

From the Margins to the Mainstream:

An Analysis of Attitudes among the Public and the LGBT Community to the increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

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A thesis presented for the award of PhD

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Tracy Mae E. Ildefonso, BA, MA

Abstract

The Philippine Association of National Advertisers, at one point, called the increase of positive representations of Filipino LGBT people in the Philippine mainstream media "the new normal" (Marchadesch, 2018, para. 4). However, this idea risks suggesting that the struggle for this community's acceptance in society is at a more advanced stage than is currently the case. For many years, stereotypical tropes connected to LGBT people have persisted. While some efforts have been made to portray them positively in the media, such as the release of several LGBT-themed advertising campaigns depicting stories of same-sex relationships and family acceptance in the last few years, some of these were met with backlash and censorship from regulatory organisations and public members. This indicates that LGBT people are still not entirely accepted by society. The United Nations Development Programme called for actions to eradicate discrimination against Filipino LGBT people by supporting them in all media outlets. This study aims to contribute to this goal by gaining critical insights into the form and nature of the Filipino population's attitudes to the recent positive LGBT-themed advertisements through two lenses: the general public's reactions to these ads and the LGBT community's opinion of how they are represented in commercials. Data was gathered from 158 survey respondents from the general public. In addition, 25 Filipino LGBT people participated in six separate focus group discussions. Guided by David Morley's Relevance Theory and George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, this study has found that prolonged stereotypical LGBT representations have affected the general public's views on LGBT people. Additionally, LGBT people think that the release of the advertisements under review indicated positive attitudes from the people, while the general public's reactions were ambivalent. Moreover, the Filipino LGBT people think media players still have to implement many improvements to ensure inclusivity and accurate LGBT representation that can help induce acceptance, not just tolerance, from the general public.

Acknowledgement

In the beginning, it was a rejection, which was actually a redirection.

The study I present to you was rejected by a funding body to which I applied, on the grounds that an LGBT study was unrelated to my course. However, I believe there was an underlying political and/or religious context behind the rejection – a case that can also be made for the Philippines (you will learn more about this in the next few chapters). Thankfully, Dublin City University, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Communications, and one of my supervisors, Dr. Aileen O’Driscoll accepted my research proposal and allowed me to investigate what I consider an important sociological problem within the Philippine media system and the life and struggles of Filipino LGBT communities: media stereotyping. Hence, I would like to thank Dublin City University, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Communications, and my supervisors Dr. O’Driscoll and Dr. Jim Rogers, for giving me an opportunity to pursue the answer to my academic curiosity despite the preliminary rejection. I would also like to express my gratitude to my brilliant examiners who meticulously reviewed my thesis and provided valuable suggestions to help improve it: Dr. Ben Murtagh of SOAS University of London, Dr. Debbie Ging, and viva chair Dr. Eileen Culloty. You have all played an instrumental role in honing a mature, independent researcher who has now rekindled a passion for pursuing inquiries in the social sciences. Perhaps, I should also thank the funding body that rejected my research proposal because, without them, this thesis would not be here now as a recent contribution to LGBT media studies in the Philippine academic field.

I am thankful for the academic, professional, personal, and emotional support that my supervisors and the School have provided me during the various challenges I faced while conducting this study. I am grateful to have worked with people who enhanced my learning on the subject throughout the years. As a piece of advice to everyone who will pursue a PhD, please make sure to find a supportive supervisor who shares a similar work ethic, is dedicated to your growth and learning, respects you, and treats you as part of the team. Aileen and Jim, thank you for being wonderful supervisors and human beings.

I am forever thankful to the most important people who contributed significantly to my study: my survey respondents and my LGBT participants. Without all of you – and I mean this – without all of you, this thesis would not exist. If only I could thank each of you one by one, I would. Unfortunately, due to GDPR law, I cannot trace my survey respondents, and I am not allowed to disclose the names of my LGBT participants. The same law also prevents me from naming the Filipino LGBT groups and their representatives which assisted me in gathering participants to protect the data and identity of everyone involved in this study. But please know that I sincerely thank all of you. I hope you will all join me in contributing to what my study advocates for: transforming the LGBT media narrative to catalyse change from a stereotype to an inclusive and better media representation of the community. Through this, I have faith that it is possible to inspire societal change with the help of Philippine mass media, one step at a time.

I would also like to thank my dear friend and temporary research assistant, Ms. Ayie Laxamana, for all her help and support during my study. I could not have conducted the FG discussions effectively without you. Thank you for your continuous support, *chika*, and advice despite the distance. I also thank all of my friends from around the globe, my small Filipino PhD group in Ireland, and my PhD colleagues in the DCU Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for their support, willingness to lend an ear, and everything else. I would like to express my gratitude to the family and relatives of my friends who prayed for my success in my viva voce examination, even though they did not know me personally. All my friends and those who supported me will receive the same blessings ten-fold.

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nieces (we are very close, especially on my mother's side) for everything. Our dogs, Loki, Sachiko, and Zoe, deserve a mention in this section as well. I miss you, Loki!

Lastly, to everyone who tells you that things are not possible, do not let them discourage you. To the people you will encounter in life who will ultimately break your heart, take the lesson and accept the loss. If you want to succeed in life, take care of yourself. Apply the lessons you have learned in all your actions moving forward. Be open to opportunities. Create opportunities for yourself. Do not be afraid to challenge yourself. Step out of your comfort zone. Explore. Try new things. Life is a continuous learning process. Avoid being the person who refuses to accept new knowledge, for those who resist it lack humility. Travel. Love. Appreciate your small victories. Do not let anyone take advantage of you. Do not let anyone treat you badly. Trust yourself and believe that you are meant to achieve great things. Life is a surprise; let it amaze you.

Always remember that redirections hold the power to exceed your wildest expectations.

*I dedicate this doctoral success to my beloved brother,
Arthur Allen, our little angel in heaven.*

1 Chapter

Introduction: From the Margins to the Mainstream

I. Introduction and Background of the Problem

The phrase "the Filipino LGBT people had been stereotyped in the Philippine media over the years" is an understatement. Many Filipinos, exposed to media over the decades from the 1970s to 2000s, if asked about how LGBT people were portrayed during these years, are likely to corroborate what the scholars have indicated in their studies. According to Diaz (2012), for instance, gay men have been portrayed as having excessive sexual desire for men. In addition, gay men's most common depictions are of providing comic relief; as being hysterics; as abused or abandoned by their relatives and partners; and as *parloristang bakla* or parlour gay (Tolentino, 2000; Tan, 2001; David, 2012; Payuyo, 2012). Parlour gays, or gay men working in beauty salons, have a connotation of belonging to the lower social class. This idea was further developed in the 1970s when the word 'gay' became almost exclusively applied to wealthy gay men. In contrast, those from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds have been labelled *parloristang bakla* (Tan, 2001).

The representations of lesbians in the same era are also problematic. It is observable that the way they are represented in their minimal media exposure is always of porn-like treatment in films, sex with a heterosexual man can convert them to heterosexuality, and acting boyish or wearing men's clothing (David, 2012; Morales, 2004). However, the alarming problem lesbian women have faced until now is simply the absence of representation, resulting in relative invisibility. In other words, they are not as prominent in the media as gay men. The case is similar for other gender identities and sexual orientations, such as bisexual and transgender

people, because of less to no media representation. For years, gay men have dominated the Philippine media. However, given that they are treated negatively regarding media representation, their presence does not amount to a net positive for this cohort. Hence, the sustained and persistent stereotyping of LGBT people and underrepresenting of some of its members in the Philippine media requires much scrutiny.

In a patriarchal and predominantly Catholic country such as the Philippines, LGBT issues in all societal sectors remain a touchy subject. For example, there is still no national anti-discrimination law that protects LGBT people against discrimination. In particular, the SOGIE (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) bill, which aims to protect all Filipinos from discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, was first filed in the Philippine Congress in 2000 during the 11th Congress. It had since faced numerous rejections from lawmakers before it ultimately passed Congress in 2017. For a bill to then become law, it should be passed in Congress and the Senate, at which point the President will either veto it or sign it into law. When the bill reached the Senate's deliberation after its passage in Congress, it faced rejections from some members of the Senate. The majority of the senators were not in favour of the bill, citing arguments such as the bill violating moral, ethical, and religious beliefs (Alvarez, 2017; Quismorio, 2020), a redundancy (Rey, 2019) as there are anti-discrimination laws already in place in the country, such as RA 6725, and perceived as an "unduly special rights" to the LGBTQ+ community (Arcangel, 2019: para. 1). In 2023, 23 years after it was first filed, the bill is still pending in the 19th Congress of the Philippines.

The LGBT community is also facing severe issues in terms of violence and hate crimes. Some lesbian women are reportedly raped with the intent to 'fix' their lesbianism and convert them to heterosexuality (Umbac, 2005). There are endless reports of LGBT-related murder and homicide (UNDP, USAID, 2014). The trans community has, especially, become vulnerable to such killings. The most famous case was the killing of transwoman Jennifer Laude by US Marine Lance Corporal Joseph Scott Pemberton in 2014 after the latter discovered Laude's sex organ during sexual activity. This high-profile case exposed an existing problem that Filipino LGBT people face: namely, the lack of judicial protection, which makes them one of the most vulnerable groups in the country. Moreover, some LGBT people feel

treated as third-class citizens in their own country (Gutierrez, 2017). The lack of distinct rights, such as civil and employee rights, does not enable them to live their lives to the fullest in an 'accepting' society. On paper, the Philippines may appear to be accepting of the community. Homosexuality is not criminalised, they are free to hold LGBT-themed events and parades, and 73% of Filipinos think that homosexuality should be accepted in the country (Poushter and Kent, 2020). However, when the public is asked about other LGBT issues, such as same-sex marriage or civil union, 61% still thought this should not be allowed in the country (Social Weather Stations, 2018). These issues describe the country's stand on LGBT issues, wherein their acceptance has a certain limit. This is also apparent in their media representation which raises the question, does their visibility in media, despite poor portrayal, benefit the community?

Adding to the problem in media representation, the LGBT community has typically been largely absent in Philippine advertising. One of the very first attempts to showcase them in advertisements was in 2015 when LGBT people were featured in a series of billboard adverts by local clothing company Bench. A lesbian and male gay couple were featured in Valentine's campaign, "love all kinds of love." However, the billboard faced controversies after the gay men couple's hands were mysteriously painted black in an attempt to censor it. This led to a discussion on social media wherein people expressed their disappointment with this action, which led to the creation of the hashtag #PaintTheirHandsBack. The controversy also led the public to express their dismay at how LGBT people are treated in the country. Despite, or perhaps because of, the controversy, Bench again released an LGBT-themed video advertisement several years later. In 2018, the "How long can you keep a secret?" ad was released, depicting a father who shows his acceptance of his closeted gay teenage son by gifting him his favourite Bench perfume. The commercial touched the hearts of many Filipinos and quickly created public discussions online. This ad inspired some advertising agencies to release positive LGBT-themed ads, in which LGBT portrayals are far different from the earlier stereotyped and negative depictions in movies and television shows from the 1970s to 2000s.

In the context of the huge public discussion and attention that greeted these two advertisements by Bench, this study considers these events as significant social

phenomena because these were the first advertisements in the Philippines to foreground LGBT themes in their content, and as such, generate public discourse around LGBT issues. While heavily criticised in some quarters, these campaigns also garnered massive public support and sympathy. Given that the LGBT community continues to face misrepresentation and underrepresentation in the Philippines, this research argues that it is important to discuss the issue of Filipino LGBT representation in the Philippine media. It is important to determine how and why problems in their media representation occurred to determine how it influenced the Filipino people's views on the LGBT community and how these media treatments influenced the lives of Filipino LGBT people. Moreover, the study deemed it important to determine if the Philippine society would embrace the changes in LGBT portrayals, as shown in the two referenced Bench advertisements. This study emphasises the necessity to persist with and advance the discussion in the public sphere to further improve the portrayal of LGBT people in mass media in the Philippines.

Similarly, a 2014 study by UNDP and USAID acknowledges that it is challenging to get the mainstream media's cooperation in terms of LGBT promotion and improvement in representation. The report offered a few recommendations to improve the LGBT people's media presence and the media player's treatment of the community, such as including the mainstream media to ensure an LGBT advocacy is in place and creating a "media watchdog" to ensure the portrayal would not be insensitive to the community (p. 13). This doctoral study contributes to UNDP and USAID's other recommendations, specifically "developing a physical or online library that contains LGBT-related information" (p. 12). Moreover, this work produces current research regarding LGBT media studies because the researcher has discovered a lack of related and updated LGBT media studies in the Philippine academic field during the build-up of the literature review chapters.

The next section provides a summary of what readers can anticipate in this study. It lays out the research question, the theoretical framework that will be constructed to inform analysis, a brief overview of the methodological approach used to generate primary research findings, and some headline-level indications of the results obtained throughout the investigation. However, readers are asked to be mindful of the following caveats to better grasp the concepts presented in this research, as some

can be deemed novel and deviate from Western scholarship or more conventional 'global' ideas.

First, the study explicitly recognises the rich diversity present within the LGBT community, encompassing aspects like SOGIE, age, religion, socio-economic status, and various other factors that contribute to the distinctive identities of its members. However, throughout the thesis, the terms "LGBT people," "LGBT community," "LGBT members," and other similar terms are used. However, the study fully recognises that the term "LGBT" is nuanced and sophisticated, so the use of such terms does not imply the representation of a homogenous group who hold similar values or ideas. It is important to note that the use of terms like "homosexual" and "homosexuality" is strongly discouraged, as they have historically been considered derogatory and linked to the misconception of mental illness (Herel et al., 1991). This perception was discredited by the American Psychological Association in 1975, which promoted reducing stigma against the community by discouraging the use of these terms (ibid.). Additionally, the most recent (eleventh) edition of the GLAAD Media Reference Guide recommends minimising the excessive use of the term "gay" (n.d). As such, creating a piece of literature free from offensive terminologies against the LGBT community as much as possible remained the primary focus of this study.

Secondly, while the focus in gathering data to answer the main research question was responses from survey and focus group participants to the five LGBT-themed advertisements aired on television and social media, (discussed in the next section), it is essential to recognise that this research takes into account the broader Philippine media landscape as to gauge the impact of LGBT media stereotyping on various Filipino audiences. As such, the study's inquiry is not limited to platforms such as TV, social media, and advertisements, but also encompasses film, radio, music, billboards, and other media platforms where LGBT people are or have been portrayed. Hence, readers are asked to keep in mind that while the media theory applied, particularly Cultivation Theory, predominantly centres on television, the utilisation of such in this dissertation is not to solely focus on television as the only media platform that can incur media effects on audiences. This study applies Cultivation Theory in the analysis due to its fundamental principle: prolonged exposure to specific media content can significantly influence the formation of beliefs among audiences, aligning with the messages conveyed in that content.

Furthermore, the study's parameters, regarding the concept of 'prolonged exposure,' entail exposure to LGBT-media content from the 1970s to the early 2010s. The platforms from which this exposure originates depend on the group of respondents under investigation, whether they are heterosexual or LGBT audiences. The definitions are defined extensively in the Research Methodology chapter.

