

INTEGRATING THEOLOGY OF THE BODY AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: A POSITIVE EDUCATION APPROACH TO HUMAN SEXUALITY

Jacinto AMN*

Theology Teacher, Senior High School Department, PAREF Woodrose School

Abstract: Theology of the Body (TOB) courses often emphasize doctrinal content but may lack integration with contemporary psychological frameworks. Positive psychology, particularly the PERMA model (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment), provides a pedagogical lens for fostering holistic learning. This research evaluates the effectiveness of a Theology of the Body course enriched with positive psychology for a more holistic understanding of human sexuality. The study employed a mixed-methods design, combining an online survey with group and individual interviews. The survey assessed achievement of course objectives and identified effective classroom strategies, while interviews explored student experiences in depth. Findings indicated unanimous agreement that course objectives were achieved and that students found the course content and objectives positive. Role plays (80%) and class discussions (71%) emerged as the most effective strategies. Qualitative results reinforced these findings, highlighting the value of experiential role plays, open dialogue, relevant topics such as chastity and dating, and a supportive classroom environment. These themes aligned closely with strategies embedded in the PERMA model. Students also reported significant growth in virtues of chastity and modesty. Overall, the integration of TOB with positive psychology through reflexive, experiential, and discussion-based pedagogy fosters a deeper, values-oriented understanding of human sexuality, demonstrating the potential of positive education to enrich theological instruction and enhance student engagement.

Keywords: Theology of the Body, positive psychology, PERMA model

Introduction

As an educator in the academe for many years, my foremost goal has been to cultivate the full potential of every student—not only in the academic sphere but also in their holistic development as individuals. I strive to nurture their sense of self-worth and well-being, guiding them toward a fulfilled and meaningful life. In pursuit of this aim, I have consistently embraced a positive pedagogical approach: emphasizing rewards over sanctions, encouragement as reinforcement rather than reproach as motivation, and respecting individual differences as integral to the learning process.

*Corresponding Author's Email: anjacinto@parefwoodrose.edu.ph



Particularly in relation to Human Sexuality, I have observed learning gaps between theoretical knowledge and real life application due to the wide range of nuances and contexts in real life situations. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate and identify instructional strategies that can more effectively promote a reflexive, experiential and values-based understanding of human sexuality among adolescents.

This is supported by research as follows: “Another perceived weakness is that adolescents express their concern that they usually do not have an available forum to discuss sexuality, and they do not feel comfortable addressing the issue with their families. To this end, they suggested ... creating forums that allow for reflection in educational establishments (Ventura-Miranda et al 2023). In addition, they report that educational interventions are ineffective, as they focus too heavily on theory and are sporadic rather than delivered over time. The adolescents suggested that sex education be improved by addressing this subject regularly, incorporating real cases and practices, using new technologies (Ventura-Miranda et al 2023).

“One of the perceived weaknesses lies in the approach to sexuality. A research study shows that positive aspects of sexuality remain understudied among young people globally, and consensus is lacking on how to conceptualize different aspects of adolescent sexual wellbeing in order to guide programs, research, and policy.” (Anna Kågestena and Miranda van Reeuwijk 2021).

Recently, the school Religion curriculum had been modified to introduce Theology of the Body classes on Human Sexuality for Grade 12. A Theology of the Body course offers an innovative approach as it highlights the positive aspect of the body – its dignity and its inherent worth over the negative view of the corruption and concupiscence of man’s human nature. Christopher West, in the book *Theology of the Body for Beginners* (2009) says: “The problem with our sex-saturated culture, then, is not that it overvalues the body and sex. The problem is that it has failed to see just how valuable the body and sex really are. “

Before the start of the semester, I gathered the goals and expectations of the students of the subject as baseline data. These were some of the feedback gathered from the students: “to gain a deeper understanding of the topic”, “my knowledge of Theology of the Body is very general which hinders me from applying TOB to the maximum”, “my current knowledge of TOB is not much and I hope to find confidence to participate”, “get new knowledge and learning and apply learnings in my life”, “love my body more”, “learn about purpose in life”, “apply lesson to the way I see myself”, “understand myself and love myself more”.

These responses reveal that students are actively searching, open, and eager for answers however there is a need for a more reflexive and discussion based approach that will enable them to truly understand and appreciate human sexuality and apply this knowledge in their lives.

These learning gaps point to the observation that while theology courses often emphasize doctrinal content, they may lack integration with contemporary psychological frameworks. This is where Positive psychology, particularly the PERMA model (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment), offers a valuable pedagogical framework which may be integrated in the theology courses to address these learning gaps.

With regard to attitudes defined as what individuals believe and value there has been renewed scholarly interest in the study of virtues. A research article entitled Introduction: Psychology of Virtue - Integrating Positive Psychology and the Psychology of Religion (Schnitker & Emmons, 2017) highlights that “One of the themes these authors called attention to was the psychology of virtue. At the nexus of the psychology of religion, personality psychology, moral philosophy, and the psychology of emotion, virtue psychology was beginning to make a comeback in psychology.”

One of the virtues examined in the research was chastity, which is often perceived negatively. “Chastity, or sexual restraint, is a moral virtue because it maximizes individual and relational well-being when practiced...In a hypersexualized culture, it is bound to be seen as quaint at best, and overly repressive, restrictive, and even pathological at worst.” (Schnitker & Emmons, 2017).

A study by Hardy and Willoughby (2017) examined theological, philosophical, psychological, and public health perspectives on chastity. Drawing on data from several thousand adults, the authors investigated the relationship between religiousness, abstinence, sexual behaviors, sexual satisfaction, and unhappiness. Their findings support the view that religious communities can promote sexual chastity and positive functioning through teachings on chastity and by providing structures that motivate and enable individuals to live consistently with these values.

In addition, Charry (2011) concludes that, “For those who live into it, Christian identity provides a solid floor on which positive psychology’s interest in resilience, emotional security, positive emotions, coping mechanisms, as well as the classic Christian virtues like compassion, empathy, forgiveness, gratitude, love, and hope can build.”

