ways of Enhancing Sexual Excitation. The distribution of the respondents in terms of their ways of enhancing sexual excitation is presented to Table 10.

TABLE X
WAYS OF ENHANCING SEXUAL EXCITATION

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1 Caress each other	603	87.8	1	670	97.5	1
2 Watch x-rated films	127	18.5	3	94	13.8	2
3 Read erotic magazines	153	22.3	2	34	5.0	5
4 Talk about sex	99	14.4	4	77	11.3	3
5 Listen to sexual tapes	34	4.9	5	52	7.5	4

To enhance sexual excitation, both male and female Ilocanos caress each other. The least that they do to enhance sexual excitation is to listen to sexual tapes for the male and to read erotic magazines for the females. The table also reveals that more male Ilocanos watch x-rated films or talk about sex just to enhance their sexual excitation.

Love is a two-way street. The male and female Ilocanos enjoy and practice the give and take relationship. They have good physical and psychological communication since they satisfy each other the way they want to be satisfied. The sexually functional human being is capable of responding to a wide variety of physical and psychological stimuli. These sexually-arousing stimuli may be real or symbolic.

Physical stimulation involves touching, and/or applying mild pressure to parts of the partner's body through one's self, by another, or by inanimate objects. Examples include kissing, stroking, hugging, squeezing, breast stimulation, manual stimulation of the genitals, oral-genital stimulation, and anal stimulation. Any of these may be engaged in to create sexual pleasure or to serve as a prelude to genital intercourse. Physical stimulation, when used as a prelude to intercourse, is called foreplay or precoital stimulation.

The Ilocanos rarely listen to sexual tapes or read erotic magazines because these are not readily available in the market or are not affordable for them. X-rated films and videos are accessible in the black market or in the internet or cell phones that is why male Ilocanos usually watch them for their sexual pleasure and excitation. Female Ilocanos are still believed to be more reserved than their male counterparts especially when it comes to sex. They may dress or act according to western style, but deep inside them still remains the conservative Ilocana.

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Preferred Sexual Positions. The distribution of the respondents in terms of their preferred sexual position is presented in Table 11.

TABLE XI
PREFERRED SEXUAL POSITIONS

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Man-on-top	408	59.4	1	653	95.0	1
2. Woman-on-top	262	38.1	2	52	7.5	3
3. Side-by-side	85	12.4	3	77	11.3	2
4. Other Positions	10	1.5	4	0	0.0	4

Man-on-top is still the most preferred sexual position for both the male and female Ilocanos. However, more male Ilocanos prefer the woman-on-top and side-by-side positions. Both the male and female Ilocanos have the least preference to other positions or positions other than those mentioned earlier.

These data imply that the male and female Ilocanos still prefer the traditional sexual position. It shows that male Ilocanos still prefer the basic way to pleasure their wives. It could also be the position most convenient for both partners. Moreover, this also shows the Ilocano male's "macho" image, that is, their being superior to the women as most of them always want to be "on top."

The most common form of sexual activity with a partner is heterosexual genital intercourse, also known as coitus or copulation. Penile-vaginal intercourse can be both physically and emotionally satisfying. There are a variety of positions for this kind of intercourse where lying face to face (with female or male on top) is the most common. Side-lying, standing, sitting, and rear-entry positions are also used. The choice of intercourse positions and activities depends on physical comfort and beliefs, values, and attitudes about different practices.

Number of Orgasms Experienced During Intercourse. The distribution of the respondents in terms of the number of orgasms they experienced during intercourse is presented in Table 12.

Most of the male and female Ilocanos experienced orgasm only once during intercourse. The table also shows that more male Ilocanos experienced orgasms twice or thrice during sexual intercourse. This indicates that male Ilocanos are amorous and sturdy when it comes to engaging in sexual intercourse.

TABLE XII
NUMBER OF ORGASMS EXPERIENCED DURING INTERCOURSE

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Thrice	155	22.6	2	9	1.3	3
2. Twice	154	22.4	3	86	12.5	2
3. Once	343	49.9	1	575	83.8	1

There are two primary physiologic changes that occur during sexual arousal: varocongestion (congestion of the blood vessels in the genital area) and myotoria (increased muscle tension). Physiologic changes have been identified in one model of physiologic response that falls into four phases: excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution.

During the excitement phase, erotic stimuli cause a gradual increase in the level of sexual arousal. This phase may last for minutes to hours. The plateau phase, the period during which sexual tension increases to levels nearing orgasm, may last from 30 seconds to 3 minutes. The orgasmic phase is the involuntary climax of sexual tension, accompanied by physiologic and psychological release. This phase is considered the measurable peak of the sexual experience. The orgasmic phase is short, lasting 3 to 10 seconds. The resolution phase, the period of return to the unaroused state, may last 10-15 minutes after orgasm or longer if there is no orgasm.

Frequency of Sexual Intercourse. The distribution of respondents in terms of frequency of engaging in sexual intercourse is presented in Table 13.