II. Introducing the Research Study

The primary question, "What are the Filipino people's reactions to the recent positive LGBT portrayals in the Philippine media?" is developed to accomplish the goals earlier laid out. Moreover, the research objectives include probing how Filipino people will respond to other positive LGBT-themed ads released a few years before or after the release of the Bench 2018 commercial. More specifically, the study aims to gain insights and perspectives on their responses to the following ads:

1. Uber Philippines (2017) "Kilig #UberStories"
2. Bench/ (2018) "How long can you keep a secret?"
3. Smart Communications (2016) "Break down barriers and welcome change!"
4. Pantene Philippines (2018) "Strength knows no gender. #StrongerNow"
5. Close Up Philippines (2019) "#MakeYourMove Films - P.S. I Love You, Bro"

Examining the reactions of Filipino audiences to the emerging trend within the Philippine advertising industry, which presents positive portrayals of LGBT individuals, and ascertaining whether the historical prevalence of negative and stereotypical depictions of the LGBT community within the broader Philippine media landscape has had an impact on Filipino attitudes, perspectives, or stances concerning LGBT individuals and related matters holds significant importance. These allow the research to determine the effects of such portrayals on LGBT people growing up to identify if their media visibility, albeit stereotypically, benefits the community. However, it is significant to note that the media system in the country has also shown limited positive LGBT representation before the release of the five advertisements listed above. This includes a small number of LGBT celebrities in mainstream media who had a positive impact on the audiences. It also includes the production of the TV show 'My Husband Lover' (2013), which is considered a landmark development in terms of LGBT representation in the Philippine media. These ideas are further discussed in the overview of the Philippine media landscape

and LGBT media representation in Chapter Four. Determining the impacts of such finite representation to the LGBT audiences in the era of parlour gay stereotypes in the mainstream opens up the discussion of whether to advocate for better representation in the future or not disrupt the harmony by sticking to the status quo. Hence, the answers provide the opportunity to pinpoint possible responses for future LGBT media content and future LGBT media treatment in the country. In answering the study's research questions, answers from two groups are gathered: the general public (via surveys) and the LGBT community (via focus group discussion).

One of the definitions of "general public" in the study is a Filipino heterosexual audience. However, the term "general" mostly corresponds to the targeted respondents. In other words, the study does not require recruiting individuals belonging to specific social classes, affiliations, or organisations, nor those with particular views on LGBT issues. Instead, the survey sought all Filipino people interested in participating as long as they satisfied the requirements: heterosexual, 18 years old and above, Filipino resident and citizen. The reason for such is to deliver collective views and opinions from random respondents who represent the Filipino general public. The complete demographic information of the survey respondents gathered by the study is explained in the Methodology chapter.

The analysis of the survey answers is guided, in part, by Cultivation Theory. One of the principles of the theory's founder, George Gerbner, is that a country's dominant perception about a specific issue can be determined by the TV content streaming in that country's media system. Moreover, the process of making a message a dominant one is what Gerbner referred to as the "pull" to the "centre of gravity" (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 24). According to Gerbner, the centre of gravity is very strong that audiences may struggle to resist it. Since television dominates the source of information, it can also dictate the perspectives of the audiences who are pulled to the centre of gravity. The centre of gravity comprises audiences with "certain social and psychological characteristics, dispositions, and world views" (ibid., p. 23). In other words, the audiences who are successfully pulled into the centre of gravity, with certain similarities, may develop similar opinions based on the nature of the content they consume via television. Drawing on Gerbner's approach, Filipino heterosexual audiences in the country are sought because they share similarities in

terms of sexuality and the LGBT media content to which they are exposed. Moreover, in the issue of LGBT representation in media, following Gerbner's ideas, the heterosexual group as the dominant one can strongly shape and influence the messages circulated in the centre of gravity. Hence, this study determines what the Philippine society thinks of LGBT people as influenced by the Philippine LGBT media representation through the lens of the dominant audience – the heterosexual people. The dominant group in this research is labelled as the "general public." The general public is an important key in discovering this information because of the possibility of forming equivalent views on Filipino LGBT people depending on the amount of exposure to LGBT media content. The general public can provide strong indicators regarding the dominant perception of the Philippine society regarding LGBT issues. In accordance with Cultivation Theory, the media content produced by the Philippines' media system reflects and reinforces these dominant perceptions regarding the LGBT community.

The Filipino LGBT people's opinions about their community's media representation are also sought. This study argues that LGBT people may have different opinions from the general public on these issues, given their personal experiences. Another aim is to determine if the stereotypical and negative LGBT media representation prior to the release of the given five advertisements had affected their situation. This research sought the opinion of random LGBT people from the three regions in the Philippines: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The different regions in the country present different characteristics, such as religion and socio-economic situation. The stance is that one region's opinion is not necessarily similar to other regions. For example, the dominant religion differs across each of these regions. While Luzon and Visayas residents are predominantly Catholic, most Mindanaons are Muslim. Moreover, people's recognition of LGBT people differs per region. Luzon, where the capital cities are located, might exhibit a more accepting attitude since there are more local anti-discrimination ordinances in place than in Visayas and Mindanao (Manalastas, 2015). The survey gathered 158 responses and their complete demographic profile is available in the Methodology chapter.

The LGBT participants are 18 and older, Filipino citizens, and residents. The focus group discussion is used as the data collection method because of the theory used in this part of the investigation. As earlier stated, there are few LGBT-focused media

studies in the Philippines. While it is challenging to find recent and relevant studies, the few available studies gathered presented a pattern of using content analysis, commentaries, and reviews as research methods and nothing about seeking the LGBT community's opinion about how they are being represented in media (see Diaz, 2019; Beller, 2001; Payuyo, 2012; Cañete, 2011). In this study, seeking the LGBT people's opinion first-hand is prioritised to contribute to this gap in the Philippine academic field. David Morley's Relevance Theory is utilised. Morley (1980) positions his audiences as active receivers of media content and discovers that audiences in a group with similar backgrounds, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or socio-economic status, produce similar interpretations of media content based on their experiences. Morley's study also discovers that those who do not share any similarities with the other group members cannot give a similar media interpretation. John Fiske (1988) adds that once 'social allegiance' is activated during the discussion, the group may produce a rich, shared interpretation of certain media content. Relevance and Cultivation Theory is further explained in Chapter Five. The LGBT participants, guided by the analysis using the Relevance theory principles, demonstrate being active receivers of LGBT media content. Moreover, the moment of social allegiances between different groups produced discussions wherein meaningful interpretations based on personal experiences as an LGBT person are shared.

In addressing the gap in research in the Philippine academic industry concerning how LGBT media studies should be approached, in addition to seeking the LGBT people's comments directly, this doctoral study heavily applies the concepts from the two chosen theories in answering the research questions. While most studies are commonly approached with ontological and epistemological bases in analysing society and research problems, this work, which is a theory-driven approach, concerns itself with understanding the "what" surrounding the LGBT media stereotyping issue instead of proving that it exists. Accordingly, the researcher deemed it necessary to keep the study away from her preconceived notions to avoid bias. The researcher, belonging to the non-LGBT community, also considers herself a member of the general public as she had been pulled in the same centre of gravity at a time when the dominant LGBT messages in mainstream media in the Philippines are showing stereotypical and negative representation. Adapting ontological and epistemological stances is deemed one way to welcome

preconceived notions from the researcher – which is what the research endeavours to avoid.

Hence, the study has been carefully planned, designed, and analysed based purely on the concepts from Cultivation and Relevance Theories. The survey's design is based on Gerbner's questionnaire, heavily focused on comparing the number of hours spent on television in analysing an audience's opinion on social matters. The Relevance Theory is much simpler than Cultivation Theory because the approach in the focus groups is to give participants space and opportunities to discuss and allow 'social allegiance' and 'moments of semiosis' to occur. These terminologies are explained in Chapters Five and Seven. These 'moments' are not manipulated; thus, the guide questions used during the focus groups are open-ended and unstructured. The sole instruction given to the participants is to welcome all opinions and keep the discussion flowing. In analysing the data from the focus group, the investigation is more concerned with answering, "What are these data telling us?" Hence, Bazeley's (2009) guidance of thematic analysis is heavily applied to data from focus group discussions, specifically instructing the researchers to give results based on what emanates from the data rather than how the researcher would want to structure it. Additionally, some coding strategies suggested by Bazeley (2013) and Braun and Clarke (2006), combined with concepts from Relevance Theory, in moving the discussions forward analytically and objectively, are also applied. The survey analysis is also guided by the concepts in Cultivation Theory wherein the audiences' number of hours spent watching television is categorised as the independent variable. The research methodology is thoroughly explained in Chapter Five.

III. Chapter-by-Chapter Outlook

The discussions concerning the related literature and studies are found in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. Chapter Two, entitled "Side Effects Included: The Relationship of Television, Advertisement, and Audiences," covers the main elements in media that have the power to influence its audiences. First, the dangers of prolonged exposure to television are explained. Cultivation Theory is also introduced in this study as findings concerning several Cultivation studies demonstrating how lengthy exposure to television could have long-term effects on audiences are discussed. Findings such as the audience's tendency to think that what

they see on television is similar to what they see in the world they live in are provided. This statement is one of the theory's critical findings, which is also applied in the survey analysis of this research discussed in Chapter Six. The advertising's effect is also discussed in this chapter. More specifically, the arguments on whether advertisements mirror what they see in society or mold it through the content they produce and show to the audiences and consumers are discussed. Lastly, arguments that audiences are not passive and monolithic, which aligns with what this doctoral study's LGBT participants demonstrated during the focus groups, are discussed. Relevance Theory is also introduced in this chapter.

Chapter Three, entitled "How Media Stereotypes are Formed from the West to the South East," gives an overview of how LGBT people have typically been portrayed in media and advertisements in the West, particularly in the United States. Studies show that their portrayal had become problematic and stereotypical for various reasons, such as racism and commercialising the community for advertising and marketing purposes. Moreover, the key aspect of this chapter is the summary of the background of the Filipino LGBT culture that is affected by family, religion, patriarchy, and socio-economic situations. Readers are strongly encouraged to peruse this chapter to develop a comprehensive comprehension of the distinctive LGBT culture, particularly within the Philippine context, and to better grasp the origins and development of LGBT stereotypes in the country. The study's position is to recognise the complex ideas surrounding sex and gender discussions in the country characterised by some ideas that diverge from Western norms of knowledge. Distinct concepts, such as *kalooban*, are explained to understand the same-sex relationship dynamics in the Philippines and why the category "in a healthy relationship" in the media is considered a positive representation of the community. However, important concepts such as symbolic annihilation and the burden of representation are presented, as understanding these is fundamental to key aspects of the findings, and the main argument advanced across this thesis. This section also offers a redefined interpretation of 'homonormativity' to align with the unique context of Filipino LGBT culture. Some of the distinct characteristics of LGBT media portrayal in the Philippines are that it will always be affected by socioeconomic factors, family acceptance or rejection, and religion.

Chapter Four, entitled "The Philippines: Media, Advertising, and LGBT Representation," narrow down the ideas from the previous two chapters and applies them to the Philippine settings. First, it discusses how television has been and still is a powerful medium in the country. In this digital age, the advertising industry is still keen on investing in traditional media, such as television, due to the Filipino's preference for using this more than other mediums. This chapter also provides an extensive background of how Filipino LGBT people were presented in Philippine media from the 1970s to the present. The discussions centre on different stereotypical roles, why this was happening, and a few breakthroughs in mainstream television. Moreover, the chapter introduces the issues on two advertisements by Bench and the discussion as to whether the emergence of positive LGBT-themed ads indicates the start of a new era or only a fad in terms of marketing strategy.

Chapter Five, "Methodology: From Curiosity to a Research Project," discusses how the study is conceptualised and how the data are gathered and analysed. It also explains the theoretical framework applied to understand the influence of both the stereotypical and positive LGBT media representation on the general public and the LGBT community. The chapter also provides a synopsis of the five advertisements that are the focus of this research, as well as detailed information on the participant's profile information, the coding process for the survey and focus group analysis and the ethical principles applied.

The findings of this study are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. Chapter Six, entitled "The General Public's Reaction to LGBT Representation in Philippine Media", answers the question, "What does the general public think about the recent positive LGBT portrayals in the Philippine media?" While Chapter Seven, entitled "The Filipino LGBT People's Reaction to LGBT Representation in Philippine Media," answers the question, "What do the Filipino LGBT people think about the recent positive LGBT portrayals in the Philippine media?" In both chapters, the people's reactions are organised into three sections: the past, the present, and the future – the definitions are explained thoroughly in those chapters.

Consistent with the principle of Cultivation Theory, the trend in the responses from the general public has provided information on the country's dominant opinion of LGBT media stereotyping issues. This attitude has been existing and persisted in

Philippine society. Moreover, the idea of the Cultural Indicator, wherein audiences' responses to media content can indicate possible societal changes in the future (Mosharafa, 2015), is also applied. The responses from the general public suggest three cultural indicators. This study argues that if those indicators are observed in Filipino audiences in the future, consistent and continuous positive LGBT media content has been achieved.

Meanwhile, the LGBT participants have revealed important information, especially on how the negative and stereotypical LGBT media portrayal affected them growing up. They have contributed helpful information, such as a specific list of stereotypes they have seen in media and how these depictions affected their families and surroundings. Moreover, the participants generally accept the five positive LGBT-themed advertisements, saying that LGBT portrayals are becoming more realistic. However, they offered a few criticisms, deducing that the media players still have a long way to go regarding LGBT representation in media. Consistent with Relevance Theory, the LGBT groups give rich interpretations of the LGBT media content by transcending the discussion into societal issues. Moreover, meaningful analyses of some elements in the advertisements based on their experiences, which non-LGBT audiences could easily miss, are also observed. Furthermore, a list of factors affecting their purchasing decisions is produced based on the participants' media reading of the advertisements. One critical idea is that the authentic marketing strategy is deemed important to the community. If it is insincere, they might not support it. The participants have given some advice on how they want to be represented in future LGBT media content to ensure they will feel seen and accepted by the Philippine mainstream media.

Chapter Eight, "The Filipino People's Overall Reaction: Only a Surface Level to Much Bigger Societal Problems", combines both the general public and the LGBT community's responses to LGBT media content to determine circumstances that are not discussed in the analysis chapters. Moreover, the analysis and discussions are focused more on the possible overview of the Filipino's insights regarding LGBT people through ideas from the data collected that are not noticeable during the initial analysis. In other words, through data from the study's respondents, this chapter uncovers four LGBT problems in the Philippines that are much more complex than LGBT media stereotyping. The chapter also challenges some ideas

given by the LGBT participants regarding future LGBT media content in the country by critically analysing its perceived impact on all Filipino audiences and considering some of the concepts of burden of representation. These discussions enable this study to coin the term *idealised Filipino gay people*.

As a final point, Chapter Nine, entitled "From Being Neutral to Being Critical", concludes this study by summarising the key findings of the research while offering recommendations that can help enhance the LGBT representation in the Philippine mainstream and marketing industry. It offers some reflections and understandings based on the data collected, which have enabled the research to provide insightful recommendations in helping cultivate favourable attitudes from the people through positive LGBT media content in the mainstream. This chapter also provided several recommendations for future researchers to enrich the empirical data from this PhD study. The chapter also explains how this work has addressed its research goals, including contributing to closing the gap in the country's academic research field and contributing to the UNDP's goal of eradicating discrimination against LGBT people in Philippine media. Lastly, the study has offered suggestions for Filipino audiences to become critical receivers and producers of LGBT media content, as opposed to being neutral and passive during the era of clichéd representation that had affected the Filipino people negatively.