Temperance, or self-regulation, is recognized as one of the core character strengths within the VIA classification of six virtues in positive psychology. Building on this framework, the present study explores

whether a Theology of the Body (TOB) course, integrated with the positive education PERMA model, can deepen participants' understanding and appreciation of sexual chastity and modesty, both of which may be classified under the virtue of temperance.

Research Question

The search for an effective approach to teaching human sexuality led me to ask: “Is a Theology of the Body (TOB) course, integrated with positive psychology, effective in promoting a deeper understanding of human sexuality and a deeper appreciation of chastity and modesty?”

Defining the Variables

The Independent variable

The independent variable is the Theology of the Body Course. The pedagogical framework is positive education of positive psychology using the PERMA (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment) model.

First, we can discuss the Theology of the Body Course as positive in its approach to human sexuality. In exploring this, a study by Ellen T. Charry (2011) contrasts the more pessimistic view of the human condition found in Classic Western Christian Psychology (CWCP) with the more constructive orientation of positive psychology. She concludes that a common ground exists between theology and positive psychology: Christian identity provides a foundation for cultivating virtues that align with the aims of positive psychology. Moreover, Charry suggests that psychologists may invoke the action of the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments to support human flourishing.

Accordingly, the TOB course offers an innovative pedagogical model by highlighting the positive dimensions of the body—its dignity and inherent worth—rather than focusing on the traditional emphasis on concupiscence in human nature. Christopher West, in the book *Theology of the Body for Beginners* (2009) says: “The problem with our sex-saturated culture, then, is not that it overvalues the body and sex. The problem is that it has failed to see just how valuable the body and sex really are. “

The *Theology of the Body* course on Human Sexuality as inspired by the teachings of St. John Paul II, is presented in a digital workbook developed by the Ruahwoods Institute, adapted to align with the specific cultural background of the students.

Pedagogical Framework: Positive Psychology using the PERMA model

Moving on to the pedagogical framework, I integrated principles of positive education, drawing on positive psychology and the PERMA model, as a central component of my pedagogical strategy.

“The field of positive psychology is grounded in the principles of humanistic psychology, in which individuals are motivated to be their best selves. According to founding psychologist Martin Seligman, positive psychology is ‘the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play’ (Positive Psychology Center, n.d., para. 1). Positive education applies the principles of positive psychology, along with best practice teaching, to encourage students and academic communities to flourish and to reach their maximum potential (About Us, n.d.)” (Kennette 2023).

Catherine Moore (2020) describes positive education using the PERMA model and the Values in Action (VIA) classification as follows:

“Positive education is the combination of traditional education principles with the study of happiness and wellbeing, using Martin Seligman’s PERMA model and the Values in Action (VIA) classification. Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology, has incorporated positive psychology into education models as a way to decrease depression in younger people and enhance their wellbeing and happiness. By using his PERMA model in schools, educators and practitioners aim to promote positive mental health among students and teachers.”

The PERMA framework

The PERMA framework as expounded by Catherine Moore (2020) encompasses five main elements that Seligman premised as critical for long-term wellbeing:

Positive emotions: Feeling positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, interest, and hope

Engagement: Being fully absorbed in activities that use your skills but still challenge you

(Positive) relationships: Having positive relationships

Meaning: Belonging to and serving something you believe is bigger than yourself

Accomplishment: Pursuing success, winning, achievement, and mastery

The article also cites Winmalee High School (2020) in New South Wales as showing how the PERMA framework has been applied in practice through elements such as project-based learning, anti-bullying strategies, and more. (Moore, C.2020)

Moore (2020) further explains: “Thus research has shown that the PERMA model in positive education serves as a framework for educators aiming to enhance student well-being and academic success. By focusing on positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, teachers can foster a more holistic approach to education that supports both personal and academic growth.

Positive psychology research, in conjunction with research from other contemporary psychological and educational fields, suggests that there are five educational foundations of well-being: social and emotional competency, positive emotions, positive relationships, engagement through strengths, and a sense of meaning and purpose (Noble & McGrath, 2008). Together, these concepts support flourishing within the education system, and help to promote positive mental health within the student population (Huppert & So, 2013). (Kennette 2023).”

VIA Character Strengths

With regard to character strengths Catherine Moore (2020) states: “Education has long focused on academics and fostering positive character strength development. However, before the publication of *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* by Peterson and Seligman (2004), any efforts to endorse character strengths were derived from religious, cultural, or political bias (Linkins, Niemiec, Gillham, & Mayerson, 2015). *The VIA classification, however, provides a cross-culturally relevant framework for ‘educating the heart’* (Linkins et al., 2015, p. 65).

Positive education programs usually define positive character using the core character strengths that are represented in the VIA’s six virtues: Wisdom and knowledge, Courage, Humanity, Justice, Temperance and Transcendence. These positive characters aren’t innate; they’re external constructs that need to be nurtured. The goal of positive education is to reveal children’s combination of character strengths and to develop their ability to effectively engage those strengths (Linkins et al., 2015).” (Moore, C. 2020).

Modesty and chastity were framed within the context of temperance due to the positive value of the inherent dignity of the human person, recognized as a character strength in the TOB framework.

The Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the students' understanding and appreciation of human sexuality. Based on the implementation of the Theology of the Body (TOB) course and integrating the PERMA model of positive psychology, this variable reflects the outcomes of the intervention. Specifically, it assesses whether students developed:

A deeper understanding and appreciation of the value and beauty of human sexuality.

A deeper understanding of chastity and modesty as a character strength.

Other variables

The other variables, including students' class size, sex, age, socioeconomic background and prior religious training, were homogeneous.

The research variables are shown in the Positive education PERMA model below.