It can be seen from the table that most of the male and female Ilocanos usually have sexual intercourse twice a week. The least number of male Ilocanos only have sexual intercourse once a month, while the least of the female Ilocanos have intercourse every day. Additionally, more male Ilocanos usually have sexual intercourse once a week, while more female Ilocanos have it thrice a week

TABLE XIII
FREQUENCY OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Everyday	82	11.9	4	26	3.8	5
2. Once a week	178	25.9	2	120	17.5	3
3. Twice a week	219	31.9	1	309	45.0	1
4. Thrice a week	153	22.3	3	215	31.3	2
5. Once a month	73	10.6	5	34	5.0	4

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These imply that the male and female married Ilocanos have a relatively healthy and active sex life. This could also be due to the age of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are still in their early 20's and they still have the energy to have a relatively high frequency of sexual encounters.

The findings agreed with the statement of Baldwin that married couples typically engage in coitus two or three times a week. They often seek out ways to expand their sexual lives, add new activities, and keep their erotic love strong. Many expect that sex would be good once it is legitimized by marriage.

Behavior After Having Sex Without Reaching Orgasm. The distribution of respondents, in terms of their behaviors after having sex without reaching orgasm, is shown in Table 14.

Most male Ilocanos feel bad after having sex without reaching orgasm. On the other hand, most female Ilocanos simply sleep after having sex without reaching orgasm. The thing the male and female Ilocanos do the least after having sex without reaching orgasm is to masturbate on their own. However, more male Ilocanos resume work, masturbate with their partner, or inform their partner that they did not reach

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orgasm. More female Ilocanos, on other hand, simply ignore the experience of not reaching orgasm.

TABLEXIV
BEHAVIORS AFTER HAVING SEX WITHOUT REACHING ORGASM

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Feel bad	356	51.8	1	344	50.0	2
2. Ignore it	188	27.4	3	223	32.5	3
3. Masturbate on my own	38	5.5	7	0	0.0	7
4. Masturbate with partner	80	11.6	5	9	1.3	6
5. Sleep	242	35.2	2	472	68.8	1
6. Resume work	101	14.7	4	43	6.3	4
7. Inform wife/husband of not reaching orgasm	67	9.8	6	17	2.5	5

These findings indicate that the male Ilocanos are more frank about their feelings than their female counterparts. On the other hand, the female Ilocanos just sleep off their failure to reach orgasm. They ignore such experience as long as they see their partner contented and satisfied. This could be an indication of the submissiveness of the female Ilocano to her husband.

Behaviors After Intercourse. Table 15 shows distribution of the respondents in terms of their behaviors after intercourse.

TABLE XV
BEHAVIORS AFTER INTERCOURSE

Items	Male			Female		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. Sleep	491	71.5	1	575	83.8	1
2. Talk with wife/husband	218	31.7	2	232	33.8	3
3. Clean Body	189	27.5	3	352	51.3	2
4. Eat	64	9.3	5	43	6.3	5
5. Follow up intercourse	70	10.2	4	60	8.8	4

Most of the male and female Ilocanos sleep after having intercourse. The least that they do after intercourse is eat. The table also shows that more female Ilocanos clean their bodies or talk with their partner after intercourse. However, more male Ilocanos follow up with another intercourse.

These data indicate that the male and female Ilocanos usually get tired after having sexual intercourse and that they sleep right away after intercourse. This contradicts the statement of Kosier that after coitus, caressing, hugging, and kissing increase the shared intimacy and that these should be encouraged. Moreover, the findings show how conscious the female Ilocanos are about their personal hygiene. They still find time to clean their bodies after the very strenuous activity. It also shows the insatiability of the male Ilocanos when it comes to sexual intercourse because they immediately want to follow up the said act with another intercourse.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

The male Ilocanos differ with their woman counterparts in terms of their psychological perception. The married male Ilocanos believed that a happy marriage consists of a happy sexual relationship, while their female partners believed that the sexual act is a pleasurable experience designated for married couples only. Male and female Ilocanos also differ in their physical perception, i.e., males believed that the length of foreplay should be adequate to increase sexual responsiveness, while the females believed that the success of a sexual encounter depends on the woman's and man's ability to reach orgasm. In terms of their social and spiritual perceptions, both the male and female Ilocanos agreed that it is the man's/woman's duty and obligation to satisfy his/her wife's/husband's sexual needs, and that sexual abstinence is the best way of limiting the number of children in the family.

The male and female Ilocanos have more or less the same behaviors towards sex, except for their behaviour after sex without reaching orgasm, wherein the males feel bad after having sex without reaching orgasm, while the females simply sleep it off. The male and female Ilocanos are also similar in their behaviour of refraining from sex during the female partner's menstrual period. Both the male and female partner caress their mate if they want to have sex; they inform their partner when they want or do not want to have sex; both prefer the man-on-top sexual position; most have orgasm only once during intercourse; and they engage in sexual intercourse twice a week.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Married couples, particularly the Ilocanos, should always find time to have sex no matter how busy they are, since an active sex life is vital in a happy married life. They should be open with one another so as to prevent any misunderstandings, particularly on such a delicate issue as sex. They should maintain good values and develop sexual responsibility. Likewise, they should be respectful towards each other, and they should maintain good perceptions regarding sex.

Marriage counselors and health care providers should be provided with the results of this study and they should make the information provided by this study as part of their health teachings to married Ilocano couples.

Married Ilocano couples should attend sex education classes to broaden their knowledge about sex. This will help them understand their partners' needs and thus avoid conflict.

Cross cultural studies should also be conducted on the sexual attitudes and behaviors of males and females.

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