2 Chapter

Side Effects Included: The Relationship of Television, Advertisement, and Audiences

I. Introduction

Media is one of the powerful institutions that can influence an audience's behaviour through exposure, manifested by changes in perceptions or attitudes in the real world. From the infamous public panic caused by Orson Welles' radio drama 'War of the Worlds,' about an alien invasion on earth in 1938, to the dangerous 'Pizzagate' internet conspiracy theory in 2017 about a secret paedophile ring allegedly run by Hillary Clinton, which resulted to an assault by a man who was convinced that it was real, the media effects are evident throughout the electronic evolution. However, television is arguably the medium that has had the most significant impact on its audiences regarding media effects (Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Bandura, 1986, cited in McQuail, 2010). For this reason, most of the earlier and seminal mass media studies were centralised on its role.

This chapter discusses different underlying possibilities of how television and mass media can create long-lasting effects on their audiences. More importantly, this chapter stresses two critical communication theories that serve as this doctoral project's theoretical frameworks: Cultivation Theory and Relevance Theory. The discussions are necessary to substantiate one of the aims of this study, which is to determine if LGBT stereotyping, which has proliferated in Philippine media for decades, has affected Filipino audiences' attitudes toward the LGBT community. The extent of the power of the television, including the advertising industry, to influence an audience's attitude in the real world and determine which type of social

reality they can portray is also explored. Ideas in advertisements are essential in this study because the reactions from the LGBT community are drawn from the five recent LGBT-themed advertisements portraying them non-stereotypically. Hence, one of the debates in the advertising field on whether advertisements merely reflect the social reality or contribute to creating its norms and values, with varying views held by scholars, is discussed. The discussion is later applied in Chapter Eight to determine the power of advertisement in influencing the LGBT media representation in the Philippines. Lastly, different audience research trends are presented in this chapter to show how audiences have been studied in different aspects. As the most critical part of the reception process, audiences are unconsciously subjected to different manipulation types through exposure to different media content. The earlier studies labelled them passive, but further behavioural studies suggest they are active too. This PhD study also aims to determine whether Filipino LGBT people are active or passive receivers of LGBT media content. Hence, these ideas are introduced in this chapter.

Television is a huge part of our lives. George Gerbner, the founder of the Cultivation Theory, considers television as the avenue that displays monotonous and repetitive media content that a large mass audience consumes (Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli, 2015). Gerbner argues that television has evolved from a simple medium or appliance to "a storyteller or a member of the family" (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 17). As a storyteller, television is where we get our daily news, information, entertainment, and recommendations through advertisements. For members of a family unit, television viewing, before the internet era, was considered a social activity wherein people gathered in one place to bond. In this activity, viewers can either share their reactions to the media text presented, discuss it, absorb the messages or discard it. Some friends and family members could strongly oppose a topic, while others could be easily influenced. Scholars such as David Morley (1986) have approached their studies on this area in different ways to prove that television viewing significantly affects our personal beliefs and choices, which could later impact our social reality and culture. The earlier trend in mass communication research on this subject leaned toward how a person's TV viewing time affects their worldview. However, contemporary studies have started looking into other variables, alongside television, to explain the phenomena.

II. The Television

Gerbner (1998) argues that people are already exposed to media the minute they are born. Gerbner describes a typical US household as using the television for over 7 hours. Because of this long exposure that becomes a routine, Gerbner claims that children in this household had already watched far more television before they even learned to read and write. Strasurger (1993, cited in Hammermeister et al., 2005) adds that when these children reach 70, they will have 7 to 10 years' worth of watching television. Television has the power to influence the audience and society's perceptions through the consistency of TV messages combined with the high amount of viewing of these messages (Shrum, 2017). Out of the three components of George Gerbner's Cultural Indicators Project, Cultivation Analysis is the one that studies the effect of media exposure on a person's formulation of their thoughts about the real world. The Cultivation Analysis helps determine whether heavy TV viewers are more likely to give "television answers" than those who watch TV less by giving questions about the social reality to people with different TV viewing habits (ibid.). The project defines "television answers" as answers that "reflect the potential lessons of the television world (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 23). The "social reality" is defined as the people's experiences "relating to the lived world they inhabit" (Holmes, 2000, p. 19), and the "television reality" is "a set of facts and beliefs based on television contents rather than actual facts" (DeMars, 2000, p. 36).

Cultivation Theory suggests that "the more people watch television, the more they develop values, beliefs, and perceptions that are consistent with the world as it is portrayed on television" (Shrum and Lee, 2012, p. 148). In Gerbner's project, various and consistent results were discovered. The heavy TV viewers had cultivated fear, mistrust, and feelings that they might be in danger at any time in their social reality than the light viewers as influenced by violent TV shows shown during daily prime-time and weekend daytime programming (Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 1994; Gerbner, 1998). Regarding sexism, Signorielli (1989) finds a positive relationship between television's portrayal of male dominance and traditional and stereotypical women from the 1970s to 1980s and the viewers' sexist responses to the survey. Similarly, heavy viewers negatively viewed older people, such as being not open-minded, unhealthy, not in good financial standings (Gerbner, 1998) and a "vanishing breed" because the television misportrayed them and treated them in poor light (Gerbner et al., 1980, p. 46). This 1980 study by Gerbner and colleagues

states that the more young people watch television, the more they tend to believe the negative portrayal of the older generation to be accurate. In a more recent study, Shrum (2017) provides evidence from several studies that showed positive correlations between the frequencies of TV viewing to different societal values, such as:

"negative beliefs about the elderly; more conservative attitudes toward criminal justice; more sexist attitudes; greater faith in doctors; higher estimates of the prevalence of doctors, lawyers, and police officers; greater interpersonal mistrust; perceptions of societal affluence; and level of materialism" (p. 2).

Audiences assume that television content they consume is a "representational realism" wherein the events happen in their social realities (Gerbner and Gross, 1976, p. 178). Based on the study, these audiences tend to accept the media messages at face value even though reality may not correspond. For instance, on the issue of 'cultivated fear' due to heavy TV viewing, Gerbner calls this fear an exaggeration because, at the time, less than 1% of the people in America were victims of violence, according to FBI statistics (1998). Additionally, contrary to the 'vanishing breed' perception, 65 years and older people were considered the "fastest-growing segment of the real-world population in the United States" (p. 184). Gerbner insists that audiences can be easily influenced because "television does not require literacy", and it would be hard to challenge or re-educate adult audiences who have already formed self-beliefs (p. 176). Additionally, the effects of underrepresentation in television are the same as audiences tend to accept it, reinforcing stereotyping in media (Gerbner et al., 1994). An example that the said study gave was how the television landscape, at that time, mirrored the US consumer spending reports more than the census, as it was observed that the middle class spends more in the real world. Hence, the middle class are more visible on television as a result.

The Cultural Indicators Project discovers that even if an audience is active or has different characteristics than the dominant audience, they can still give TV answers if they are heavy viewers. This type of cultivation is called mainstreaming, wherein "heavy viewing may absorb or override differences in perspectives and behaviour which ordinarily stem from other factors and influences" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 183).

Respondents that are college-educated and consistent newspaper readers in Gerbner and Gross' (1976) study have a low tendency to give TV answers about the violence in television drama because they lean on the facts. However, upon answering the survey about the perceptions of violence in social reality, heavy viewing counteracts it. For example, most college-educated respondents and newsreaders gave TV answers to questions about their views on the proportion of people employed in law enforcement in reality and whether people should be trusted or not (*ibid.*, p. 191-194). The educated but heavy viewers tend to give sexist responses influenced by stereotypical roles they see on TV (Signorielli, 1989). Similarly, audiences with a high need for cognition were observed to avoid television because it does not present challenges to them cognitively (Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, cited in Shrum, 2009). However, Shrum discovers that heavy viewers who are in high need of cognition tend to "suspend disbelief in order to become engrossed in the program" (2005, cited in Shrum, 2009, p. 263) and exhibited strong cultivation effects (Shrum and Lee, 2012). Despite their need for cognition, they seek to watch television because it entertains them. Shrum (2009) also discovers that the study's respondents with a high need for cognition are more likely to get transported when watching films than their counterparts.

Cultivation studies established television's influential role in causing an impact on audiences. However, it is essential to understand why this is happening. Bandura's (1986, cited in McQuail, 2010) social learning theory explains why mass media exposure can cause long-term effects. This theory argues that personal experiences and everyday living are not the only primary sources of people's information. Non-personal relationships, such as media, can also be a source of information gathering. The social learning sequence is as follows: attention, retention, production, and motivation. Our attention is directed at media content, then we retain the messages in our memory, then apply them in our behaviours, and its reward or punishment will motivate us to follow or not follow a particular path (*ibid.*). When forming judgments, people tend to use a 'cognitive shortcut' and generally draw information from their memory (Shrum and Lee, 2012). This is where television becomes influential because, according to the study, television messages are usually stored in our memory, readily available, and easily accessible for judgments, decisions, or opinions. Media players use this technique via mainstreaming to capture all types of audiences. According to Gerbner (1998), the mainstream has a gravitation pull

wherein people will be directed to where the mainstream is. He added that even if they try to diverge via a different path, they remain affected by the "same central current" (p. 180). Hence, the mainstreaming technique effectively captures the attention of even those who do not significantly follow the mainstream.

Based on many studies by Gerbner, one observable trend in determining the television's effect on audiences is the usage of the audiences' viewing frequency as the primary independent variable. Contemporary Cultivation studies have tried to deviate from this. While television plays a central role in cultivation, some scholars argue that investigating other factors in influencing audiences should be welcomed.

II.I. Frequency of Viewing vs. Other Variables

Critics of Cultivation Theory, such as Hawkins and Pingree (1981 cited in Shrum, 2017), question Gerbner's frequency of viewing method and argue that the audiences' program selection has a stronger relationship to cultivation than merely measuring a person's viewing time. The respondents' profile in Cohen and Weimann's (2000) study, determining whether the demographics affect Israeli teenagers' cultivation, includes the ability to select the television show they want to watch. Variations of genre preference among the respondents were observed. The study found more long-term cultivation effects on teenagers 16 and above than their younger peers. Notably, the respondents were considered heavy viewers, spending 3.39 to 6 hours of television daily. However, the study's significant discovery was that their cultivation was also affected by other variables such as demographics, religion, and education.

Some critics have also argued that watching specific genres affect the audience more than their viewing time (Shrum, 2017, p. 4). This is in response to Gerbner's idea that television in its entirety, instead of a specific genre or program, influences cultivation, especially in the "shared conceptions of reality" among various groups (1998, p. 178). Rössler and Brosius (2001) explore this by determining whether prolonged exposure to talk shows affects adolescents' real-life views on "lesbian or gay male relationships/transsexuals/tattooed persons" in Germany (p. 150). Despite discovering that the content had limited cultivation effects on the respondents, the magnitude of the effects proved that exposure to a specific genre greatly influences the viewers' perceptions and beliefs. The respondents under the experimental

condition were observed to be more susceptible to influence than the uncontrolled group. In general, adolescents developed less restrictive attitudes toward the issues. Lett, DiPietro, and Johnson (2004) try to answer whether real-life violence presented on television can influence audiences. The study aims to determine the effect of 9/11 footage on college students immediately after the event until six weeks later. The study found a negative relationship between the amount of viewing and their perceptions (1) that people outside the USA tend to initiate violence and (2) that Americans think that people outside the USA have a greater tendency to create violence. However, consistent with the earlier Cultivation research, this study has shown that exposure to the 9/11 news can cultivate hate towards the respondents' Islamic peers. Interestingly, a study in the Caribbean determining whether violent shows - from general to specific genres and fictional to actual news - can cultivate a fear of crime has discovered that none of these things reflected media effects among the respondents (Chadee, Smith, and Ferguson, 2019). The study showed a negative relationship between other media exposure variables and fear of crime. Also, the correlation between perceived TV realism and perceived victimisation risk was insignificant. Some of the explanations offered in this study as to why it garnered such results are their respondents' different individual perceptions of TV reality and crime perception and the local news's presentation of authentic crime story reports that are not sensationalised.

Cultivation research has also been applied in behavioural science studies. Hammermeister and colleagues (2005) explore the impact of television viewing frequency and psychosocial health. The television-free respondents exhibited improved psychosocial health profiles than those who watch television. However, there was a difference in the results between male and female respondents. An enhanced psychosocial health profile was observed in both female respondents who watch television moderately and those who do not. However, it is the opposite for the ones who watch more television. There was no difference in the results for the male respondents who are television-free, moderate, and frequent viewers. All of them exhibited an enhanced psychosocial profile. The study concluded that their results were congruent with the Cultivation studies. Hetsroni (2012) uses television viewing habits to determine unmarried undergraduate Israeli students' love styles, based on Lee's six love styles taxonomy, and whether general TV and specific shows affect their personal love styles. The study found that only three love styles had a

positive relationship with TV viewing: Ludus (playful or uncommitted), Pragma (practical), and Eros (passionate and intense). In addition, each love style was consistent with their programming choice: news program for Pragma, romantic stories and drama for Eros, and inconsistent results for Ludus.

The issue related to the two studies above is that while the results are consistent with Cultivation research, the established viewing hours to elicit similar results differ. Both studies' respondents watch less than 3 hours of television, which is not considered heavy viewing. Because of results like this, critics of Cultivation Theory question its legitimacy because most results either reflect less impact, inconsistency, or insignificance and question the measurement of data (Shrum and Lee, 2012; Mosharafa, 2015; Shrum, 2017; Chadee, Smith, and Ferguson, 2019). However, Gerbner defends it, saying that a slight shift in variables could point the researchers to a different point of view (Shrum and Lee, 2012). For example, minor cultivation effects can mean that there might be a more significant cultivation effect hiding in a particular group. For example, the fixed opinions on social issues based on the respondents' political orientations in Gerbner and colleagues' study (1994) tend to adjust when asked questions affecting their demographics and viewing time. Shrum and Lee (2012) explain this behaviour as the conflation of the first (memory-based) and second-order (persuasive communication) judgment of a person that might contribute to the inconsistency of the results. However, patterns and trends are still expected. Gerbner also defends the genre-specific approach saying that no matter what type of program a heavy viewer watches, the results will remain the same (Mosharafa, 2015). Their viewing habits are susceptible to being influenced because it is "ritualistic and unselective," and the messages the content they view are similar and consistent, whether the program is news or drama (p. 33). This is consistent with Rössler and Brosius (2001) and Lett, DiPietro, and Johnson's (2004) studies.

Cultivation Theory explains the cause of the long-term effects of television on audiences. First, the more they watch television, the less time will be allotted to the real world, which can have an alternate influence on forming their beliefs other than TV messages. Second, if they are more absorbed in television, the development of their social reality will heavily be based on television reality (Hammermeister et al., 2005; Shrum and Lee, 2012; Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli, 2015). These ideas are utilised in this doctoral study during the analysis of survey responses in Chapter

Six. The respondents' television and social media hours are measured to determine if the LGBT media stereotyping they have seen on these platforms affects how they view LGBT people in their social realities. The following subchapter will explain the long-term effects of heavy television viewing.