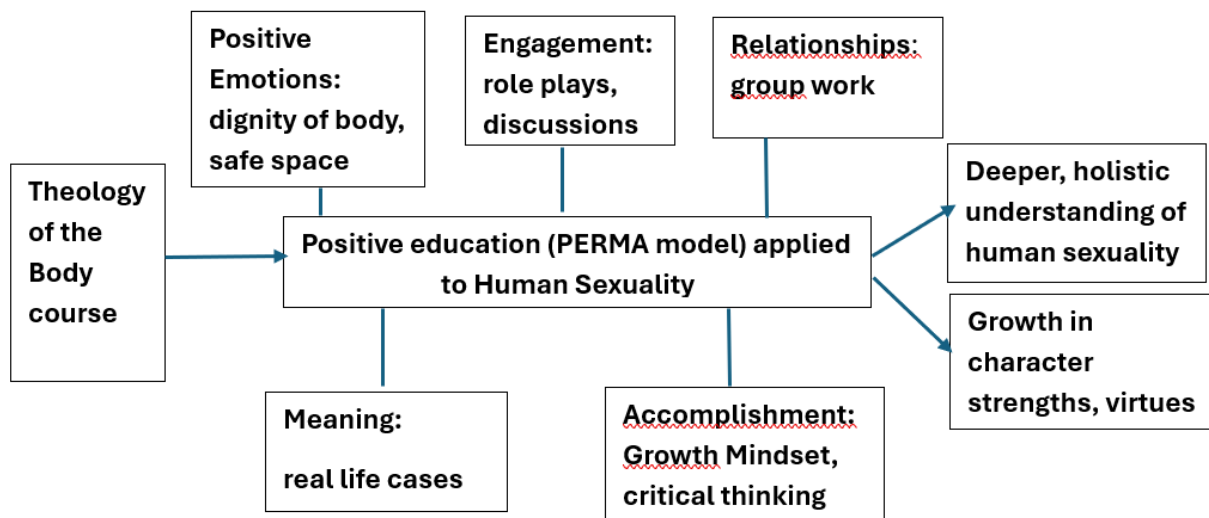


Figure 1: Research variables are shown in the Positive education PERMA model

Intervention

The intervention consisted of delivering the Theology of the Body (TOB) course through a positive, experiential, reflective, and discussion-based pedagogy. The lessons emphasized the true meaning and beauty of the human body in relation to personal identity and dignity, self-giving love, and the virtues of modesty and chastity, over the traditional negative view of the corruption and concupiscence of man's human nature.

The Theology of the Body course was conducted from August to November 2023, involving 68 Grade 12 students from an all-girls school in Metro Manila. During this period, two course modules were taught for one hour twice a week. The topics covered included: Creation, Original Experiences, The Fall, Historical Man, Dignity of the Human Person, Dignity and Dating, Eschatological Man, Being as a Gift, Marriage, and Motherhood/Fatherhood.

Positive Education – the PERMA Model

The pedagogical framework of positive education was introduced using the Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment (PERMA) model.

Positive Emotions: The introduction of a Theology of the Body course adopted a positive approach by emphasizing the beauty, dignity, and sacredness of the human body, in contrast to the more traditional emphasis on concupiscence. This perspective fostered positive emotions within the classroom. In addition, I was deliberate in cultivating a supportive environment by ensuring a safe space where students could openly share their opinions and respectfully engage with one another's views.

Engagement: To enhance student engagement, I revised my lesson plans to incorporate interactive and varied teaching methods. For example, I employed case studies enacted through role play to capture students' interest and stimulate active participation, discussion, and critical thinking. Supplementary activities such as videos, mind mapping, and poster creation were also integrated.

Relationships: A key factor in the teaching strategy was the deliberate emphasis on fostering relationships. To achieve this, the majority of application exercises were designed as group activities, encouraging greater discussion and collaboration among students rather than individual work.

Meaning: To enhance the sense of meaning, I incorporated real-life case studies enacted through role plays. This approach enabled students to apply classroom concepts to their daily lives, thereby equipping them with practical insights and skills that would better prepare them for the future.

Accomplishment: To cultivate a sense of achievement, a growth mindset was fostered by developing students' critical thinking and discussion skills, enabling them to more effectively process decision-making. Additionally, peer evaluation was introduced following group work presentations, encouraging students to critically review both their own and their peers' decisions, thereby reinforcing reflective learning and deeper engagement.

Research show that case studies and group discussions enhance student critical thinking skills. Notably, the opportunity for dialogue, the exposure of students to authentic or situated problems and examples, and mentoring had positive effects on Critical Thinking Skills. (Abrami P, Bernard R, Borokhovski E et al. 2015)

Another research showed that the case study method could enhance students' critical thinking capabilities and enable them to analyze and solve problems during group discussions. The initial study findings stated that the case study encouraged students to reflect, have a discussion with teachers and get involved in group discussions. (A. Sinan Ünsar, Ediz Engin 2013).

A study on the competencies needed for sexual well-being includes critical reflection skills (Anna Kågesten and Miranda van Reeuwijk 2021). Based on their study, adolescents in most cultural settings are growing up in a context characterised by multiple, and often conflicting, messages and norms related to sexuality and gender. As a result, adolescents need skills to process different ideas related to what is socially or culturally "ok" (or not) to feel or do (e.g. expecting boys to be sexually active and girls to be abstinent), for whom (e.g. only between men and women), and under what circumstances (e.g. only within marriage), Arbeit MR (2014), Kim JL et al (2007).

Critical reflection skills are thus essential to allow adolescents to take a step back, reflect and distance themselves from dominant social-sexual norms in way that is in line with their own values (Bay-Cheng LY 2021). As noted by Bay-Cheng LY (2012) such critical reflection is essential to be able to "plan actions with which to build a world that may better promote their sexuality development and better support sexual thriving".

Participants of the Research

The participants were 68 Grade 12 female students from an exclusive Catholic school in Metro Manila with around 25-30 students per class. They had prior exposure to Theology courses but received focused instruction on human sexuality through the TOB course conducted over four months. The teacher-researcher facilitated the intervention and course evaluation.

Negotiations Undertaken

Students were informed about the study's objectives and voluntarily participated in the course evaluation survey and interviews. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured as responses were collected through an online form without identifying information. The teacher clarified that the data would be used for course improvement and research purposes, without academic grading implications.

Data Collection

Data to measure the effectiveness of the course were collected using a mixed-method approach:

- Quantitative data from an online survey consisting of Likert-type questions on course objectives, content, and virtues developed.
- Qualitative data from open-ended survey questions and follow-up group and individual interviews conducted four months after the course.

