



## Introduction

Last January, the Social Policy Office held a KPS meeting to discuss the topic of Abortion. The student organisations present did not voice their opinion on the matter but rather decided that it would be ideal to come up with a timeline of initiatives organised with the aim of obtaining a representative stance on the matter from all University students. In fact, it was agreed that the most effective way of doing this was by disseminating a survey to all the University students. Furthermore, it was agreed that a public consultation session on Abortion, which would include a balanced panel with two representatives from the pro-life side and two representatives from the pro-choice side, should take place prior to the launching of the survey.

During another KPS meeting, the questions that were to be included in the survey were voted upon and a final vote was also taken to ensure that the gathered data would be analysed through the use of SPSS, together with the guidance of Prof. Liberato Camilleri. Additionally, it was agreed that the results of the survey would reflect the position to be taken by KSU on behalf of all student representatives and students. After this meeting, the said public consultation session was organised and the survey was issued and distributed to all University students via email. Notably, only University students could fill in the survey. Eventually, the Social Policy Office met up with Prof. Liberato Camilleri to analyse the results via SPSS and prepare the report accordingly.

A third KPS meeting was also held to discuss the findings of the survey with the student organisations. The results of this survey are only representative of the views of the students who form part of the University of Malta.

## **General Background on Abortion**

Albeit the fact that Abortion is legal in nearly all Member States of the European Union, with Ireland being the last Member State to legalise Abortion, there is a variation with regards to the restrictions under which it is permitted. The majority of Member States legalised abortion only during the first trimester, after which it is permitted solely under certain circumstances. When it comes to the local scenario, Malta is the sole Member State that has not legalised Abortion.

## **Methodology**

A sample of 733 participants, selected from a population of around 11,000 students guarantees a maximum margin of error of 3.5% assuming a 95% confidence level. This data was collected using the web-based questionnaire Google forms.

The Friedman Test was used to compare mean rating scores provided to a number of statements related to Abortion. The null hypothesis specifies that the mean rating scores provided to the statements are comparable and is accepted if the p-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis, implying significant difference in mean rating scores, is accepted otherwise.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test was used to compare mean rating scores provided to an Abortion-related statement between different groups of students clustered by faculty, gender and age. The null hypothesis specifies that the mean rating scores provided to the statement vary marginally between the groups and this is accepted if the p-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis, implying significant differences in mean rating scores, is accepted otherwise.

The Chi-Squared Test is used to assess the association between two categorical variables, including the legalisation of Abortion with gender/age/faculty. The null hypothesis specifies no association between the two variables and this is accepted if the p-value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis, implying significant association, is accepted otherwise.

The KSU Social Policy Office has ensured that this survey as well as the subsequent data analysis were of a professional standard, hence, why Prof. Liberato Camilleri's expertise was required to ensure that the final product would be up to standard as well as representative. Once the required amount of responses was gathered, Prof. Camilleri helped KSU's Social Policy Office to analysing the data through SPSS. The latter was a lengthy process which Prof. Camilleri reviewed very thoroughly.

The following tables and graphs outline an in-depth analysis of the data gathered from the questions that were asked in the survey. In fact, it was ensured that all questions were analysed separately and that the relationships, which give additional value to the study, were also created. This was done so that the information at hand would provide the reader with a full view of the students' perception on the issue of Abortion.

### Individual Analysis of the Questions

The table below portrays an analysis of Question 1 in which respondents were asked to indicate which faculty they fall under. The faculty/institute/centre with the highest frequency of responses happened to be the Faculty of Arts whereas the faculty/institute/centre with the lowest frequency of responses was the Institute for European Studies given its size.

		Frequency	Percentage
Faculty/Institute/Centre	Arts	101	13.8%
	Built Environment	21	2.9%
	FEMA	67	9.1%
	Education	49	6.7%
	Engineering	33	4.5%
	Health Sciences	68	9.3%
	ICT	23	3.1%
	Law	79	10.8%
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	22	3.0%
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	81	11.1%
	Science	41	5.6%
	Social Wellbeing	89	12.1%
	Theology	26	3.5%
	European Studies	17	2.3%
	Other	16	2.2%

The table below provides a further analysis of Question 2 whereby respondents were asked to indicate their gender. In fact, the gender composition of the respondents of this survey is comparable to the University students' gender composition, which consists of 60% females and 40% males.

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	267	36.4%
	Female	466	63.6%

Question 4 analyses the students' opinion on whether abortion should be legalised or not, as detailed in the below table. In fact, the majority of the respondents believe that Abortion should not be legalised.