II.II. Other Long-Term Media Effects

Different studies have looked into various long-term effects of media. Some negative effects among children and adults upon exposure to violent, sexually explicit, and pornographic content include desensitisation, aggressive behaviour, and acceptance of violence against women (Bushman and Huesmann, 2006; McQuail, 2010). Additionally, media consumption may factor in self-esteem issues and eating disorders such as bulimia nervosa due to consistent exposure to the dominant image of very thin models in media and advertising (Napoli, Murgolo-Poore, and Boudville, 2003). Likewise, obesity and problems regarding physical fitness have been found as a long-term result of childhood television viewing (Landhuis et al., 2008) and self and social isolation and depression in adults and children (McQuail, 2010; Hammermeister et al., 2005; Lucas et al., 2011); as well as a sedentary television lifestyle being linked to mental health disorder (de Wit et al., 2011). Long-term exposure to advertising can trigger an impulse-buying attitude because consumers do not refer to a lengthy thinking process when buying (Zhou, Zhou, and Ouyang, 2003). They do not care for product information and choose something ready and available (ibid.). This study is consistent with Hawkee and Pingree's first-order judgment (1982 cited in Shrum and Lee, 2012) and Shrum and Lee's accessibility model, precisely the idea of the availability heuristic (2012). Availability heuristic corresponds to a consumer's purchasing judgement based on information that is easily or readily accessible to them. One example of the availability heuristic thinking process is the result of a brand's element of recall during the campaign to the consumers: the easier they recall the product, the higher they tend to base their purchasing decisions on it (ibid.).

There are positive long-term effects, as well. For instance, repeated exposure to educational programs may result in long-lasting positive changes in attitudes towards negative social issues, such as the tendency to think of drug or tobacco addiction as a social problem (Albertson and Lawrence, 2009). The effect of television viewing to children who watch prosocial content may also exhibit more

positive and behaved attitudes toward each other in the sense that television has the "potential to foster positive social interactions, reduce aggression, and encourage viewers to be more tolerant and helpful" (Mares and Woodard, 2005, p. 316). Furthermore, media exposure has been found to help children and young people form their identities, gain knowledge of the wider world, and develop their imaginations (McQuail, 2010).

The Cultivation research and studies were primarily prominent in the past 50 years mainly because they tried to explain the phenomena involving television. As we enter the digital era, questions of whether Cultivation Theory is still relevant today may arise. A few contemporary studies have shown the possibility that Cultivation Theory may still be relevant despite the current changes in media trends, viewing habits, and consumption.

II.III. Current Research

The standpoint of several principal scholars of Cultivation research in today's social media era is that audiences are still susceptible to long-term influence because even though media platforms have changed, the messages we receive have not (Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli, 2015). Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli argue that shows produced at the time of their study still fail to offer quality and critical content, citing less diversity in the media companies that limits them in contributing meaningful stories as one of the reasons. They criticise the prevailing strategies, such as focusing more on novelty and prioritising commercial content that attracts revenue than employing more diverse writers and producers. They add that having a diverse staff member who can help produce diverse content can help audiences trigger their critical thinking by presenting a variety of stories from different walks of life when watching programs rather than merely absorbing what they see. This viewpoint suggests that these contents may still contribute to developing the audiences' current social reality, whether they watch it on traditional television, mobile phones, gadgets, social media pages, or streaming apps or devices. According to them, despite the changing times, cultivation effects still survive in the modern era because the same repetitive content's impact on the public remains intact. The only change is that audiences are now more exposed to television reality influences because there are more media platforms than ever before. The characteristics of the television, as defined by Gerbner, are analogous to social media's features today:

"ubiquitous, unified, and undifferentiated stream of messages" that the said scholars compare to the "feed" that we now see on our social media pages (ibid., p. 677).

Recent studies show that social media reality can influence one's social reality. This PhD study defines "social media reality" as a set of ideas, beliefs, and behaviours that the media and the people present in social media. One example is a 2010 study by Stefanone, Lackaff, and Rosen, raising concerns about having a different definition of 'friend' in the current times. This study, which checks the relationship between watching reality television and a person's social media consumption, discovers that heavy viewers tend to copy celebrities' traits on social media, such as "promiscuous friending," which means building online connections and relationships with strangers (p. 514). These audiences are likelier to seek or permit strangers to be their friends and access their social media reality, privately or publicly. The study also observes that the viewers adopt celebrities' behaviours into their interpersonal communication, including a strong preference for social media usage and a higher comfort rate in sharing their pictures publicly. This study can explain the impact of the Kardashian family's popularity with the public. The Kardashian family are television reality stars in the US, popularised by their TV show 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians', which has lasted 20 seasons since 2007. As television reality stars and social media influencers, the family's lifestyle is publicly exposed. The study states that an audience's social media engagement correlates with the behaviours expressed by reality television celebrities. One possible example that can be drawn from this conclusion is that since the Kardashians have exposed their audiences to cosmetic surgeries through their TV show and social media pages, it creates a tendency for people, their fans or people who are following their lifestyles, to be influenced into engaging in cosmetic surgeries.

Developing the Cultivation Theory by using social media to test cultivation effects on people, two studies have shown that people's social media habits reflect their perceived social reality. First, Williams and Fedorowicz (2019) determine the relationship between the public's perceptions of the US police department to their online interaction on the police's social media pages. The study covers four US police departments in Massachusetts, Nevada, and Nebraska that posted precautionary

and warning measures about local problems, news, and educational information regarding law enforcement. The study discovers that, in this case, heavy viewing frequency and heavy interaction with social media pages do not equate to police service satisfaction. Coincidentally, the least frequent viewers are more likely to rate them negatively. These results suggest that their distrust of the police reflects on their social media habits that despite the high interaction rate with the police's social media pages, it still does not mean approval or exhibition of trust in the said department. Some of the key findings in Williams and Fedorowicz's study is applied in the discussions in Chapter Eight in explaining one of the crucial findings of this doctoral study.

Another example showing that people's social media habits reflect their perceived social reality is a study suggesting that a social media campaign may only be effective on people with similar circumstances as the campaign's messages. For instance, utilising social media to promote the post-disaster campaign of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake shows that the medium is only effective on people directly affected by the tragedy (Cheng et al., 2016). In the study, social media campaigns exhibited a lesser effect in promoting the campaign than the traditional media, particularly on respondents who were not affected by the tragedy. The study discovers that the said social media campaign was only effective and resonated with the people who had an aligned experience with the disaster. This is because those who resonated perceived social media as giving more personalised information about the tragedy than traditional media. These information and messages were tailored to specific people, whereas the information shown in traditional media is more generalised. Hence, the respondents who had similar experiences with the disaster successfully bonded with the social media campaigns due to their resonance with the personalised information it gave. While the two cited studies provide an overview of testing cultivation effects via social media, it is essential to note that these studies did not cover the long-term effects of social media exposure and only focused on the people's responses on social media concerning the mass media's efforts to create cultivation effects concerning recent events.

An observable trend in changes in viewing habits shows the slight possibility of having shared experiences because of the abundance of technology and watching flexibility currently available to audiences. For example, children today are more

prone to long-term effects than before because of the increased use of technology and the creation of 'bedroom culture' wherein children's media intake is left unsupervised by their parents because of the privatised media experience using their gadgets in their own bedroom (Livingstone, 2007). Livingstone's study is focused on children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 in the UK. The usage of digital media is one of the causes of the observed sharp increase in mental health issues among children, adolescents, young adults, and adults in the United States since 2011 (ScienceDaily, 2019). The same study states that digital media use altered their daily habits and directed their social life in a worse direction because the time they spent on digital media took away the time they could have spent with their family, friends, and the real world. This finding mirrors one of Gerbner's critical ideas on the heavy viewing television effects in Cultivation Theory: "if you spend most of your time watching television, then you will have less time to explore other options that might provide alternative views or information about the world" (Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli, 2015, p. 681).

The previous subchapters focused on the effectiveness of television in influencing people's perception towards their social reality. This PhD study argues that advertisements also have a huge role in this. Television was thoroughly explained because this study argues that television and advertisements have a direct relationship that, when combined, can significantly persuade audiences. These ideas in the advertising field are also reflected in the answers of this study's LGBT participants, as explained in Chapter Seven. Being the most used media, advertisers utilise television to ensure wider exposure. Through this, the advertisers are confident that their campaign messages will reach the mass audience and can expect their intended results. These claims are explained in the next section.

III. The Advertisements

Like television, advertisements can also provide the same persuasion techniques that elicit comparable effects on the audiences. Scholars have different definitions of advertising. Lasch (1979, cited in Belk and Pollay, 1985) explains that advertisements have made people feel less guilty about their purchasing decisions by successfully establishing consumption as one of the central values in our lives. Lears (1983, cited in Belk and Pollay, 1985) argues that advertisers have unconsciously normalised the view that pursuing material goals is similar to their

religious goals' gratifications. Boorstin (1973, cited in Belk and Pollay, 1985) states that advertising became a "community of consumption" that acts as the glue that binds people together (p. 888). Pollay, Tse, and Wang (1990) add that advertising can uplift people's spirits by portraying a blossoming economy and positive culture. According to these scholars, the main consensus is that advertising can be instrumental in creating cultural change, a shift in values, and behavioural change in consumers and audiences.

Most advertising research mainly focuses on advertisements' role in ensuring effective strategies to generate sales and revenues. Studies have concluded that rationality is one reason advertising effectively affects a consumer's purchasing behaviours (Vakratsas and Ambles, 1999). These include established loyalty through repeat purchases, a customer's purchasing logic that cannot be overridden by advertising messages, and that product preferences will only be established after using the product (*ibid.*). However, researchers discovered that basing the advertising effects on rationality alone is empirically impossible because other marketing methods proved that rationality is not the only factor that can fully influence its target consumers' behaviours and perceptions. Vakratsas and Ambles (1999) argue that cognitive and affective awareness also contributes to the consumers' short-term and long-term effects. They cite studies showing that incorporating consumers' real world into the ads may help in brand advertising and evoke feelings and familiarity that can lead to the formation of their beliefs towards the brand or the ads.

Cigarette advertising has effectively influenced people's smoking habits, especially among young adolescents (Pollay et al., 1996). Exposure to cigarette ads would elicit smoking behaviour or thoughts of smoking (Hanewinkel et al., 2010). Hence, World Health Organization took action by establishing a tobacco control framework that many countries supported. The framework includes bans on tobacco advertising and health information rules on brand packaging (WHO FCTC, 2015). The long-term exposure to a particular brand's advertisement was also studied to determine whether there were effects on the respondents' purchasing behaviour. Lodish and colleagues (1995) aim to discover if heavy ad exposure to some established and non-established products would guarantee higher sales over time. The test was done on respondents and ensured they would be exposed to random brand advertisements

and promotions for three years. The results shows that the brand penetration and the buying rate differences were positive in the first year compared to the next two years. However, the study also discovers that the respondents continued purchasing the products even after the test (advertising exposure) was over.

Aside from behavioural studies, several research has also been concerned with how advertisements play a role in influencing the cultural values of consumers. The subsequent studies argue that the continuous modern Islamic portrayal of advertisements, specifically on Muslim women, may inspire secularisation in the audiences. A study concerning the representation of Malaysian Muslim women in advertisements showing modern women's characteristics reveals that as long as these ads are still consistent with the portrayal of Islamic values and lifestyle based on the Quran, such as emphasis on *halal* and deemed proper clothing on women, positive responses can still be expected (Hussin et al., 2015). These modern characteristics include showing confidence in Malaysian women's endeavours and interests in current fashion trends. The study explained that the respondents felt that these modern ad representations of Malaysian women are justified as long as their clothing still adheres to Islamic teachings (p. 892). Moreover, they still trust ads and products that show *halal* logos. A *halal* logo ensures that the advertised products promote values aligned with Islamic standards (p. 893). The absence of it gives the impression that the product is *haram* or forbidden goods, leading to the consumers' loyalty withdrawal from the brand, or worse, negative issues such as propaganda or product banning. Similarly, integrating Iranian customs, traditions, religions, art, music, and literature has been effective in Iran's modern advertising and marketing strategies (Farzad, 2019). The strategy is effective because it shows attentiveness to the customers' interests, leading to the creation of advertisements to which they can relate. As a result, they were easily persuaded to purchase the products advertised. However, the study illustrated that misunderstandings of cultural cues could cause negative results because members of other cultures might perceive a particular symbol differently. That is why Marquez (1975) considers that "advertising is culture-bound" (p. 436). In Marquez's study, Filipinos were observed to empathise more and be receptive towards advertising messages that reflect their own culture. Adapting a foreign advertisement of particular brands is ineffective because the values presented differ from the Philippines' cultural values. For example, technology-focused ads would not guarantee expected responses because

the country was still more agrarian at the time of the study. Marquez adds that incorporating Western culture in the Filipino ads at the time of the study would guarantee an inaccurate representation of the culture and miscommunication with its target consumers.

However, Pollay, Tse, and Wang's (1990) study showing that the Chinese people perceive advertisements as a symbol of capitalism opens up a question of whether advertisements influence the people or merely portray what is observed in social reality. Interestingly, the study mirrors Marquez's findings, as Chinese advertising players consider the Chinese culture's Western-inspired portrayal of ads unfitting. The advertising trend during the 1970s and the 1980s mirrored Western strategies, which compromised the quality of the advertisements. Advertisers would produce novelty content with undignified use of important cultural symbols such as dragons and flags. It was perceived that this kind of advertising approach could promote and normalise capitalism in the country. During this time, China has been experiencing rapid cultural change and economic development. The government was aware of advertising's power in influencing people, so they ensured that the said radical change would also be reflected in ads. To ensure the eradication of Western-inspired advertising strategy and incorporation of changes in the country during that time, the government imposed fines on foreign advertisements and made sure that local ads aligned with the "traditional Chinese socialist ideals and economic goals" (p. 83). However, the elements of the ads produced after that mirrored the characteristics of communism, and people showed mixed reactions towards them.

The said events show that Chinese advertisements mirrored the existing social reality at the time of the study and state the potential of molding powers; hence, got subjected to regulations. There has been a debate in the advertising field on whether advertisements merely reflect society or shape, create, and construct the real world. This debate is called "mirror vs. mold." The following subchapter will explain different scholars' arguments concerning this debate. The debate can be challenging, but the ideas presented could make one contemplate whether their daily decisions are based on their own views or not.

III.I. The Mirror vs. Mold Debate

Gerbner (1998), on several occasions, compares television to religion. Regarding TV's social function, they are similar in "defining the world and legitimising the social order" (p. 178). He considers both of them as symbolic worlds. In this world, people learn and act based on the meaning produced by the environment, which religion and television can reinforce by presenting and regulating norms and values (Gerbner and Gross, 1976). Based on these concepts, it is evident that Gerbner considers that television has the power to mold the real world by dictating norms and values through visual images and television messages. Shrum (2017), however, argues that the television world is different from the real world based on a few empirical research he presented in his study. This argument means that television does not reflect the reality. These statements give a basic overview of "the mirror vs. mold debate."