Data collection through an online survey was conducted immediately after the course in November 2023. Of the 68 participants, survey responses were obtained from 56 students, while 7 students additionally participated in interviews.

Follow-up data collection through group and individual interviews were carried out in April 2024, four months after the course concluded, to minimize the possibility of students feeling pressured to respond favorably due to grading considerations and to assess the lasting effects of the course. This phase included two interviews: one face-to-face group interview with six students and one face-to-face individual interview.

A convenience sampling method was employed. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by omitting participant names from the transcripts. Interview participants were drawn from the same sample as those who completed the survey.

Instruments, Procedure and Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages and frequency distributions) to identify students' agreement levels with course objectives and learning outcomes. Qualitative data from open-ended responses and interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, following Maguire and Delahunt's (2017) steps of coding, theme generation, and synthesis. Results from both data sets were triangulated to validate findings.

Survey Questionnaire

The online survey questionnaire consists of six (6) parts:

- a. Part 1 - Course Objectives

- b. Part 2 - Course Content/Experience
- c. Part 3 - Virtues
- d. Part 4 - Course Delivery
- e. Part 5 - About the Teacher
- f. Part 6 - What did I like the Most/Least about the course/What could be done to improve the course?

A four point Likert-type scale was used for Parts 1-5 which consisted of the following responses and corresponding values from which the respondents chose which best applied to them.:

4- Strongly Agree (SA) 3- Agree (A) 2- Disagree (D) 1-Strongly Disagree (SD)

4- Excellent (E) 3- Very Good (VG) 2- Good (G) 1-Poor (P)

The frequency of values of the responses per item were tallied and converted into percentages using the Google excel feature. Percentages were chosen because they would be more accurate and meaningful for the study.

For a portion in Part 4 (Activities), students are requested to choose from any number of class activities listed. For Part 6, student is requested to answer three open-ended questions: “What did I like most?”, “What did I like least?” and “How could I improve the course for next year?”

Interviews

The interview portion consisted of four open-ended questions which consisted of the following:

How would you describe your experience of the Theology of the Body course?

What were the expectations met or not met when you started and after?

What realizations or life style changes do you think were influenced by TOB class?

How do you think these reflections came about?

For the open-ended questions of the survey and interview questions, data analysis was carried out following a thematic analysis method (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017): (1) the responses were read by the researcher to understand everything the participants said (2) systematic coding : most significant quotes were assigned codes using the open coding method (3) Assigning of themes from the coded data by grouping codes that

shared patterns of meaning around a central idea (4) Review of themes by double checking for consistency with the codes they included.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Closed -ended Questions in Survey Questionnaire

Results of Responses to Course Objectives

Table 1 - Responses to Questions on Course Objectives, Experience and Delivery (%)

Course Objectives	4-SA	3 -A	Course Experience	4-SA	3 -A	Course Delivery	4-SA	3 -A	2-D
I established the basis from the Bible of the inherent dignity of the human person as a body-person	87.50%	12.50 %	I found the course objectives positive and encouraging	82.14 %	17.86 %	Course content – organized, clear	87.50 %	10.71 %	1.79 %
I understand that human persons are made for self-giving love, and find fulfilment in self-giving to others	96.43%	3.57 %	I found the course content positive in its approach to Human Sexuality	67.86 %	32.14 %	Course materials (slides, videos) - relevant, useful	76.79 %	23.21 %	0%
I deepened my ideas on Dating, Marriage in the light of the body as a gift from God and	92.86%	7.14 %	I was able to reflect and gain new insights from the course	80.36 %	19.64 %	Course tasks effectively meet course objectives	87.50 %	12.50 %	0%

human sexuality as part of Gods love.					
I was able to deepen a personal relationship with God.	71.43%	28.5 7%	I felt comfortable answering whether I agreed or not	71.43 %	28.57 %
I was able to apply the lessons learned in my daily life.	76.79%	23.2 1%			
overall average -	85.00%	15.0 0%			
%					

Table 1 shows the responses of students in relation to their agreement with the course objectives. The results show that the big majority of the students strongly agreed that they were able to achieve the course objectives with the over-all average of the 5 objectives of 85% among the 56 students. This was followed by 15% of students who agreed that they were able to achieve course objectives. There were no 0% of students who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The course objective with the highest percentage of responses from highest to lowest rating is as follows:

Objective 2: “I was able to understand that human persons are made for self-giving love, therefore find fulfillment only when they give themselves in service to others.” with Strongly Agree at 96.43% and Agree at 3.57 %.

Objective 3: I was able to deepen my ideas on Dating, Marriage and Parenthood in the light of the body as a gift from God and human sexuality as an integral part of the Covenant of Gods love with 92.86% of respondents who strongly agreed and 7.1% of the respondents who agreed.

Objective 1: “I was able to establish the basis from the Bible (Creation of Man to Redemption of Man) of the inherent dignity of the human person as a body-person, i.e the body is integral to one’s identity as a child of God.” with a ranking of, 87% of respondents who strongly agreed and 12.5% of the respondents who agreed.

Objective 5: “I was able to apply the lessons learned in my daily life. “with a ranking of Strongly Agree at 76.79% and Agree at 23.21%.

Objective 4: “I was able to deepen and strengthen a personal relationship with God, “with a ranking of Strongly agree at 71.43% and Agree at 28.57%.

Most significantly, responses for Objectives 1-3 which were the most highly ranked reveals that the majority of the students strongly agreed that they were able to attain course objectives which all present the human condition in a positive light.

It is also noteworthy that for Objective 4 majority of the students strongly agreed that they were able to apply lessons learned in class and that majority agreed strongly that they were able to deepen their personal relationship with God as seen in Objective 5.

Results of Responses to Course Experience (%)

On Table 1 on the column on Course Experience, for survey item “I found the course objectives positive and encouraging” 82.14 % of the students strongly agreed and 17.86 % agreed. On the item “I found the course content positive in its approach to Human Sexuality” 67.86% strongly agreed and 32.14% agreed that the course content was positive. These results indicate that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the Theology of the Body course is positive in its course objectives and course content.