		Frequency	Percentage
Should abortion be legalised?	Yes	305	41.6%
	No	428	58.4%

On the other hand, Question 5 delves into the students' level of agreement as to when Abortion should or should not be justified in the scenarios outlined in such question. The tables below pinpoint the frequency of respondents in more detail.

		Frequency	Percentage
When a mother's life is endangered	Strongly disagree	95	13.0
	Disagree	59	8.0
	Neutral	122	16.6
	Agree	160	21.8
	Strongly agree	297	40.5

		Frequency	Percentage
Life threatening illness on the child	Strongly disagree	206	28.1
	Disagree	119	16.2
	Neutral	92	12.6
	Agree	122	16.6
	Strongly agree	194	26.5

		Frequency	Percentage
Any form of disability of the child	Strongly disagree	327	44.6
	Disagree	143	19.5
	Neutral	97	13.2
	Agree	49	6.7
	Strongly agree	117	16.0

		Frequency	Percentage
Financial Instability	Strongly disagree	391	53.3
	Disagree	98	13.4
	Neutral	64	8.7
	Agree	73	10.0
	Strongly agree	107	14.6

		Frequency	Percentage
Any form of addiction	Strongly disagree	328	44.7
	Disagree	128	17.5
	Neutral	72	9.8
	Agree	75	10.2
	Strongly agree	130	17.7

		Frequency	Percentage
Not being ready for parenthood	Strongly disagree	428	58.4
	Disagree	81	11.1
	Neutral	54	7.4
	Agree	70	9.5
	Strongly agree	100	13.6

		Frequency	Percentage
Teenage Pregnancy	Strongly disagree	403	55.0
	Disagree	88	12.0
	Neutral	60	8.2
	Agree	69	9.4
	Strongly agree	113	15.4

		Frequency	Percentage
Not wanting the child regardless of the above	Strongly disagree	459	62.6
	Disagree	63	8.6
	Neutral	68	9.3
	Agree	50	6.8
	Strongly agree	93	12.7

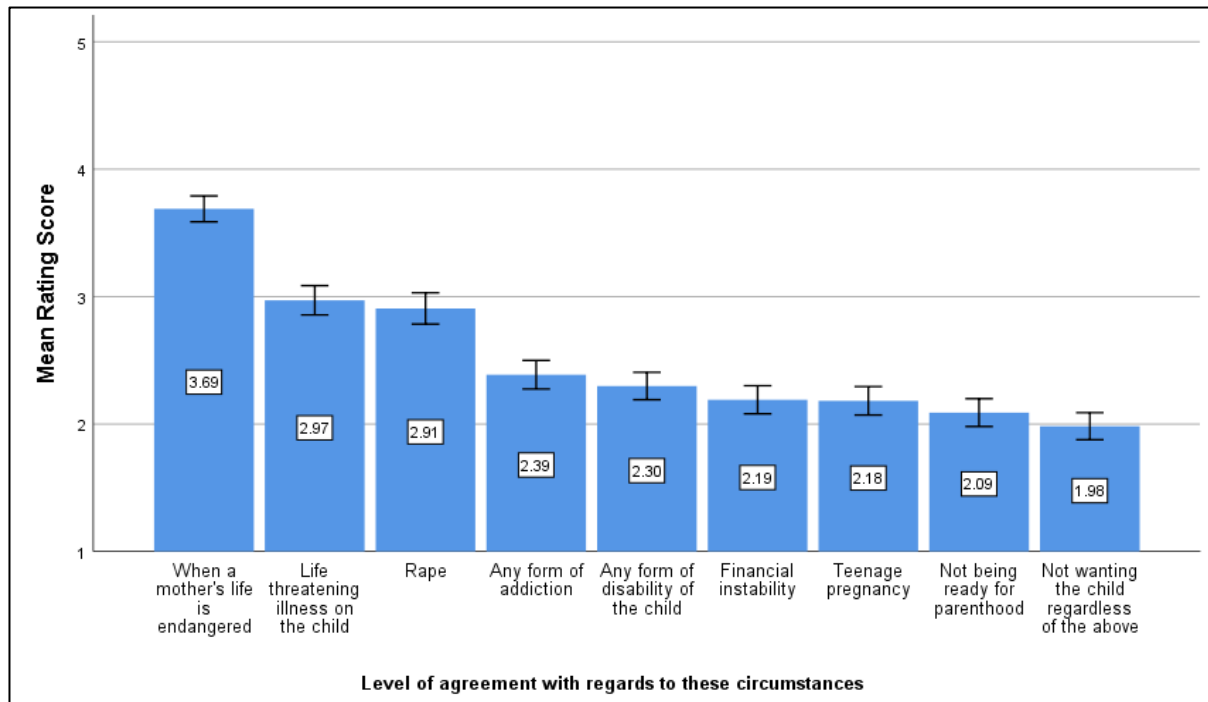
With respect to Question 5, the Friedman test was used to compare the mean rating scores provided to a number of statements related to Abortion. These mean rating scores range from 1 to 5 where one corresponds to strongly disagree and 5 corresponds to strongly agree. The larger the mean rating score, the higher is the agreement.