The debates and ideas surrounding the 'mirror vs. mold' debate are applied in discussions in Chapter Eight in determining the overall reaction of the Filipino people toward the positive LGBT-themed advertisements, which helps this study deliver one of its key contributions to the academic field. The debate started when Pollay (1986) criticised the social role, impact, and influence of advertising. He argues that it targets people to be materialistic as ads were meant to be carefully curated to create a need among audiences. Since advertisements tend to sell "the good life" and fantasy, they would show images that are "a materialist's hedonic conception of utopia or heaven" (p. 26). Hence, Pollay (1987) explains that advertisements show a distorted image of reality, which he calls "the distorted mirror" (p. 104). Critics like Holbrook rejected this idea and instead called it a "passive mirror" (ibid.). Holbrook (1987) explains that Pollay thinks of advertisement as "less like a mirror that reflects prevailing societal norms and more like mold that shapes those values towards its ulterior ends" (p. 96). Holbrook argues that Pollay's arguments came from thin strands and presented weak logic because, despite the advertising's success in creating brand salience, people would still look for sociological content in ads instead of stories of fantasies. He adds that consumers tend to buy products that have a particular effect on them due to long-time acculturation or socialisation of the products. Hence, Holbrook states that most advertisements mirror the values of their target consumers. Pollay's (1987) response to this insisted on his stand that advertising is a distorted mirror. He argues that

while advertisements only show selected values and lifestyles, they do not accurately reflect a culture, its environments, and values. He adds that advertising is also a distorting mirror because there is a huge possibility that not all societal values will be presented in advertisements. Hence, the absence of other values in the ads tends to weaken such but strengthens those selected to be included.

There are similar discussions in the television field about how media content distorts reality. Mosharafa (2015) states that the media shows misleading information, stereotypes, and unrealistic beauty standards. Shrum (2009) also argues that television does not only distort reality but the underlying messages, as well. He gave a few studies as an example, wherein prime-time TV often portrays minorities as criminals and villains and white males as good guys (p. 243). This type of portrayal conveys that these characteristics are observable among these cohorts in the real world. Similar research also discovers the trend of media's distortion of real-life issues such as crime and minorities (Lett, DiPietro and Johnson, 2004).

Since the 'mirror' concept states that advertisements merely reflect things that already exist in the real world, then the contents would have an insignificant effect on audiences (Zotos and Tsichla, 2014). However, the 'mold' concept can influence values and encourage cultural change (Pollay, 1986). Barnouw (1978, cited in *ibid.*) agrees with the mold concept saying that advertising had already changed the work ethic into a 'consumption ethic', while Mannes (1964, cited in *ibid.*) fears that molding might create non-educated consumers. Sutherland and Golloway (1981) reason that through 'agenda-setting', mass media can dictate what people prioritise and think about. By emphasising a particular agenda as more important than the others, people would focus on where the media told them to focus. In advertising, this is similar to brand salience, wherein consumers prioritise the most advertised and popular product. Heavy advertising creates the "top of the mind" and "first-brand awareness" effect wherein a consumer directly associates a specific brand with regular everyday products, such as toothpaste, which mold their purchasing behaviour (p. 26). Interestingly, some audiences and consumers developed resistance to advertisements' molding features by recognising their goals and intentions. This is called "the myth of self-immunity" (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990, p. 361). The underlying notion is that consumers think they still have purchasing power despite recalling a brand's advertisement. According to Scott (1921, cited in

ibid.), an advertisement succeeds if the consumer is both given and later forgets the message. Pollay and Gallagher (1990) argue that the myth of self-immunity helps consumers tolerate excessive advertising and provides self-respect for consumers that their purchasing decisions are from their own ideas. This concept can be interpreted that advertising has already affected people through exposure, whether they are aware or not, whether they like it or not, and that these influences will manifest through real-life actions and decisions later on.

Zotos and Tsihla (2014) argue that advertising creates a lifestyle or personality that will determine people's social roles. It creates a social comparison wherein women compare themselves with idealised female features reinforced by advertisements (Richins, 1991). Many advertisements have presented messages of the socially constructed definition of genders that do not help educate the audiences with accurate real-life characteristics (Zotos and Tsihla, 2014)—for example, consistently showing messages and characteristics of masculinity and femininity defined by society. Although advertisers still portray images derived from traditional definitions and understandings of masculinity and femininity, progress in portrayals has been observed (Grau and Zotos, 2016). For example, in Shao, Desmarais, and Kay Weaver's (2014) study, wherein nine advertising agencies were interviewed, some insights were garnered regarding whether Chinese advertisements mirror or mold their society's gender representation. One advertiser says that sometimes, they would reinforce stereotypes regarding gendered products. One advertiser said they would tend to portray Chinese society instead of mixing it with Western values as it would alienate some consumers. While one said that it is better to follow the social trend than challenge it. The study ultimately concludes that advertisers focused more on selling products than influencing society.

Whether advertisements mirror or mold the social reality, it was argued that it could be a 'continuum' wherein advertisements both mirror and mold the culture (Zotos and Tsihla, 2014). The values that will be depicted will depend on the product that will be advertised (Grau and Zotos, 2016). Gerbner (1976) argues that television is already an established culture and has the power to spread mass-produced information. Klapper (1960, cited in Sutherland and Galloway, 1981) reasons that media creates a "climate of opinion" which can influence people through portrayals of "what people think other people think," and those who have no informed opinion

would tend to follow the climate (p. 28). Hence, it still depends on how the audiences perceive the advertising messages and decide what to do about it.

IV. The Audiences

One of the dominating beliefs in the earlier audience studies was the treatment of audiences as mass: "viewers with a single identity, a monolithic set of preferences and repetitive habits of viewing, all exposed to a single channel and type of influence and therefore behaving in predictable uniform ways" (Hall, 1986, p. 10). With this concept, audiences were typically perceived as passive, easily influenced or manipulated, and had a single response to particular messages.

Some studies about the effects of media materials during and after the Second World War tried to prove that the public is "vulnerable, persuadable, and at risk from propaganda" (Brooker and Jermyn, 2003, p. 5). However, these studies also show that personal relationships, experiences, and preferences played significant roles in the audiences' responses. Lazarsfeld and colleagues' 1968 study on how people chose whom to vote for in the 1968 US presidential elections found that personal relationships and contacts are more influential in their decision-making than the media (cited in Brooker and Jermyn, 2003). A considerable amount of bonds bought for the war bond drive, broadcasted on the radio, to support the American soldiers during the war came from people with close relatives in the army (Merton, 2003). The main message in the US Military produced anti-fascist film 'Don't Be a Sucker' were contradicted by some viewers due to their personal experiences, while some messages were misunderstood because of different individual prejudices (Cooper and Dinerman, 2003). These studies have shown that people can be selective with their influencers, have different selection processes, and have varying opinions on propaganda, thus contradicting the stance that media responses could be considered a mass activity.

Brooker and Jermyn's (2003) argument that the public can be easily persuaded was illustrated in Merton's (2003) study. Merton explains that the radio broadcaster concentrated on the mothers' worries about their sons in the army and exploited it to make it seem that their sons' safety would be assured through buying bonds. Though Merton argues that the broadcaster terrorised these mothers, the purchase gave them a "temporary escape from intolerable fears and anxieties" (p. 22). Brooker

and Jermyn (2003) claim that this type of media manipulation is one of the characteristics of treating "audiences as a whole" (p. 51). According to them, some media effects studies chose audiences who were easily vulnerable to manipulation.

The treatment that all audiences are mass audiences burgeoned through the Frankfurt School's determination to prove that viewers passively absorbed everything the media presented and belonged to cultural homogeneity. Led by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, they coined the term 'culture industry' in 1944. This was an effort to put a label on something to describe the downfall of authentic art. As Marxists, they were disappointed that the art industry worsened after all the economic and political changes that happened at the time. They rebelled against the idea of the popular culture they had seen upon moving to the United States as they perceived that this type of culture downgraded the art and made people complacent about it. In Adorno's 'On Popular Music,' he argues that an authentic culture requires time, effort, and imagination to appreciate and enjoy and cites the example of classical music (2006, cited in Storey, 2006). For example, the care and attention people put into dressing elegantly when going to theatres to watch opera embodies how Adorno would want people to behave in authentic culture. However, in the culture industry, triggered by popular culture and commercial exploitation, it was perceived that "all mass culture is identical" (p. 66). Hence audiences tend to continuously subscribe to a repetitive piece of art that requires little effort to gain and enjoy, unlike Adorno's definition of how an audience should behave when enjoying authentic art.

However, conceptualisations of the audience as monolithic did not persist in Communication Studies. Scholars successfully provided the rationale for why and how people perceive media messages in certain ways. Because of these understandings, audience studies' focus progressed from the media texts to the audiences. This approach is applied in analysing this doctoral study's focus group discussions in Chapter Seven. Under the concepts of Relevance Theory, which is explained in the following paragraphs, this study determines if Filipino LGBT audiences are passive or active receivers of LGBT media content.

IV.I. The Audiences are More Than "Mass"

Under the encoding/decoding concept, audiences are understood to decode television messages in three ways: dominant/preferred, negotiated, and oppositional reading. Researchers criticised the traditional 'sender-message-receiver' cycle because it only concentrated on exchanging messages and did not explain how the messages were subjected to a process (Hall, 2001). The dominant/preferred readings occur when an audience reads the text in alignment with the dominant situations, ideas, or events. The negotiated reading is a mixture of accepting and opposing the dominant ideas. Lastly, oppositional reading means the audience still understands the text but decodes it contrary.

After the conception of the idea, Morley (1986) notices that the semiological studies, at the time, were more focused on the encoding/decoding of the readers, which Stuart Hall found alarming. Hall (1973) states that this research type had dominated the field and that the researchers could not see that "television is a discourse, not a behavioural event" (p. 5). They were more concerned if audiences could correctly decode the codes that the producers placed in media texts instead of what took place when decoding them. Hall posits that symbolism had become so formal that it started to "displace meanings" and give "disguised forms of the repressed content of a culture" (p. 11). However, Hall acknowledges the importance of semiotics, especially in understanding the codes presented in front of us. He emphasises that meanings are polysemic, and codes would always be subject to "alternative connotation," "transformation," and "displacement" on their denotative meaning (ibid.). Furthermore, a person's ability to read media texts, whether preferred, negotiated, or oppositional, or even to misunderstand, has something to do with his economic, political, and cultural life.

These ideas inspired Morley to consider an audience study's sociological and cultural aspects, leading to Relevance Theory's conception. This theory argues that audiences place meaning on texts based on shared experiences with people in the same socio-economical situations (1980). The theory places the audiences as active creators of meanings that can be activated through discussions. It centralises the audiences' social and cultural factors that are relevant or irrelevant to them when interacting with the media, which reflect their viewing behaviour, media consumption, and text decoding (1986). Fiske (1988) adds that Relevance tends to

oppose a preferred reading because the audience precedes the text than the other way around. The generation of meaning undergoes a "cultural process," which combines a personified experience through a person's social history and can only be activated when one "dissolves into social." More importantly, "social allegiances" and "discursive practices" have a correlative relationship in this dynamic, as there would not be any allegiances if there were no shared discourses among individuals. This combination dramatically affects a person's "moment of semiosis" The pleasure is gained when the program's message corresponds to the viewer's social allegiance (p. 246-247).

Contemporary studies that have used Relevance as a theoretical framework have shown success in transcending audience studies from text reading to discourse on social issues presented in media. In her analysis of the interpretations of gay male and heterosexual audiences on the show 'Tidy Endings', which centres on the friendship built by the deceased gay man's same-sex partner and ex-wife, Cohen (1991) discovers that the gay male audiences related more than heterosexual viewers did to the characters and situations presented by the show. They were also able to transcend the discussion into real-life situations. In contrast, the heterosexual audience displayed fewer responses and knowledge of the situations because they could not relate to the subject matter in the show.

Regarding race, Lind (1996), Cooper (1998), and Rockler (2002) centralise racial issues and problems in determining the interpretations of different groups on media content that tackled the said subject. Lind (1996) analyses the interpretations of two different groups, the African Americans and the European American, of a news story, 'Steering You Wrong' that exposed the house realtors' unlike treatment towards the White and Black potential house buyers. The study discovers that these issues are irrelevant to the White groups; hence their responses were either limited or fixated on the characters in the news program. Meanwhile, the Black groups elevated the discussion of discrimination from merely buying houses to a more extensive social context, such as racism and oppression. Similarly, Rockler (2002) focuses on the same sets of groups in understanding their interpretations of the comic strips 'Jump Start' and 'The Boondocks' that discussed racial issues in society. Like Lind's study, Rockler discovers that African Americans expressed relevance towards racial issues, whereas European Americans felt that the issues were

irrelevant. Lastly, Cooper (1998) discovers that non-African American audiences produced an oppositional reading on 'Do The Right Thing,' a film discussing racism and violence, causing them to denounce the depiction of Whites as antagonists in the film. Moreover, African Americans understood the racism and discrimination that the film was trying to portray because they experienced these problems in real life. However, the lack of personal experience on the matters made the non-African Americans interpret the film differently and criticised the Whites' depiction and the Blacks in the film. They failed to see the racism and violence towards the Blacks and acted defensively on how the Whites were portrayed.

These breakthroughs paved the way for recognising that some audiences do not merely absorb media messages passively. Furthermore, they have the ability to interpret them based on their own opinions. This behaviour also reflects that they have control over choosing a specific media to interact with at a specific time and place driven by their personal choice. Hence, studies showing active audience reflects progress compared to media consumption studies showing that audiences are passive and have monolithic responses.

IV.II. The Active Audiences

McQuail (1997) defines "audiences" as a product of social context and a "response to a particular pattern of media provision," which sometimes occurs simultaneously depending on the audiences and their social positions (p. 2). The audience's passivity was observed to be influenced by technological innovations in mass media in the 19th century. The rapid expansion of large-scale industries and the advertising industry's boom have affected mass media through the mass production of visual and audio content intended for larger-scale audiences. Audiences now face more accessible and cheaper options from print and live plays in the auditoriums as their earlier source of information and entertainment.

The Uses and Gratification theory places audiences as active ones. This means that audiences consciously choose a particular media based on personal, social, or other reasons, whether for use or gratification, and recognise that the media selection, reactions, and effects are based on the audience's various motivations (McQuail, 2013). It also states that audiences' engagement with media depends on their motivation level (Rubin, 2002). According to McQuail, Blumler, and Brown, there

are categories that a gratification-seeking audience looks for to satisfy their needs: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance (1972, cited in Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1973). In Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch's (1973) study, they discover that people use different media forms to connect to their loved ones and society and satisfy their individual gratification. In the current digital age, technology, the internet, and social media can provide all these needs in one tool. These structurally correlated needs are why social media is popular with people because they tend to select a type of media wherein all their needs would be met (ibid.). For example, the marketing strategy of Apple Inc. presents their products not just as a helpful tool in communication and source of information but also as a mixed character of being trendy, luxurious, innovative, and fashionable (Johnson et al., 2012). From the users and gratification perspective, Apple's technique of combining various features in one product would guarantee absolute success. Li (2019) adds that "when a given set of media allows individuals to obtain the gratifications they need, they continue adopting this type of media to satisfy those needs," both of which Apple Inc. met (p. 573).