On the survey item about gaining new insights from reflection, 80.36% signified that they strongly agreed while 19.64% agreed. This indicates that majority of the students strongly agreed that they had gained new learning/knowledge.

Results of Responses to Questions on Course Delivery (frequency/%)

Table 1 also shows the responses for course delivery. For the item - Course content is well planned, organized and clear, 87.50% strongly agree, 10.71% agree and 1.79% disagree revealing that majority strongly agreed that course content is well planned, materials are relevant and performance tasks effectively meet course objectives.

For the item - Course materials (Power points, videos selected) are relevant, useful, and current, 76.79% strongly agree, 23.21% agree and 0% disagree indicating that while a majority of the students strongly agreed that the course materials are relevant and useful, 23.21% answered that they agreed which is an indication that there is room for improvement.

For the item - Course performance tasks effectively meet the course objectives & supports students' learning, 0 students disagree, 7 students agree at 12.50% and 49 participants strongly agree at 87.50%. revealing that majority strongly agree with this item

Results of Responses to Activities learned from the Most

For the item “Which among the activities did you learn from the most?” students were given a choice of all the different activities to choose from (See Annex 1: Part 4 –“Which among the activities did you learn from the most?” for the complete list of activities and the number of responses). The number of responses per activity are seen below:

Table 2: Activities Students learned from the Most

Activity	Percentage	Frequency of Responses
Role Play	80.35%	45
Class discussion	71.42%	40
Focused group discussion	60.71 %	34
Reflection Paper	51.78%	29
Poster making	50.00%	28
Mind mapping	42.85%	24
Videos	31.21%	18
All Activities	25.00%	14
Speaker/Talks	1.78%	1

Role play (80.35%) followed by Class discussion (71.42%) garnered the highest number of frequency of responses which supports the review of literature (Abrami P, Bernard R, Borokhovski E et al. 2015) that use of case studies through role play and class discussion are effective in developing critical thinking skills. The role play and class discussion were also found to be dominant themes in the responses to the open

ended question “What I liked most about the course” plus the interviews validating the above findings in Table 2.

The Focused group discussion (60.71%), reflection paper (51.78%), are the next two activities with more than 50% of the students saying that these activities were those they learned from the most which support the study that focused group discussion and reflection are effective methods of developing critical thinking (A. Sinan Ünsar, Ediz Engin 2013).

Mind mapping (42.85%), testimonial videos (31.21%), All activities (25%) least caught the interest and engagement of the students. The 1.78% for the speaker/talks may be explained because it was not listed as one of the choices but was mentioned by one respondent under the category “Others”.

Results of Responses to How Would You Rate the Course?

Table 3. Responses to the question: How would you rate the course? (frequency and %)

Responses to How would you rate the course	f	%
1 Poor	0	0
2 Good	1	1.79%
3 Very Good	15	26.79%
4 Excellent	40	71.43%
Total	56	100%

When asked about how they rated the course, the respondents rated the course excellent at 71.43%, Very good at 26.79% and Good at 1.79%. A big majority of the students felt that over all, the course was excellent.

Results of Responses to Virtues and Strengths

The next part of the survey was designed to measure if the course helped the students improve their understanding and appreciation of the virtues leading them to practice the following virtues/strengths: modesty, chastity, generosity, sincerity, patience and courage.

Table 4 Responses to the Question on Virtues and Strengths (%)

Virtue/Character Strength	4-Excellent	3 -Very Good	2-Good	1-Poor	Total
Modesty	78.57%	17.86%	3.57%	0%	100%
Chastity	82.14%	16.07%	1.79%	0%	100%
Generosity	85.71%	14.29%	0%	0%	100%
Sincerity	83.93%	16.07%	0%	0%	100%
Patience	85.71%	4.29%	0%	0%	100%
Courage	83.93%	16.07%	0%	0%	100%
Over-all Average	83.33 %	15.77%	.89%	0%	100%

Modesty was rated 78.57% as Excellent, 17.86 % as Very Good and 3.5% as Good. 3.57% rated themselves as Good (a high rating compared to other responses for Good) rather than very good or excellent which tends to show that they rated themselves honestly. The finding shows that majority were inspired to exercise modesty.

Chastity was rated 82.14% for Excellent, 16.07% for Very Good and 1.79% for Good indicating that majority were very inspired to practice the virtue of chastity.

Generosity was rated 85.71% for Excellent, 14.29% for Very Good and 0% for Good, revealing that 85.71% were appreciative of and inspired to practice the virtue of generosity.

Sincerity received the highest number of respondents at 83.93%, 16.07% for Very Good and 0% for Good, showing that majority were very appreciative of and very inspired to practice the virtue of sincerity.

Patience was rated 85.71% for Excellent, 14.29% for Very Good and 0% for Good Indicating that majority were very appreciative of and very inspired to practice the virtue. Courage received 0% for Good, 16.07% for Very Good and 83.93% for Excellent receiving the highest number of respondents. This indicates that 83.93% were very appreciative of and very inspired to practice the virtue of courage. Based on the virtues which ranked highest in terms of the number of Excellent responses, the rank would be first, a tie between patience and generosity at 85.71%, second a tie between the virtues of courage and sincerity at 83.93%, third, the virtue of chastity at 82.14% and last modesty at 78.57%.

The over-all average for excellent received 83.33 %, while the over-all average for very good was 15.77% and for poor was .89%. This shows that the big majority of the students were inspired to practice these virtues through the course.

Based on the responses that the students gave wherein majority strongly agreed that the course objectives were met and that the course content and experience were positive, we can relate this to the ideas of authentic happiness in Positive Psychology. Martin Seligman in the book “Authentic Happiness” writes “Positive Psychology is about the meaning of those happy and unhappy moments, the tapestry they weave and the strengths and virtues they display that make up the quality of your life. Positive emotions alienated from the exercise of character leads to emptiness. The positive feeling that aims for the exercise of strengths and virtues rather than from the shortcuts, is authentic.”

The results tend to confirm the proposition that the positive emotions from the course content and objectives of the Theology of the Body course lead to authentic happiness because they lead the students to aim to the practice character strengths/virtues as espoused by Seligman.