The mean rating score provided to mother's life is endangered (3.69) is the largest indicating highest agreement. This was the only statement where the mean rating score exceeded 3, indicating that on average, the participants tended to agree more than disagree. This is followed by life threatening illness on the child (2.97), rape (2.91), any form of disability of the child (2.30), financial instability (2.19), any form of addiction (2.39), not being ready for parenthood (2.09), teenage pregnancy (2.18) and not wanting the child regardless of the above (1.98). These mean rating scores vary significantly since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
When a mother's life is endangered	3.69	1.402
Life threatening illness on the child	2.97	1.586
Rape	2.91	1.690
Any form of disability of the child	2.30	1.482
Financial instability	2.19	1.516
Any form of addiction	2.39	1.551
Not being ready for parenthood	2.09	1.504
Teenage pregnancy	2.18	1.538
Not wanting the child regardless of the above	1.98	1.462

$$X^2(8) = 2263.7, p < 0.001$$

The error bar graph displays the 95% confidence level of the actual mean rating score, provided to a statement if the whole University student population had to be included in the study. When two 95% confidence levels overlap, this indicates that their mean rating scores are similar or comparable. Conversely, when two confidence levels do not overlap, this indicates that their mean rating scores differ significantly.



The tables below reveal a further analysis of Question 6 whereby students were asked to indicate their opinion with respect to the below four scenarios. In all instances, respondents revealed that Abortion should be kept illegal.



		Frequency	Percentage
First three months of pregnancy being intrusive	Should be legal	292	39.8
	Should be illegal	441	60.2

		Frequency	Percentage
First 3 months of pregnancy being non-invasive	Should be legal	328	44.7
	Should be illegal	405	55.3

		Frequency	Percentage
Second three months of pregnancy	Should be legal	116	15.8
	Should be illegal	617	84.2

		Frequency	Percentage
Last three months of pregnancy	Should be legal	61	8.3
	Should be illegal	672	91.7

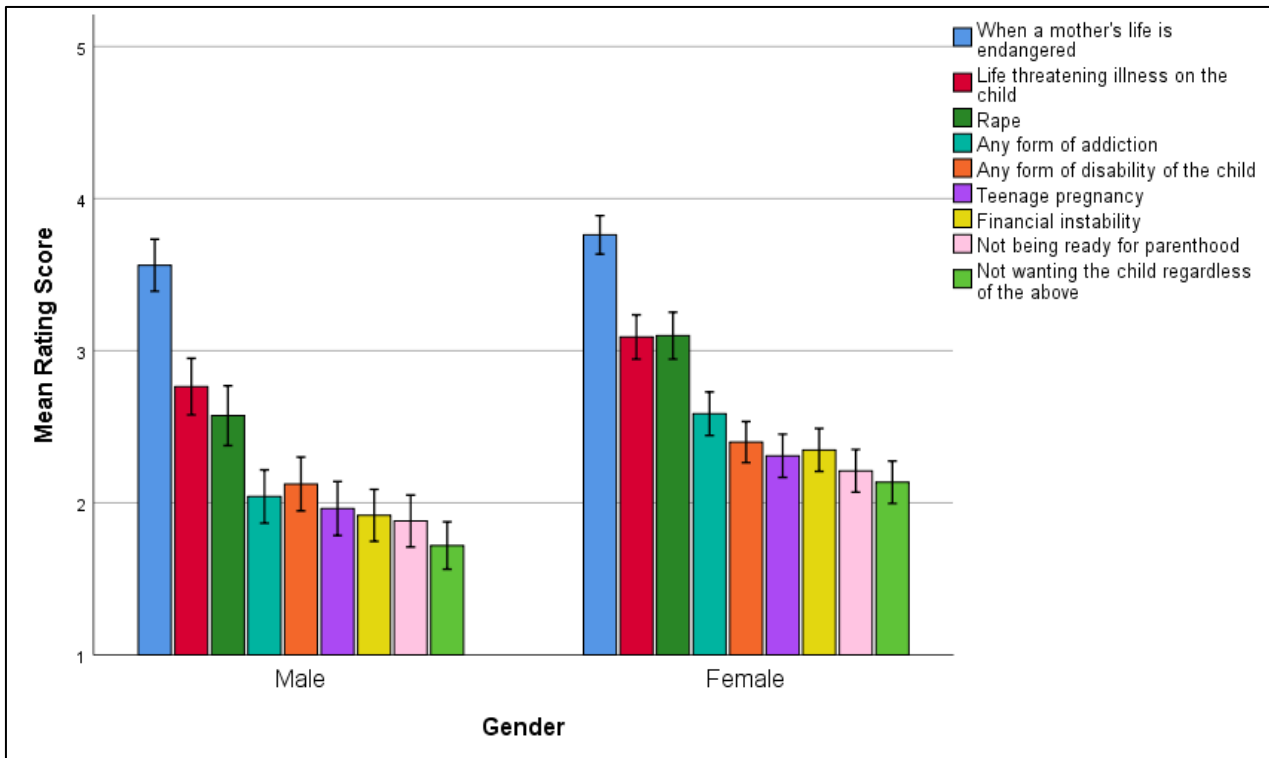
### Relationships created between the Questions