However, if the media people choose do not let them fulfil their need for gratification, they will alter their media usage until they obtain fulfilment (Li, 2019). In Li's study, some people were observed to seek science news for professional and social use, political news to understand society, and health news for self-protection. Li's respondents in the study live in Taiwan, wherein the traditional media is dominated by political news at the time. The research has proved that some people's media-use pattern does not equate to a passive audience's behaviour because they make efforts to use non-traditional media, such as social media, to gratify their need for information. This is essential information because mobile phone expenditures were expensive in Taiwan at the time of the study – showing that the respondents are willing to go out of their way to satisfy their need for information not fulfilled by the available media.

McQuail (1997) also defines 'audiences' as a market. In this setup, the communication between producers and readers becomes cash-based, prioritising media consumption over reception. In addition, Adorno (2006, cited in Storey, 2006) has consistently portrayed audiences as passive audiences who would consume popular culture in the expected ways. However, considering that only 10%

of the music records released in the 1980s were making a profit (Firth, 1983 cited in Storey, 2006), the extent of the predictability of consumer behaviour is debatable. Storey argues that audiences have become critical and discerning in their type of music. This suggests that the audiences during this time developed a selective method in terms of their media consumption. However, it was not assured whether going against the flow motivated them to purchase records during that time. Though, being critical of their musical selection created a cultural shift because different types of subcultures emerged, such as emo and punk.

Finally, one characteristic of being an audience in the traditional media era, wherein they had no option to talk back or communicate directly to the producers and senders of messages, is over. Internet players have provided various options to ensure audience participation with their content through direct interactions such as liking, subscribing, and commenting on it through social media. This trend caused changes and the demise of some traditional media. The print industry has its share of downfalls, such as the encyclopaedia business with the introduction of Wikipedia allowing its readers to be the receiver and producer of text simultaneously – something an audience cannot do when interacting with traditional media (Mason, 2015). Huge conglomerates such as the BBC have also yielded from being an "elite and powerful mass broadcaster" to mediating "user-generated content from a diversity of audiences" to open up their platform to welcome the myriad of ideas and opinions of the internet population (Childs, 2003 cited in Livingstone, 2004, p. 76). The YouTube community has also created a "participatory culture" between audiences and producers through direct interactions using the platform (Himma-Kadakas et al., 2018, p. 67). In addition to that, viewers could transcend from being mere audiences to active content producers. The technology made it easier and cheaper for people to create and publish their works, guaranteeing exposure to different types of people. Clearly, today's mass culture has come far from the traditional practices wherein texts no longer come from a single source.

V. Conclusion

Television dominated mass media for such a long time that its effects on audiences and society are still evident. Through critical media research, Cultivation Theory has proven that long-term exposure to television can lead to a distorted perception of social reality and believing that television reality is the same as the audience's social

reality. The medium of television may still influence an informed audience with the tools to resist dominant messages because it is omnipresent. People are vulnerable to its power because the messages are curated to target them for different purposes, whether to set an agenda or influence their purchasing decisions. This is evident in the advertising messages, which intend to influence people to generate sales. Furthermore, heavy television viewing has harmful effects on an individual, which tend to be long-term. The effects can manifest in their mental, emotional, and physical health and permanent behavioural changes. Studies have also convincingly shown that mass media, specifically advertising, both mirrors and molds society. The reflection, though, is always distorted, according to Pollay (1986), as it has been altered to convince people to buy the advertised products.

After placing audiences at the centre of the research, significant insights into how they read texts were revealed. The producer's code is not the only variable that can measure how audiences read media content. According to Morley (1980) and Fiske (1988), their socio-cultural and economic situation and needs dictate how they interact with the media. The Relevance Theory prioritises the audience's shared experiences in giving meaning to texts. Research shows that these audiences could provide more objective and subjective meanings than the typical reading, which is more technical and systematic. Audiences with shared experiences can transcend television discussion into real-life situations because of their personal knowledge through experiences in their social realities. Lastly, technological advances have only changed the playing field, no longer making television the main player, and have given audiences opportunities to be active. However, the cultivation effects of television are expected to endure because if the contents that the producers produce and the messages that the audiences receive remain monotonous and unevolved, they will still be passed on to the audiences no matter which type of platform they use for their media consumption. These ideas and analyses serve as the jumping-off point of this doctoral study regarding the formulation of its research design, questionnaire, data collection, and analyses. These discussions are heavily applied in the Methodology chapter and analysis chapters for the survey and focus group discussions.

3 Chapter

How Media Stereotypes are Formed from the West to the South East

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the treatment and portrayal of LGBT people in media in the United States of America and the Philippines. The chapter establishes that the dominant media narrative surrounding LGBT people in the West is problematic, bringing different concerns to the individual, society, and culture. Such problems mostly have negative impacts, and the results of which can be damaging to everyone involved. From being marginalised to commercialised, reasons for why these happen, from the marketing perspective to the theoretical point of view, are offered. The Philippines has been significantly exposed to the culture and traditions of Western countries, especially the United States, through various media platforms such as films, television shows, music, and even theatre plays. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss LGBT representation in the US because, based on the analysis in this doctoral project, some advertising strategies applied by the US can also be implemented in the Philippines. Unpacking ideas, discussions, and theories presented in this chapter are essential as they offer a more thorough and holistic understanding of the deep-rooted and persisting LGBT problems in the Philippine media and society. Moreover, the ideas critiqued here fundamentally inform the subsequent analysis of findings in later chapters.

Analysing the treatment of this community in and by media in the West and the Philippines also reveals how the situation differs between both cultures. The Philippines is in a different space regarding LGBT culture and lifestyle, which can be deemed confusing to an outsider. Hence, this chapter gives an overview of what

sexuality means for the members of the community. With an in-depth discussion of historical, cultural, and religious factors that shape conventional understanding of sexuality, this chapter demonstrates how certain media stereotypes occurred in the country and why they persist. The details presented in section three will familiarise the reader with the Philippine culture and will help in understanding the arguments presented in the next few chapters, particularly the rationale behind the list of what is deemed 'positive' and 'negative/stereotypical' LGBT representation used in this study in its data gathering process and data analyses. As such, the readers are reminded to recognise the complexity and intricacy of discussions pertaining to sex and gender in the Philippines in order to gain a full understanding of the culture in this non-Western society.

II. Typical LGBT Characteristics in Media and Advertisements in the West

For years, a stereotypical representation of the LGBT community has dominated US advertisements. Gay niche marketing, which started in the 1980s, has commercialised Queerness (Tsai, 2010). This advertising strategy targets gay consumers and integrates them into the mainstream. Once the advertisers realised that gay consumers fall into a different demographic, they altered their campaigns to cater to this non-homogenous group (Costales and Arguelles, 2015). However, this gay niche marketing produced a negative effect in which the gay representation was narrowed down to specific characteristics. One of which is being a "wealthy white man" (Tsai, 2010, para. 15) or from the upper-middle class (Nölke, 2018). In Cover's (2004) analysis of different advertising research, he discovered that gay men are portrayed in advertisements as well-groomed. They are shown as very conventionally attractive, such as the figure of the male model. This representation is marketable and chic and tends to emphasise a kind of feminine quality that is present in a certain type of archetypal gay man. Other scholars have observed similar characteristics, such as "typically Caucasian" (Nölke, 2018, p. 226) and "youthful, shirtless, hairless and muscular" (Marshall, 2011, cited in *ibid.*). Other gay men's stereotypes in US media involve an "unrealistic erotic lifestyle" showing alcohol, drugs, parties, and hook-up culture (Chung, 2007, p. 100-101). Similar to Cover's analysis, Chung also discusses how TV shows such as 'Will and Grace' support prevailing stereotypes by portraying gay men as fashion-obsessed, well-groomed, and someone who enjoys bar scenes. The stereotyped portrayal is problematic because it cages the male gay community into specific characteristics

which mainstream perception carries over into real life. For example, excessive erotic representation in television, such as the ones shown on *Will and Grace*, risks gay men being perceived as sexual deviants in reality.

Meanwhile, gay men's sexuality is not the only factor affecting their media portrayals. Other variables such as age, race, and socio-economic status can also influence their representation in ads. In Baxter's (2010) study, she discovered that Caucasian males aged 20 to 35 had become the template of male gay representation in the advertising and marketing field. This is because this field has focused on portraying their dominant consumers, who possess the said characteristics, for the past 40 years. Baxter acknowledges that a particular age group, race, ethnicity, or sex does not represent the entire community. However, her analysis showed that the advertisers are likely to centralise models who fit the said characteristics in an LGBT-themed advertisement. Similarly, Sender (2003) discovered that Black people rarely appeared in ads. If they were, they were stereotyped as showing "excessive sexuality" or having a contrasting representation of frequent visibility on products associated with HIV medicines and yet showing a healthy and ideal athletic body (p. 35).

As for lesbian representation, some were portrayed having typical male physical features such as short hair conforming to one of the characteristics of masculinity (Cover, 2004). But for some, despite the masculine characteristics, they were still portrayed as feminine (van Meer and Pollmann, 2021). The common observation of lesbians' stereotypical representation is that their media presence is largely absent, yet when there is one, they are portrayed with stereotyped characteristics to ensure acceptance by the heterosexual audience (Tsai, 2010). For instance, one strategy is to "straighten" them so that they correspond to "heteronormative forms of femininity" (Nölke, 2018, p. 226). So-called 'lipstick lesbian' representation is one such portrayal that fits the said idea. Nölke explains that lipstick lesbians are represented as conventionally physically attractive, stylish, or chic enough to gain the male gaze but are actually romantically interested in another lipstick lesbian. Corresponding to this depiction, Tsai (2010) notices that lesbian women were always subject to erotica elements. Their heterosexualised representation, Tsai argues, serves to please male audiences. This lesbian fantasy trope is not surprising, considering the observed rise of the lesbian sex stream in mainstream pornography

(van Meer and Pollmann, 2021; Sender, 2003). Regarding social class, lesbian representations tend to get narrowed down to white and upper to the middle class (Tsai, 2010; Nölke, 2018). Lesbians in lower classes or who belong to other races are absent from the mainstream because they are not considered "palatable" to consumers (Tsai, 2010, para. 21). The invisibility extends to those who are non-Caucasian, non-femme, and younger lesbians (Nölke, 2018). In her study analysing LGBT ads from 2009 to 2015, Nölke noticed that racial diversity among lesbian women was lacking. It was only in 2015 that more non-White lesbian portrayals emerged. She thinks this kind of exclusion leads to the idea that the same-sex family is a "white male phenomenon" due to the dominant male-gay household representation in the mainstream media (p. 239).

The bisexual characters in TV shows in the US are primarily female and non-Caucasian, and the female bisexuals are feminised (van Meer and Pollmann, 2021). They were also portrayed as "having the best of both worlds," which corresponds to their "double" sexuality (Tsai, 2010, para. 23). Bisexual males were shown as promiscuous and dangerously adventurous (Nölke, 2018). Ross and colleagues (2010) argue that these are not good representations because they propagate the stereotype that bisexual men are responsible for passing diseases to the heterosexual community. Moreover, these strengthen people's assumptions that bisexuals, in real life, have promiscuous sex lives, always hypersexual and engaging in threesomes (ibid.). In addition to that, female bisexuality has become an opportunity for sexualised representations, similar to lesbian fantasy (Tsai, 2010, para. 23). Plots in TV shows such as identity crises or lack of coming out culture in the bisexual community were used to justify their engagement in promiscuous encounters with both males and females before eventually discovering their sexuality (van Meer and Pollmann, 2021). Because of their personal problems, most bisexual characters in the traditional media are always presented as either constantly confused or curious (McInroy and Craig, 2017). These representations are problematic because "having the best of both worlds" risks resulting in bisexuals facing double negative prejudices (homophobia and biphobia) that keep them from opening up to their communities about their sexuality (Tsai, 2010, para. 23). As far as how bisexual audiences view this representation, the bisexual participants in Ross and colleagues' study (2010) share that the lack of more accurate or nuanced media representations contributes to homophobic notions, especially from the people whose

understanding of bisexuality is limited to either just being a gay man, a lesbian woman, or just confused. Another participant expresses fear that the media portrayal, specifically "acting out to get male attention," might be applied to her in a bar setting which, as a result, limits her movements and her desire to have fun (p. 500). Some participants have acknowledged their invisibility as there was minimal information or education about them until the internet arrived.

Transgender people's representations are problematic, too. While they are visible in mainstream media, the portrayals of transwomen mostly involve the shock twist or revelation that the female model was actually a male (Tsai, 2010). Also, their physical characteristics are feminised, which creates problems such as "fetishising transwomen and, by extension, all women in general" (ibid., para. 28) and "reinforcing gender binary by appropriating traditional femininity and institutionalised heterosexuality" (Nölke, 2018, p. 245). Similar to aligning lesbians' erotica stereotypes with female bisexuality, transwomen's portrayals are also aligned similarly to the stereotypical characteristic of gay men in terms of being sexually deviant (Tsai, 2010). Despite their presence in adverts, Nölke (2018) posits that this does not equate to meaningful visibility. She reasons that transwomen are still invisible in mainstream ads because they are not represented in diverse, complex, or nuanced ways. For example, in advertising, middle-aged and middle-class transwomen are almost invariably represented as drag queens with extravagant aesthetics and extreme behaviours, such as "hypersensitive, catty entertainers or pitted against each other in comical storylines" (p. 242). Transmen, however, are generally excluded from mainstream advertisements. This problem also extends to butch lesbians. The absence of these representations contributes to the problem as it would often result in a stereotyped portrayal of such characters that should fit the generalised view that can be sold to the masses (Annati, 2020).

To understand this, Tsai presents a phenomenon called "symbolic annihilation," which is the "erasure of a specific minority representation in mass media so that the dominant culture can promote stereotypes and further marginalise specific identities" (Tuchman, 1978, cited in Tsai, 2010, para. 32). For example, Nölke's (2018) analysis of LGBT-themed ads that predominantly came from the US (with 15% share of ads from Europe) showed that transmen in ads only started appearing in 2015. However, their portrayals were always aligned with prevailing male gay

portrayals, which are white, young adult, and middle-class, limited to stereotypical male hobbies such as weight lifting. Nölke adds that older butch lesbians were absent, aligning with misconceptions that being butch is just a phase and might not be carried on to adulthood. Some of the reasons why symbolic annihilation in ads is practised are not to lose buyers and to not offend heterosexual consumers. For example, Black people are not represented much because the advertisers are not interested in using Queer people of colour due to socio-economic reasons such as comprising smaller market size, having a low average income, and being deemed an unprofitable consumer group (Sender, 2003). Lesbian consumers are also excluded because they are considered an unprofitable market compared to male gay consumers (Sender, 1999).

Decades after implementing gay niche marketing, advertising marketed to the gay male consumer base has resulted in some positive benefits for the LGBT community. For instance, Tsai's (2011) gay men and lesbian participants said societal and economic awareness made them wary of their purchases. They would research first and ensure the gay dollar would go into gay-friendly companies. They are now more aware of their importance in the market. Hence, they started using their power as consumers to reject marginalisation and develop a "positive sense of self and collective identity" (p. 89). The respondents also feel validated, seen, and satisfied with being recognised as a distinct demographic group. To them, being recognised is equivalent to being seen by corporate America, which means "being included in mainstream advertising carried far more symbolic significance than being included in popular films or television shows" (p. 89). This recognition by the marketing field helped them build confidence in facing real-life issues, such as supporting the gay rights movement. However, some equated the ability to overspend to self-worth. Some male gay participants in Tsai's (2011) study confirmed the gay spender stereotype as depicted in the ads. It is under the niche known as DINKs (dual income, no kids), which they consider a positive representation. The DINKs are the ideal LGBT consumers targeted by marketers and advertisers. They are described as gay or lesbian couples who earn high incomes but spend less to nothing on children and more on leisure, travel, and hobbies (Baxter, 2010). Most DINK ads use male models who are generally Caucasian (ibid.). This explains why the lesbian participants in Tsai's (2010) study were surprised upon learning that they are also part of the DINKs cohort. In this type of symbolic annihilation, it is safe to agree

with Tsai's argument that the prevailing LGBT representation in the mainstream, which was also acknowledged by the LGBT community itself, is not powerful enough to create a "countercultural force for social transformation" (Tsai, 2010, para. 40). Instead, it only produced a standardised, heteronormative representation of a supposedly unique group and the failure to account for the other members of the community, which conforms to the idea of homonormativity.