The results that the majority of the students rated the course delivery and instructional skills of the teacher as excellent indicate that these are important factors in the effectiveness of the course.

Results from Open Ended Survey Questions: What did I like Most? What did I like Least and “What could be improved?” What did I like Most? Why?

For the results from the survey open -ended question “What did you like most about the course? Why? the content analysis was more data driven using an inductive approach to capture students’ experience rather than a theory driven approach (Braun & Clarke 2006). The answers were coded into patterns and classified into 4 themes which were significant and had a high number of responses coded per theme from which sub-themes were derived as shown in the themes below.

As seen in Thematic Map 1, the students clearly express as shown through the 4 main themes and sub themes that they liked 1) the application to real life situations through role plays versus the purely theoretical approach. 2) class discussions wherein they actively participate and deepen knowledge 3) the topics of marriage, dating and relationships and 4) feeling comfortable to express their opinions.

Shown in Table 5 below are the Themes, sub themes, and the codes.

Table 5- Themes from Question: What Did I like Most about the course? Why?

Themes	Sub themes	Codes
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Real-life Scenarios (24 R)	Real Life applications	-incorporate our own understanding -very practical - learn more about our surroundings. - up to date with what is happening around us in terms of applying it in our daily lives. - encourages us to really imagine ourselves in different situations and ponder on what is right and wrong, what to do, what not to do, and a lot more. - really pushed to think about not only the concepts but also their applications, especially surrounding relationships with others and God.
	Role Play Application of lesson	- had fun conceptualizing with my classmates and acting. - I understood the lesson well that way. -Reflect upon deep topics, make meaningful outputs, think of ways to apply what I have learned in class. -thought provoking cases and situations - assessed our knowledge on everyday scenarios.
	Creativity through Role Play	-great outlets to express creativity while applying class concepts. -it's fun for us. -videos and role plays were inspiring and allowed us to be creative.
Class discussions on	Deepening understanding	<u>-enlightening</u> , engaging

the TOB topics
(19 R)

-able to really understand the significance of the lectures or slides

-students more knowledgeable.

-made us think a lot.

-helps each one of us determine how well we understood the assignment, and how well we can explain to someone whom doesn't know yet.

- deep topics discussed in class.

-process ideas help students understand.

-she readily answers our questions.

-I think this was the first year where I felt completely engaged in a Theology of the Body class. Not because it was presenting completely new concepts but the delivery on all lessons were clear and made sense to me.

-the pacing and ratio of activity and discussion.

-enthusiasm of teacher

Interactive participation

- ask us questions related to the lessons

-Questions fun to ponder on and answer.

-my insights are heard

-give new ideas or reignite old ones in my classmates' minds and hearts.

- interactive lessons allowed the topics to be attained.

- enthusiasm and participation in this course.

		-Group discussion allowed us to share our thoughts and opinions freely.
		-I like how we are able to learn a lot through activities that enable us to engage with one another as a class.
Students felt free to agree or not. (13 R)	Students felt free to agree or not – safe space.	-very understanding on all points of view on different topics – some things may be situational – grey areas instead of just black or white
		-easy to discuss sensitive topics.
		-good exercise for me to voice out ethics and finding ways to intersect my faith with morals.
		- we get to tell our own opinions in which to widen our perspective and get to know more people.
		- how relaxed the course was
		- how it was safe for us to share our own opinions because we knew they would be respected.
		- share our thoughts and opinions freely.
		-I felt comfortable speaking my opinions whether I agreed or not with the teacher.
		- free to express their own opinion without getting judged and if someone makes a mistake, they will be corrected without being humiliated.
	Open-mind and free to express opinion	-kind and understanding teacher
		-How miss is open-minded and does not make us feel invalidated with our answers.

		- despite being of a slightly controversial nature in this contemporary era. - very respectful, and made me think in a way that helped to better my understanding of Theology of the Body. -welcoming the class was because we were encouraged to freely share our thoughts on the matter. -sincere and without forcing anything on us - ask any questions we had in mind and voice out any opinions or ideas that we had about the topics.
Topics on Marriage, Dating and Chastity are important and relevant (10 R)	Topics vaguely talked about	-very informative and catered to our needs as young women - clarified subjects that are often only vaguely talked about at home, if they were discussed at all. Miss has done an exceptional job in approaching discussions that are not often talked touched on--evident in topics of marriage, dating, modesty/chastity, and parenthood.
	Marriage and dating	- all topics in relation to my future as a Catholic woman so topics like marriage and motherhood - gave me a better understand and feeling of dating -what I should look for in a guy.
	Modesty, Chastity	- discussions about modesty and dating because we need to be aware of the things especially in our age. -help me improve myself at present and in the future. Present because it taught me how to be modest and how to practice the virtue of chastity. While future because it

taught me a lot of topics on marriage. It made me realize the importance of finding the perfect husband.

- we get to open relevant topics such as chastity and sex. It is because these topics are relevant to us as we become a woman and young adults and we always need our minds to be open.

-learning about new things and gaining better insights on the things I have already learned in the past, such as modesty.

These interview results validate the findings on the results of the google survey on course objectives, experience and activities. The themes 1,2 and 4 respectively of “What I like Most”: Real life scenarios, Class discussion on TOB topics and Marriage, Dating, Modesty and Chastity are important topics, validate Course objectives 3,4 and 5 survey results as follows:

Theme 1: Real life scenarios application (24 Responses)

Course Objective 5: “I was able to apply the lessons learned in my daily life. “with a ranking of Strongly Agree at 76.79% and Agree at 23.21%.

“I liked that we didn't just learn the lessons, but also applied to real life through the class activities. It is more memorable that way.”

“I liked case studies the most. It encourages us to really imagine ourselves in different situations and ponder on what is right and wrong, what to do, what not to do, and a lot more.”

“I enjoyed having the role plays, which I often don't like, mostly because we were able to be assessed on our knowledge in everyday scenarios.”

“I liked case studies the most. It encourages us to really imagine ourselves in different situations and ponder on what is right and wrong, what to do, what not to do, and a lot more.”