Statistical significance is obtained when the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance whereby this all-encompassing rule applies to all the below scenarios.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test is used to compare mean rating scores, provided to a statement, between independent groups clustered by gender, age and faculty. Statistical significance is obtained when the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. When it comes to comparing the Question 5 to Question 2, the females are scoring significantly higher than the males in all the statements, implying that they tended to agree more than the males.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
When a mother's life is endangered	Male	3.56	1.419	0.048
	Female	3.76	1.389	
Life threatening illness on the child	Male	2.76	1.542	0.008
	Female	3.09	1.600	
Rape	Male	2.57	1.633	0.000
	Female	3.10	1.693	
Any form of disability of the child	Male	2.12	1.468	0.003
	Female	2.40	1.482	
Financial instability	Male	1.92	1.420	0.000
	Female	2.35	1.549	
Any form of addiction	Male	2.04	1.457	0.000
	Female	2.59	1.569	
Not being ready for parenthood	Male	1.88	1.414	0.001
	Female	2.21	1.542	
Teenage pregnancy	Male	1.96	1.474	0.001
	Female	2.31	1.561	
Not wanting the child regardless of the above	Male	1.72	1.292	0.000
	Female	2.14	1.531	

This is a graphical representation of the above table:



When comparing Question 3 with Question 5, participants aged more than 25 years tended to agree less with the statement where a mother's life is endangered than their younger counterparts. For the remaining statements, the mean rating scores varied marginally between the age groups and differences were not found to be significant.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
When a mother's life is endangered	20 years or less	3.65	1.381	0.022
	21-25 years	3.84	1.372	
	More than 25 years	3.47	1.478	
Life threatening illness on the child	20 years or less	2.89	1.539	0.067
	21-25 years	3.13	1.592	
	More than 25 years	2.80	1.640	
Rape	20 years or less	2.87	1.673	0.055
	21-25 years	3.07	1.687	
	More than 25 years	2.66	1.703	
Any form of disability of the child	20 years or less	2.15	1.402	0.102
	21-25 years	2.41	1.516	
	More than 25 years	2.36	1.548	
Financial instability	20 years or less	2.12	1.426	0.192
	21-25 years	2.31	1.572	
	More than 25 years	2.09	1.564	
Any form of addiction	20 years or less	2.32	1.466	0.062
	21-25 years	2.53	1.585	
	More than 25 years	2.23	1.625	
Not being ready for parenthood	20 years or less	2.01	1.424	0.401
	21-25 years	2.19	1.548	
	More than 25 years	2.05	1.563	

Teenage pregnancy	20 years or less	2.12	1.479	0.229
	21-25 years	2.30	1.581	
	More than 25 years	2.08	1.558	
Not wanting the child regardless of the above	20 years or less	1.86	1.353	0.209
	21-25 years	2.09	1.512	
	More than 25 years	2.00	1.551	