Homonormativity is "the proliferation of a culturally specific way of being gay that is enough in sync with existing gender, class, racial, and cultural norms as to be considered 'acceptable'" (O'Brien, 2015, p. 794). Homonormativity can be observed in different parts and fields of society, including the advertising industry. Homonormativity is one of the ways to successfully commercialise the LGBT community to gain revenues from the consumer. Casey (2007) adds that the growing practice of producing "commercialised, mainstreamed and non-threatening... world weave commodified gay spaces" excludes those who do not satisfy the idealised image (p. 127). Casey calls this group the 'queer unwanted' (ibid.). The 'queer unwanteds' can be the lesbian and gay men in older age and with disability. Homonormativity and the idea of 'queer unwanted' create damaging results for the LGBT community, such as being sexually excluded in the gay scene and invisibility regarding representations. In the advertising field, one of the reasons why advertisers have conformed to homonormativity is to capture the attention of all consumers without offending heterosexuals. For example, Nölke (2018) argues that LGBT-themed adverts have moved from the depiction of hypersexualisation to committed relationships. One possible reason is to showcase some heterosexual values, such as commitment and monogamy, in portraying romantic relationships to gain audiences and sales. Moreover, advertisers have developed a few strategies to attract LGBT consumers and audiences without necessarily revealing Queer elements. One of which is gay window advertising (GWA). The technique of GWA involves incorporating Queer codes and subtexts into adverts. While heterosexual audiences easily ignore these, they are well understood by members of the LGBT community (Sender, 1999). One example Tsai (2004) gave was an oatmeal commercial with two men having breakfast. Their relationship could be open to different interpretations because of some subtle nuances, or it could also lead to no interpretation at all. There is a similar strategy called "gay vague," wherein the association or the sexuality of the models in advertisements is purposely portrayed

as ambiguous (Mcnamara and Descubes, 2016). Scholars posit different takes on this. Some state that LGBT audiences find pleasure in decoding Queer codes in ads (Tsai, 2004). Studies also suggest that the LGBT market is still fully unexplored, so techniques applied to the general audiences were also used on LGBTQIA+ consumers (Mcnamara and Descubes, 2017). But the common consensus remains that it is important not to alienate or upset heterosexual consumers (Sender, 2003; Nölke, 2018). Some companies would even create two versions of one advertisement wherein they would carefully choose one that could be perceived as more appropriate by the audiences of a specific media (Mcnamara and Descubes, 2017).

However, Sender's (2003) analysis implies that even Queer media would control Queer sex ads to avoid upsetting the general consumers and create a more satisfactory perception of the gay community. Widely distributed Queer glossy magazines such as *Advocate*, *Out*, and *Curve* and visited websites such as *PlanetOut* and *gay.com* have declined sex ads. Although claiming that the main reason for removing sex ads was not to perpetuate gay stereotypes in media, it was revealed that the heaviest reason for doing so was not to push away the national advertisers, as some are still dependent on the revenues coming from them (ibid.). Concerning the elevation of the group's status, it is understood that marginalised groups would try their best to raise their social hierarchy through any possible means. One of the results is the containment of Queer sex in media, wherein representations should conform to heterosexual standards to be deemed acceptable (ibid.). Conforming to the dominant strategy threatens the natural uniqueness of the group. Such actions may tone down its uniqueness which could possibly restructure LGBT visibility as something that is "much more about societal perceptions of gender presentation and their conformity — or divergence from — the cultural norm" (Bianco, 2014, para. 10).

Because of different reasons and strategies that aim to commodify the LGBT community, their media portrayal has become problematic. As people call for more representation without fixing the goal of why they are given more visibility, their media presence could remain challenging. The previous chapter explained how television, media, and advertisements can significantly affect people's behaviours, psychological states, and worldviews. Consequently, it follows that because of persistent stereotypical portrayals of LGBT people in the media, societal opinions

and treatment of this community have been negatively impacted due to exposure to such representations. The following section explains how the media treatment of this cohort has affected them in various ways, including the development of, some scholars argue, an artificial sense of self-worth.

II.I. What representation means for the minority

The pressure to fit into a particular type, promoted by the media, and maintain it can take a toll on the members of the LGBT community. Gay men have lower self-confidence and become susceptible to developing unhealthy eating habits or disorders because of media representations of them as fit and muscular (Nölke, 2018). The butch lesbians were mainly portrayed as large, fat, and unappealing, while femmes were accused of appropriating the heterosexual's appearances (ibid.). Exposure to these stereotypical lesbian characteristics in media reported an increased negative mood among the lesbian participants in Annati's study (2020). Moreover, the invisibility of proper butch lesbian media representation leads to body image problems because of the lack of relevant characters with whom they can associate themselves (ibid.). In addition to being pressured to appear fit and muscular, it was revealed that gay men do this to eradicate other stereotypical representations of them, such as being 'sissy' and carriers of the HIV-AIDS virus (Peplau et al., 2009). By commodifying them, they had to keep up with the expected gay identity and sustain it to remind everyone that they exist (Tsai, 2010). They have also established problematic principles such as buying products from top-rated and expensive brands equating to inclusion and accreditation from corporate America and that being a spender can give a sense of self-validation (Tsai, 2011; Nölke, 2018). Some members found a way to turn things around. Some gay men used their financial independence to create a "positive sense and collective gay identity" in this capitalistic society, while some lesbians encouraged all women to promote body acceptance of all sorts (Tsai, 2011, p.89; Peplau et al., 2009).

Steering away from the negative repercussions of LGBT visibility in media, there are some strategies that the community considers effective in representing them well. One is the 'out-of-the-closet' advertising wherein they show real-life situations and issues of LGBT people, like same-sex relationships and gay rights advocacies (Tsai, 2011). Human interest (HI) advertisements give more prolonged exposure with more stories to tell as they are usually two to four-minute-long, quite different from

the traditional 30-second ads giving very limited LGBT coverage (Nölke, 2018). The 'modernist quest ads' centre storylines on the character's personality, diverting from the usual hyperfocus on their sexuality (ibid.). However, some underlying reasons they favour these strategies can be rooted in their need to be accepted or validated by the dominant population. According to the participants in Tsai's (2011) study, out-of-the-closet advertising, despite occasionally showing problematic representation, is still tolerated because it provides visibility that helps them advance their political advocacies. In addition, portraying them as ordinary people with regular aesthetics and typical drama validates their need for normalcy, that "we are just like everyone else" (p. 91). Plummer notices that the modernist quest ads have a pattern in their storylines wherein characters would overcome a great ordeal, ultimately proving and triumphing a message that "love is love" (1991, p. 31 cited in Nölke, 2018). This means that same-sex love is just the same as heterosexual love, describing their need to be seen just like their heterosexual peers. This idea, which is explained in Chapter Seven, is also mentioned by some of the LGBT participants in this doctoral study, as some stories from the five LGBT-themed advertisements this study is focusing on are about same-sex relationships. In Chapter Seven, some participants also report that the effect of some advertising strategies mentioned in this section can be either compelling or insufficient. Moreover, these strategies are expounded on in Chapter Eight, discussing which best advertising approach should be applied in future LGBT media content in the Philippines.

The LGBT community has realised the power of gay dollars in creating appealing narratives when representing them in media. As a result, they used the niche marketing strategy to their advantage. This is in hopes to demarginalise the minority in the consumer and advertisement field by embracing the characteristics of a "dream consumer," validating the rich and spender stereotype, and recognising that they have more money to spend than the other consumers (Tsai, 2011, p. 88). This phenomenon is known as the gay affluence myth or a belief that gay and lesbian consumers are financially more advantaged than other consumers (Bettinsoli et al., 2021; Tsai, 2011). As perpetuated by the media, this myth enhances the 'gay spender' representation and gives them a sense that they have better economic situations than heterosexuals (Tsai, 2010). The contradictions of this myth are having a misplaced belief that they "have made it" and discrediting the reality of the LGBT worker's plights and struggles with class stratifications and other forms of economic

inequality (Tsai, 2011, p. 93; Hollibaugh and Weiss, 2015). According to Hollibaugh and Weiss (2015), most LGBTQ people in the United States are poor and in the working class, with 33% of them being people of colour, with an estimated 904,000 immigrants. These facts made them at risk of not gaining stable rights because of double threats such as homophobia and racial complications they experience in their society (ibid.).

Similarly, media representations such as the heterocentric ideology also trivialise the personal and moral dilemma of young LGBT people. The heterocentric ideology is the dominant group's appointment of gender roles, social attitudes, and cultural values (Chung, 2007). LGBT people are at risk of ridicule in this ideology because their behaviours do not prescribe to heterosexual practices, thus confusing the young LGBT people about behaving 'naturally.' That being the case, most of them had difficulty accepting their sexuality, while some would rather stay in the closet than be ridiculed for not behaving in customs appointed by the dominant group (ibid.). Another problematic media representation that does not comfort the young LGBT community is the one-dimensional portrayal on television. Fans of sci-fi TV shows have observed that the typical representation of lesbian women is that their characters are nearly always killed off early and are frequently depicted as sacrificing their lives for their love interests (Ng, 2017). The fans also feel that the traditional media has often shown them as "weak, insecure, and bullied," while gay men tend to be portrayed as "young, affluent, well-educated, and urban" (McInroy and Craig, 2017, p. 34-39). Sender (1999) disagrees with these portrayals of gay men saying that it is not a holistic presentation of the community. However, some gay men think this representation is correct based on the lifestyle they see in their social realities (Tsai, 2011). This gives gay men a sense of validation of the 'gay dominance' in media, especially in same-sex families' portrayal, wherein the other members of the community (LBT) are visibly underrepresented (ibid.). The symbolic annihilation comes into play again as this strategy has been used to defend the patriarchy and masculinity from anything threatening them. Tsai (2010) specifies some attitudes that threaten patriarchy and masculinity, which led to symbolic annihilation. One, bisexual men were described in media as no more than a phase to hide male confusion and denial. Two, the femme lesbian representation overshadows the butch lesbians to create a monolithic lesbian identity, which is erotic and appealing to straight men. Also, to bury the image of butch lesbians' threatening masculine

characteristics and their ability to assume masculine roles. Lastly, because transgender people blur gender boundaries, transwomen were buried in entertainment representations, whereas transmen were generally excluded so that the prevailing concepts of patriarchy would not be questioned.

Tsai (2010) also argues that no one questions and challenges the patriarchal authority. The heterocentric ideology and the symbolic annihilation could potentially explain why there are prevailing class and power struggles within this group across different cultures – a group that was expected to be united due to their shared marginalisation and struggles. The challenges of intersectionality in media representation are growing, which unfortunately transpires in reality, too. Tsai (2010) argues it is because the ideas presented were entrenched with the dominance of the "wealthy white man" and "male privilege" in the society (para. 15). In a multicultural country that is still dominated by White people, such as the US, it is not surprising that the marketers and the advertisers are careful with their marketing strategies when dealing with race and ethnicities. It is predicted that by 2050, half of the United States will be populated by people from different races and ethnicity (Baxter, 2010). Along with it are sets of different groups who would need different kinds of representation in all parts of society. According to Baxter (2010), the recent decade produced three new types of consumer groups: the Hispanics, the Asians, and the LGBT population. The target marketing strategy seemed to be the answer to successfully catering to all diverse groups. By focusing their advertising plan on them through presenting value-specific messages to the group who share a common need, the target marketing strategy can guarantee brand recall and purchase from a specific group of consumers. However, despite the application of this strategy, the existing advertisements in the recent decade still subscribed to the usual dominating pattern of race, gender, and social class representations. The presence of Asians on TV shows and ads in LGBT-themed magazines in the US was deficient (van Meer and Pollmann, 2021; Baxter, 2010). In those limited exposures, Asian females were likelier to appear as lead characters, while male Asians were mostly supporting characters (Baxter, 2010). The observed dominating representation of middle-class Asian male gays in ads is what Nölke calls the "Neil Patrick Harris" (NPH) type. The NPH characters are stylish, dressed professionally, successful, fit, and "confident metrosexuals" (2018, p. 236). However, male gay Asians were mostly depicted as more effeminate than the other races, with

discernible comedic elements in both straight and gay content. Because of this, the media produced an Asian perception of being more feminine in real life for both straight and gay men (Nölke, 2018; Kuo et al., 2022).

Some scholars argue that this type of representation of gay Asian men developed the idea of 'sissyphobia.' Sissyphobia is when a gay man experiences stigma because of his effeminate mannerisms and actions (Eguchi, 2011; Nölke, 2018). In Eguchi's (2011) autoethnography analysis of his life in the US as a femme Asian gay man, he states that he must constantly "negotiate and renegotiate" people's perception of him that was heavily influenced by media (p. 46). For example, instances of denouncing the stereotype of Asian gay men as someone who works in the fashion industry, someone who has feminine-like body parts (for example, lesser body hairs), or someone who only prefers a White man as a partner because they are looking for someone to protect them, and someone who is a "wanna-be housewife" (p. 47). Being considered a subordinate group with problems fitting in society and the LGBTQ community, gay Asian men living in the US are battling both racism and homophobia (Han et al., 2014). For example, they are found not desirable enough to be a sexual partner because of their perceived lack of masculinity. Some strategies they use to battle discrimination is to take and rebuild the "drag queen" stereotype to trade the "stigmatised status as Asian" (ibid., p. 54). They also subscribe to masculine performance to assimilate into the mainstream culture and normalise feminine characteristics by ensuring that their performance pleases the heteronormative standards of an effeminate gay (Eguchi, 2011). Making sense of the latter point, El Hazzouri and colleagues (2017) offer an explanation under system justification theory wherein there is a "motivation to legitimise the status quo" to elevate their social status despite the minorities' awareness that it would not serve their groups' interest, (p. 718). Applying this theory to advertisements, El Hazzouri and colleagues' study (2017) discover that minorities prefer to see the majority group in ads more than the other minority groups. The study also discover that minorities exhibit ostracism toward other minority groups if they are featured in advertisements.