“I like how the course is up to date with what is happening around us in terms of applying it in our daily lives.”

Theme 2: Class Discussion: engaging, interactive, deep and insightful (19 out of 56 responses-34% See “What I liked Most About the Course”)

Sub theme: Deepening Understanding

Course Objective 3: I was able to deepen my ideas on Dating, Marriage and Parenthood in the light of the body as a gift from God and human sexuality as an integral part of the Covenant of God's love with 92.86% of respondents who strongly agreed and 7.1% of the respondents who agreed.

"Reflect upon deep topics, make meaningful outputs, think of ways to apply what I have learned in class."

"What I liked best was about the speaker talks and the discussion in the classrooms (group activities) about the topics. I liked these because it helps each one of us determine how well we understood the assignment, and how well we can explain to someone who doesn't know yet."

Theme 4: Marriage, Dating, Modesty and Chastity are important topics

Course Objective 4: I was able to deepen and strengthen a personal relationship with God, with a ranking of Strongly agree at 71.43% and Agree at 28.57%.

"I liked how we were really pushed to think about not only the concepts but also their applications, especially surrounding relationships with others and God."

"Through this course we get to open relevant topics such as chastity and sex. It is because these topics are relevant to us as we become a woman and young adults and we always need our minds to be open."

"I think this was the first year where I felt completely engaged in a Theology of the Body class. Miss has done an exceptional job in approaching discussions that are not often talked touched on— evident in topics of marriage, dating, modesty/chastity, and parenthood."

Theme 3: Students felt free to agree or not with 13 out of 56 responses (23%)

Course experience What I liked Most About the Course: responses indicated that the students did not feel judged or pressured but were able to freely state their opinions. This is illustrated in the following statements:

"I felt comfortable speaking my opinions whether I agreed or not with the teacher."

"I liked how easy it was to be able to discuss sensitive topics. As a HUMSS student, this class was a good exercise for me to voice out ethics and finding ways to intersect my faith with morals."

“I liked how open the discussions were because we got to ask any questions we had in mind and voice out any opinions or ideas that we had about the topics.”

“I liked everything because the way our teacher approaches a topic is calm and everyone is free to express their own opinion without getting judged and if someone makes a mistake, they will be corrected without being humiliated.”

“Miss was incredibly open to discussions about the topics despite being of a slightly controversial nature in this contemporary era. The way she talked about the course and its lessons was very respectful, and made me think in a way that helped to better my understanding of Theology of the Body.”

With regard to class activities, it was found that role play (78.94%) and the class discussion (71.42%) in the survey of “Activities you liked most” emerged as the top activities and also were found to be dominant themes of the interview questions: Real life scenarios and class discussion as shown in Table 6. This was also a significant finding since it shows that the interviews validated the findings of the survey.

Results to “What did you like Least About the Course?/ What could be improved next year?”

For the survey questions “What did you like least about the course and “What could be improved for next year?” The responses were coded and several themes were identified.

Theme 1: Nothing (39 R). For theme 1, 39 respondents did not find anything that they liked least about the course. This confirms that the majority had a positive experience and were very satisfied with the course as shown by the following responses:

“None! I believe that all the topics are useful and informative; hence, it was encouraging to learn.”

“I think I least liked nothing. I completely enjoyed the TOB sessions every single time we met, because we were able to achieve a broad understanding on the importance of TOB and etc.”

Theme 2: Course materials (6R). For Course materials, 3 students responded that they found the slides useful but wordy. The other 3 commented that they did not find the testimonial videos relatable. This feedback may be considered for the next TOB sessions.

Theme 3: Course Requirements (4R). For Course requirements, 2 respondents gave comments about the recoverage of topics, another the use of laptops in class and another about the exam. However, we could say these are isolated cases. Extracts are shown below:

“I liked least the re-coverage of topics we had already learned before.”

“The topics were a bit difficult when trying to apply it to the situation questions in the exams especially if the teacher is looking for a specific answer.”

Theme 4: Course Activities (4R). For theme 4 on Course Activities, one respondent each gave feedback on different activities such as the skit, the interactive lectures and class discussion. These may be isolated cases since the majority of the respondents liked the course activities.

“I liked the very interactive lectures the least because I'm not very comfortable speaking when I am not confident with the topic.”

“I would like more discussion sessions about real life applications as well, because I feel like it's where I can learn best.”

Results for the Group and Individual Interviews

The themes from the group and individual interviews are consistent with the themes from the question: What did I like Most? in the google survey as seen in their intersections in the thematic map below where the intersections are highlighted in yellow.

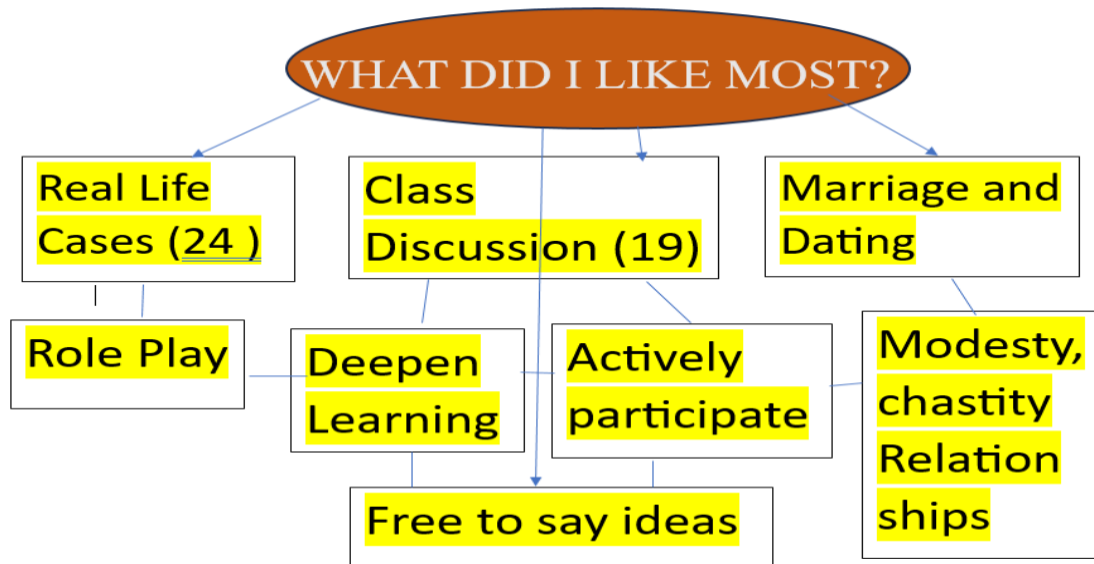


Figure 2 Thematic Map 1 of Intersections of Themes from the Group and Individual Interviews and the Question “What did I like most about the Course”?