When it came to comparing Question 5 with Question 1, the mean rating scores provided by the Theology students to all the statements are significantly lower than the mean rating scores provided by their counterparts. This implies that the Theology students tend to agree less with these statements compared to students from other faculties.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
When a mother's life is endangered	Arts	3.83	1.357	0.000
	Built Environment	3.24	1.786	
	FEMA	3.45	1.428	
	Education	3.76	1.315	
	Engineering	3.61	1.368	
	Health Sciences	3.49	1.471	
	ICT	3.83	1.497	
	Law	3.76	1.370	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	4.27	1.202	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	3.90	1.251	
	Science	3.71	1.470	
	Social Wellbeing	4.02	1.261	
	Theology	2.12	1.107	
	European Studies	3.76	1.393	
	Other	3.38	1.360	

Life threatening illness on the child	Arts	3.11	1.593	0.000
	Built Environment	2.43	1.630	
	FEMA	2.78	1.536	
	Education	2.86	1.541	
	Engineering	2.70	1.489	
	Health Sciences	2.90	1.631	
	ICT	2.83	1.723	
	Law	3.20	1.628	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	3.45	1.438	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	3.01	1.577	
	Science	3.12	1.552	
	Social Wellbeing	3.44	1.492	
	Theology	1.31	.884	
	European Studies	3.24	1.522	
	Other	2.50	1.414	
Rape	Arts	3.10	1.712	0.000
	Built Environment	2.57	1.690	
	FEMA	2.61	1.687	
	Education	2.80	1.527	
	Engineering	2.73	1.587	
	Health Sciences	2.72	1.638	
	ICT	2.74	1.685	
	Law	3.11	1.812	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	3.77	1.631	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	2.90	1.602	
	Science	2.90	1.670	
	Social Wellbeing	3.43	1.664	
	Theology	1.15	.784	
	European Studies	3.41	1.661	
	Other	2.38	1.544	

		Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Any form of disability of the child	Arts	2.38	1.434	0.001
	Built Environment	1.86	1.352	
	FEMA	2.16	1.493	
	Education	2.29	1.514	
	Engineering	2.21	1.474	
	Health Sciences	2.01	1.366	
	ICT	2.30	1.550	
	Law	2.54	1.624	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	2.68	1.427	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	2.35	1.398	
	Science	2.46	1.535	
	Social Wellbeing	2.54	1.515	
	Theology	1.15	.784	
	European Studies	2.65	1.801	
	Other	2.13	1.408	
Financial instability	Arts	2.30	1.514	0.009
	Built Environment	1.86	1.389	
	FEMA	2.04	1.492	
	Education	2.16	1.573	
	Engineering	2.24	1.562	
	Health Sciences	1.91	1.358	
	ICT	2.17	1.557	
	Law	2.33	1.654	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	2.77	1.602	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	2.15	1.467	
	Science	2.32	1.507	
	Social Wellbeing	2.45	1.574	
	Theology	1.12	.588	
	European Studies	2.59	1.734	
	Other	2.06	1.436	

Any form of addiction	Arts	2.53	1.578	0.002
	Built Environment	2.05	1.499	
	FEMA	2.33	1.646	
	Education	2.41	1.526	
	Engineering	2.33	1.429	
	Health Sciences	2.18	1.455	
	ICT	2.30	1.579	
	Law	2.57	1.677	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	2.82	1.651	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	2.33	1.500	
	Science	2.54	1.485	
	Social Wellbeing	2.62	1.578	
	Theology	1.12	.588	
	European Studies	2.71	1.687	
	Other	2.06	1.389	

		Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Not being ready for parenthood	Arts	2.22	1.591	0.003
	Built Environment	1.62	1.203	
	FEMA	1.99	1.451	
	Education	2.14	1.646	
	Engineering	2.09	1.569	
	Health Sciences	1.71	1.282	
	ICT	2.00	1.537	
	Law	2.11	1.485	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	2.64	1.590	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	2.05	1.474	
	Science	2.32	1.491	
	Social Wellbeing	2.46	1.617	
	Theology	1.08	.392	
	European Studies	2.41	1.734	
	Other	1.94	1.340	