The Findings

1. Findings indicated unanimous agreement that TOB course objectives were achieved and that students found the course content and objectives positive.

A Theology of the Body course content is effective in achieving its objectives in deepening the understanding of human sexuality as follows:

a. TOB course perceived as positive in content and objectives

- 1) Established the basis from the Bible of the inherent dignity of the human person as a body-person (87.50% strongly agree and 12.50% agree)
- 2) Understand that human persons are made for self-giving love, and find fulfillment in self-giving to others (96.43% strongly agree and 3.57% agree)
- 3) Deepen ideas on Dating, Marriage in the light of the body as a gift from God and human sexuality as part of God's love. (92.86 strongly agree and 7.14% agree)
- 4) Deepen a personal relationship with God. (71.43%strongly agree and 28.57% agree)
- 5) Apply the lessons learned in my daily life. (76.79% strongly agree and 23.21% agree)

2. Students also reported significant growth in virtues rating the following as excellent and very good:

Modesty (78.57 Excellent, % 17.86% Very Good)

Chastity (82.14% Excellent,16.07% Very Good),

Generosity (85.71% Excellent, 14.29% Very Good)

Sincerity (83.93% Excellent,16.07% Very Good)

Patience (85.71% Excellent,14.29% Very Good),

Courage (83.93% Excellent,16.07% Very Good)

Over-all Average (83.33 % Excellent, 5.77% Very Good)

The high ratings of these virtues indicate that majority of the students had gained a deeper appreciation and were inspired to practice these virtues which they see as leading to better life choices.

3. The results from both the online survey and the group and individual interviews showed that: The most effective strategies were role plays (80%) and class discussions (71%), which fostered critical thinking and real-life application. Qualitative themes revealed that learners valued (1) role plays with real-life applications (2) open discussions, (3) relevant topics on chastity and dating, and (4) a safe, classroom environment where people respect and are open to ideas shared. These themes aligned closely with strategies embedded in the PERMA model.

a. Positive Emotions – creating a safe space.

The results from the online survey showed that the majority of the students felt comfortable answering whether they agreed or not as seen in the result to the item “I felt comfortable answering whether I agreed or not” (71.43% Strongly agreed and 28.57% Agree).

Aside from this, the open-mindedness of teacher to create a safe space was one of the themes which came out in the group interview. I was deliberate in creating a safe space where students are able to express their ideas and emotions freely as there are sensitive topics about relationships such as dating,

Motherhood and the students may be hesitant to articulate what they may feel are unacceptable views. The results show that the students appreciated the openness and respect for everyone’s views.

b. Engagement: Variety of teaching activities

The results of the question “Which activity did you like the most? showed that the students liked most of the activities.

This positive result shows that varied activities is an effective way to keep the students focused and engaged. The lesson plan would always have a short slide presentation of the lesson with discussion questions which may then include a short video then a lesson application consisting of a role play or mind mapping or poster making or such other activities.

c. Relationships: group work activities to foster greater discussion

In the survey group discussions was the second most liked activity. Group discussion was also one of the themes in the interviews conducted. The small focused group discussions worked well in processing different ideas, concepts and scenarios as they interacted with each other and built relationships.

They also learn from their peers as we evaluate the group work reports presented to the class.

d. Meaning: use real life scenarios in their role plays and discussions

In both the google survey and interviews, the findings validated that the use of real life cases made the classes relevant and applicable to their daily lives as seen as follows:

“helped us—real life examples “apply it to our personal lives also by sharing it with others” As one of the objectives of the course was to equip the students to make better decisions about human sexuality in the future, presenting real life cases and being able to process them together in a safe space was one effective way to prepare them for future choices.

e. Accomplishment: Growth mindset through the use of the case study (role play enactment) to foster critical thinking skills and discussions Role playing (80.35% or 45 out of 56 students) and class discussions (71.42% or 40 out of 56 students) were listed by the majority listed as top choice over other activities as they learned to process real life situations by honing their critical thinking skills to make better life choices.

In the interviews findings, the role play and class discussion were also found to be the dominant themes and the students indicated that in these activities, they were able to process, reflect and develop critical thinking skills.

Example of codes on the role play: “I like the role plays because I get to understand the lessons more.”
“Really fun but we really learned the faith.”

Unlike in previous Values classes which were mostly lectures, I observed that the students really enjoyed acting out the role plays and got so involved in the scenario.

The class was always so exciting and entertaining such that everyone would eagerly look forward to role plays. Role play was also a wonderful way to make even the shy ones participate actively and shine. It is important not only for the students to know the concepts but to have an application activity to see if they can appropriately apply in real life situations what they have learned to stimulate critical thinking and a growth mindset. Through the application activity, their understanding of the general concepts are fine tuned according to the nuances and contexts of complex life situations.

Conclusion

The integration of TOB with positive psychology through reflexive, experiential, and discussion-based pedagogy fosters a deeper, values-oriented understanding of human sexuality, demonstrating the potential of positive education to enrich theological instruction and enhance student engagement.

The significance of the research shows that the integration of TOB with positive psychology is an:

1. Effective model for adolescent human sexuality courses
2. The PERMA model is an effective pedagogical framework
3. Role play is a preferred teaching delivery mode

Action Planning:

The plan of action includes the following:

1. Sustain the Theology of the Body's positive, virtue-centered approach in future classes.
2. Continue the deliberate integration of positive education, specifically the PERMA model, in the delivery of future classes.
3. Replicate the study across diverse student populations to further validate the applicability and generalizability of the findings.

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