Teenage pregnancy	Arts	2.38	1.666	0.003
	Built Environment	1.76	1.338	
	FEMA	2.01	1.502	
	Education	2.16	1.612	
	Engineering	2.09	1.569	
	Health Sciences	1.90	1.373	
	ICT	2.09	1.505	
	Law	2.28	1.617	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	2.73	1.453	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	2.17	1.507	
	Science	2.44	1.517	
	Social Wellbeing	2.48	1.596	
	Theology	1.08	.392	
	European Studies	2.41	1.698	
	Other	1.88	1.310	
Not wanting the child regardless of the above	Arts	2.15	1.539	0.003
	Built Environment	1.38	.865	
	FEMA	1.87	1.347	
	Education	2.02	1.561	
	Engineering	1.82	1.402	
	Health Sciences	1.63	1.245	
	ICT	2.04	1.609	
	Law	2.03	1.561	
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	2.45	1.595	
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	2.00	1.449	
	Science	2.15	1.459	
	Social Wellbeing	2.35	1.617	
	Theology	1.08	.392	
	European Studies	2.29	1.490	
	Other	1.63	1.204	

When comparing Question 5 with Question 4, participants who agree with legalising Abortion are rating all the statements significantly higher than those participants who disagree with legalising Abortion. Interestingly, participants who are in favour of Abortion, are providing mean rating scores larger than 3 in all the statements, indicating that they agree more than disagree. Conversely, those who are against Abortion, are on average, scoring lower than 3, for all the statements, indicating that they tend to disagree rather than agree.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
When a mother's life is endangered	Yes	4.73	.637	0.000
	No	2.94	1.321	
Life threatening illness on the child	Yes	4.38	.921	0.000
	No	1.97	1.136	
Rape	Yes	4.53	.892	0.000
	No	1.75	1.056	
Any form of disability of the child	Yes	3.55	1.337	0.000
	No	1.40	.751	
Financial instability	Yes	3.60	1.337	0.000
	No	1.19	.502	
Any form of addiction	Yes	3.85	1.251	0.000
	No	1.35	.637	
Not being ready for parenthood	Yes	3.42	1.444	0.000
	No	1.14	.480	
Teenage pregnancy	Yes	3.59	1.374	0.000
	No	1.18	.537	
Not wanting the child regardless of the above	Yes	3.22	1.505	0.000
	No	1.10	.413	

The Chi-Squared Test will be used to investigate the association between whether Abortion should be legalised and another variable, including age, gender and faculty. Statistical significance is obtained when the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

When comparing Question 1 with Question 4, there is a significantly lower percentage of Theology students (3.8%) in favour of abortion compared to their counterparts.

		Should abortion be legalised?		
		Yes	No	
What faculty/institute/centre do you fall under?	Arts	Count	45	56
		Percentage	44.6%	55.4%
	Built Environment	Count	7	14
		Percentage	33.3%	66.7%
	FEMA	Count	23	44
		Percentage	34.3%	65.7%
	Education	Count	19	30
		Percentage	38.8%	61.2%
	Engineering	Count	11	22
		Percentage	33.3%	66.7%
	Health Sciences	Count	22	46
		Percentage	32.4%	67.6%
	ICT	Count	10	13
		Percentage	43.5%	56.5%
	Law	Count	36	43
		Percentage	45.6%	54.4%
	Media and Knowledge Sciences	Count	15	7
		Percentage	68.2%	31.8%
	Medicine/Surgery/Dental Surgery	Count	34	47
		Percentage	42.0%	58.0%

Science	Count	19	22
	Percentage	46.3%	53.7%
Social Wellbeing	Count	50	39
	Percentage	56.2%	43.8%
Theology	Count	1	25
	Percentage	3.8%	96.2%
European Studies	Count	9	8
	Percentage	52.9%	47.1%
Other	Count	4	12
	Percentage	25.0%	75.0%

$X^2(14) = 38.977, p < 0.001$

When comparing Question 3 with Question 4, there is a significantly larger percentage of students aged between 21 and 25 years who are in favour of legalising abortion (48.5%) compared to their younger counterparts (37.6%) and older counterparts (35.6%).

		Should abortion be legalised?		
		Yes	No	
Age	20 years or less	Count	108	179
		Percentage	37.6%	62.4%
	21-25 years	Count	144	153
		Percentage	48.5%	51.5%
	More than 25 years	Count	53	96
		Percentage	35.6%	64.4%

$X^2(2) = 9.885, p = 0.007$

There is a significantly higher percentage of females (47.2%) compared to males (31.8%) in favour of legalising abortion when comparing Question 2 with Question 4.

			Should abortion be legalised?	
			Yes	No
Gender	Male	Count	85	182
		Percentage	31.8%	68.2%
	Female	Count	220	246
		Percentage	47.2%	52.8%

$X^2(1) = 16.516, p < 0.001$

### Concluding Remarks

As noted in the report, it was voted upon by all student organisations during the KPS meeting that the survey results would reflect the official position of the students, which is therefore against the legalisation of abortion.