Some Asian Americans in the United States believe that Korean pop or K-pop can help rebrand the way people look at Queer Asian Americans. The members of K-pop groups are known to be straight male cisgenders, yet they are not bullied for having

effeminate aesthetics, attitude, and body type while wearing makeup and colourful fashion styles. Their portrayal of an androgynous cisgender male Asian, which challenges the heteronormativity in a country such as the US, has started to redefine the "effeminate male Asian" stereotype into a desirable man despite his femininity (Kuo et al., 2022). The said study has revealed that K-pop idols have helped some Asian Americans find a representation of the androgyny, genderqueer, and nonbinary that was lacking in Western media. The fandoms of these Korean pop bands have used their platform to disseminate helpful information about LGBTQ Asian American fans, support them in their journey of self-discovery, and overcome double stigma because of their ethnicity and sexuality. The social relationships built in the fandom have resulted in increased confidence of the LGBTQ Asian American fans in showing their real identity and sexuality. Contrary to this event, China recently banned pop idols in the country because of their effeminate looks. Corresponding to the country's goal of endorsing "revolutionary culture" and "national rejuvenation," the Chinese government ban effeminate Chinese pop stars on television (McDonald, 2021, para. 1-2). According to McDonald (2021), the announcement used derogatory slang words like "niang pao," which meant "girlie guns" (para. 4). The government was concerned about the Korean and Japanese pop singers and actors' influences, who are known for having a vibrant fashion culture, which might affect the Chinese youth's view of their culture's perception of masculinity. Following the announcement, Weibo suspended a massive number of fan club accounts supporting these pop idols (ibid.).

Based on the studies articulated in this section, it can be surmised that the representation of LGBT Asian Americans in the West is problematic in its own sense. However, the situation on the other side of the world differs significantly. The Asian representation in Asian media, particularly in the Philippines, is much worse as it draws upon various beliefs from religion and traditional practices that add to the prejudice against Filipino LGBT people. The following section introduces the Philippine sex and gender cultures that have been affected by different factors for years. From this point onwards, it should be reiterated to recognise that the Philippines has some complex and intricate ideas surrounding sex and gender notions. The section serves as an important background to a holistic understanding and a more critical unpacking of Filipino LGBT representation in mass media in the next chapter.

III. An Introduction to the Philippine LGBT Culture and its Implications in Media Representation

“Mark Bautista says it straight (no pun intended): "Yes, I love both sexes," short of outright admitting that he is gay or bisexual” (Lo, 2018, para. 1).

The interchangeable usage of 'gay' and 'bisexual' in the first line of this news article about the coming out of a Filipino celebrity can confuse a reader, particularly scholars of gender and sexuality from the Western tradition. Halfway through the article, the author's mistake, or his binary notion (which will be explained later), can be pinpointed when Bautista says he loves both sexes but does not want to label it. Although without the intention of labelling Bautista, academically speaking, such an idea could be interpreted as 'non-binary' or 'gender non-conforming.' However, such a concept is still deemed complicated in the sex and gender discourse among the Filipino masses. Lo's article is one of the many instances to describe the Philippine culture or the Filipino people's challenge in grasping the concepts that could be considered 'the Western notions' of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). The condensed way to explain to non-Filipinos the rationale behind this confusion is due to the LGBT culture in the Philippines and the general public's perception of it being founded by heteronormative notions.

Although there are attempts to educate the public today about progressive sex/gender discourse, lack of awareness and misunderstanding prevail for several reasons. As highlighted in the first chapter, the non-implementation of the SOGIE bill is one key reason. While primarily centred on the well-being of the Filipino LGBT community, the bill has the potential to trigger a significant ripple effect, fostering broader public enlightenment and the development of an intelligent discourse on this matter. Along with the implementation of some local government units' own anti-discrimination bill, the advances also reached the education sector following the implementation of Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy in 2017 which allows the Department of Education (DepEd) to finally integrate the principles of gender equality, gender equity, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination and human rights in the provision and governance of basic education (“An Act”, 2017) and the DepEd's endorsement to the Senate to enact comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in all basic educational levels in the Philippines (Gregorio, 2023). As a firm believer in one of the most effective actions in learning a habit, knowledge,

and idea through layering the groundwork as early as possible, the researcher of this study celebrates these milestones. This move is helping to lay a foundation by moulding the minds of future generations with updated and critical knowledge of sex and gender. However, the move can be deemed problematic, as well. The position of young Filipino Scholars De Leon and Jintalan is agreeable: "A person's acceptance or non-acceptance to ideas and concrete things is deeply rooted to one's culture, customs, values, and ideals and these factors influence the way a person thinks and the way this thinking is actualised," (2018: 409). As such, the Filipino mentality is profoundly affected by their history, culture, and religion.

This section attempts to explain the existing understanding of SOGIE in the Philippines as evaluated by some gender scholars. It also endeavours to discuss different factors that describe the LGBT culture and discourse in the Philippines to inform the readers of such and discuss the possibilities of how their stereotypes in media in the country came to be. Moreover, it aims to describe what heteronormativity is in the country and how it manifests within various societal contexts, particularly in the Philippine mass media. The reality of one society is different from another's. Hence, the reader is advised to engage with the essay without preconceived notions. Garcia's (2000) sentiments on how Western academics represented the Filipino culture in a global language are logical: this could equate to cultural appropriation because globalising sexual categories leads to reflecting one's own culture when attempting to study a non-western concept and trying to fit all information together to make it "culturally palatable – to turn it relevant to itself somehow" (ibid., p. 266). Even the UNDP and USAID (2014) share the same approach in their Philippine study upon acknowledging the necessity of understanding the concepts of gender in the Philippines to understand the LGBT community in the country better.

III.I. It's more complicated in the Philippines: the non-existence of sex/gender dichotomy in the Philippines

One of the problems this study presents regarding Filipino LGBT media representation is the significant lack of representation for other sexual orientations, while gay men are given much exposure. Whether the representation is in good or bad form, the community tolerates it because it is still deemed as visibility in the mainstream. However, the problem manifests when attempts to represent

transwomen or bisexual men still align with gay men's representation. This can be attributed to the binary thought that has developed in the minds of the Filipino people that there are only males and females. Therefore, LGBT people are only gay men and lesbians (Tang and Poudel, 2018). This means that bisexual men and transwomen are still considered gay men or *bakla*, whereas bisexual females and transmen are still viewed as lesbians or *tomboy*.

Lexically, the translation of the terms 'gender' and 'sex' in the Tagalog vocabulary is embodied in only one word – *kasarian* (Lim, 2010; Tan, 2008). The questions "What is your sex?" and "What is your gender?" have no difference. The nouns are generic, and pronouns have no sexual or gender characteristics. For example, he/she is *siya*, and his/her is *kanya*. The language is specific in that one should put the words *lalaki* (man) or *babae* (woman) before or after a noun, or letters o (for man) and a (for woman) at the end of the words, for accuracy. For example, fisherman (*mangingisda*): *babaing mangingisda* for women and *lalaking mangingisda* for men, and *abugado* (for a male lawyer) and *abugada* (for a female lawyer). If one wants to refer to or describe a member of the LGBT community's profession, the words *bakla* (for gay men) and *tomboy* (for lesbian) are added in front of the words (*baklang mangingisda* and *tomboy na mangingisda*). Because of the language's demand for specificity, sex and gender bifurcation were never the Filipino's concerns (Quindoza-Santiago, n.d.).

One should not disregard the basis of language as an influence on the existing sex/gender concepts in the country because when a person learns a language, the culture comes with it as they are interconnected (Pineda, 2016). The local dictionary definitions are helpful indicators for understanding society's recognition of definitions (Tan, 2018). As such, the absence of Filipino terminologies of other SOGIs in the Tagalog dictionary could have shaped and influenced Filipino perspectives that encouraged people to develop a binary thought minoritising all other sexual orientations and gender identities, except for gay and lesbian (Tang and Poudel, 2018) as these two have their corresponding Tagalog words: *bakla* and *tomboy/lesbyan*, respectively. In the said study by Tang and Poudel, even though the other forms of SOGI were explained to the people, especially those who know little about the topic, they would still misunderstand, confuse, or compare it to the prevailing binary thought. Most Filipinos tend to reject

other terminologies, such as transgender, and would continuously refer to them as *bakla* or male gay (Winter et al., 2007). This is where a key problem arises because the term *bakla* describes "a wide range of males whose behavior deviates from male gender norms, e.g., for sexual interests (gays), sexual expression (fetishistic transvestites), or even general demeanor (effeminate males, 'sissies,' and even those who are judged timid or cowardly). All share the status of not being 'real men'" (ibid., p. 80). This Filipino attitude of unconscious rejection to recognise other SOGIE is because the culture has developed a belief that homosexuality, including but not limited to crossdressing or effeminacy, is exclusively synonymous with *bakla* (Sechrest and Flores, 1969, p. 9 cited in Mathews, 1987, p. 66). Hence, the 'GBT' in Filipino minds does not equate to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity but only to homosexuality, wherein homosexuality is *bakla*. This reasoning is apparent in the news article by Lo mentioned earlier. Lo's understanding, as surmised from his article, is that bisexuality equals being *bakla*. Congruent to the binary thought, the female 'LBT' will always remain lesbian or *tomboy*.

Aside from the language, one factor that affected the people's misunderstanding of SOGIE is the Filipinos' critical unawareness about the subject (Garcia, 2008). This can be attributed to the fact that there has been very little research about Filipino LGBT people in the past (Foe, 2014; Marin, 1996; Villar, 2000; Winter et al., 2007) and the absence of focus on the social context of sex and gender in the previous school curriculums (Pineda, 2016). As such, there is a lack of critical engagement among Filipino students with the broader sex and gender discussion. As a result, the terminologies and concepts became culturally specific:

"...the heuristic "*bakla*(gay)/homosexual dynamic"... indicate(s) the areas of equivalency and disparity between what are fundamentally different, culturally specific terms: mainly, that *bakla* denotes gender comportment and identity (effeminacy, femininity, crossdressing, etc.), and homosexual is obviously limited to the concept of sexual object choice (or sexuality). This dynamic may be shown to structure much of what follows in the history of gay culture, as a critical unawareness of it has inadvertently minoritized homosexuality to the identity of the *bakla*, and therefore institutionalized both inversion and the hierarchy of heterosexualized (that is to say, inverted) same-sexual desire" (Garcia, 2008, p. 35).

The lack of critical sex and gender discussion in the country's academic system in the past decades resulted in the present generation's limited critical understanding of the matter. Misgendering is one of the results. Most Filipinos are still confused about properly addressing or using LGBT people's preferred pronouns. This action might be some form of bullying in other countries, but in the Philippines, this was unintentionally done (Tang and Poudel, 2018). Despite whether it was intentional or not, misgendering can trigger gender dysphoria in LGBT people (ibid.). The confusion even extends into the LGBT community. Some of them still do not understand the SOGIE concepts. This is especially apparent in this PhD study's LGBT participants, as seen in Chapter Seven, where most have given conflicted information regarding their sexual orientation and gender identities. For example, one participant said he identifies as a gay man, but he is also bisexual. The complete profile of the LGBT participants can be seen in Appendix A. Hence, this study had a first-hand encounter with how Filipino LGBT members themselves exhibit confusion on sex and gender discourse. At some point, even influential institutions such as the Supreme Court tend to misunderstand the difference between 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' (UNDP, USAID, 2014).

Moreover, heteronormativity prevails in the Philippines because it is a patriarchal and religious society. The dominant religion in the country is Catholicism. Currently, 78.8% of the population or over 85 million identifies as Roman Catholic (Gregorio, 2023a). Religion highlights the division of gender into two distinct categories (UNDP, CHR, 2018), hence the prevalence of the belief that God created only man and woman and that the only accepted sex and gender in Philippine society are male and female and masculinity and femininity. These have profoundly affected the unconsciousness of the Filipinos that when presented with other beliefs, they would still cling to the familiar and culturally acceptable system. The 'man and woman' belief is holding them back in accepting and understanding SOGIE and forcibly fitting the LGBT people into labels they find comfortable, which are the equivalence of 'male' and 'female.' The rigidity of terminologies and mentality in the Philippines is why some Filipino lesbians feel it is easier to be themselves in the United States than in their own country (Nadal and Corpus, 2013).

While it is plausible for heterosexual people to misunderstand LGBT notions and discourse, in the Philippines, even some LGBT people can confuse the general public

due to their actions and romantic orientations that are non-Western conforming or heteronormative. Many Filipino scholars have argued that "heterosexism of the West does not correspond with the gendered and classed construction of heterosexism" in the Philippines (Ceperiano et al., 2016, p. 29). This idea is unpacked in the next section.

III.II. The complication continues: Hetero/Homonormativity in the Philippines and its history

The SOGIE ideas in the Philippines can also be complicated to understand because LGBT people's sexual behaviours, for some of them, are not congruent with society's ideas, and romantic or sexual relationships always follow the heterosexual element. A few scholars might argue that some LGBT people's sexual and romantic orientations do not align with their identified SOGIE. Some might find it odd or amusing that heteronormativity still exists in these situations. However, we should consider approaching the Philippines' case uniquely and empirically - emphasising economic, historical, and cultural aspects - to understand different reasons why these are being continuously practised.

A Filipino gay man's primary sexual and romantic interests used to be a straight heterosexual man (Tan, 2001; Tolentino, 2000). In the late 1960s, a same-sex male-gay relationship was taboo and tantamount to lesbianism (ibid.). In Philippine society, people automatically assume that a straight man is only in a relationship with a gay man because of financial and material benefits. Gay men resort to such actions to keep their straight partners from looking for something they do not have, such as a female reproductive organ or the ability to procreate. This reality extends to even the most famous local male gay celebrities. Hence, most jokes in TV comedy shows involving gay male characters are about their recently purchased branded shoe or Honda motorcycles as gifts to their partners or blind items in tabloids, including a famous basketball player (as the straight man) being involved with a 'male gay benefactor.' People accept that in this dynamic, the 'male' remains straight despite his relationship with the *bakla* or their activity behind closed doors, and some straight men in this type of relationship protest when labelled as *bakla* as they would still identify themselves as a straight man (Tan, 2008). From the historical point of view, it was proven that this dynamic emerged because of poverty. Although it is compelling to relate this to the native Filipinos' rich sexual behaviours in the

pre-colonial era, wherein the sexual partner's sex, gender, and filial affiliations were overlooked, the Spaniard's long years of colonization succeeded in uprooting these practices from the Filipino culture. As early as the war during the 1900s, men resorted to prostitution, which eventually led to the birth of 'call boys' in the 1960s in which their clientele was majorly composed of local and foreign gay men to support their families or their lifestyle (Bonnet, 2017; Mathews, 1987; Foe, 2014; Tan, 2001). Tolentino (2000) acknowledges the 'gay-straight man' relationship as normal in this society and usually based on sexual and economic charity. Hence, it explains why this idea remains in the minds of rural or urban poor Filipinos that the only legitimate homosexual in prostitution or gay-straight man sexual and romantic relationships is the effeminate man (Garcia, 2013).

If we look at it from a cultural point of view, patriarchy plays a big part. The heterosexual elements in the gay-straight man relationship are apparent within the lesbian relationship in the Philippines, as well. Marin (1999) introduces the *pars-mars* dynamics in describing the lesbian relationship in the country. The *pars* (male) desire to dominate the relationship in all areas, especially sexual activities. It stemmed from the notion that to be touched by their partners "would mean becoming 'women' themselves, and as 'women' they would be stripped of their power over the *mars* (female) in the relationship" (ibid., p. 47). Such characterisation of the *pars* illustrates the prevalence of an underlying sexism against women. With the arrival of the Spaniards in the 1500s and the introduction of Catholicism, the Philippines transitioned from a matriarchal to an extremely patriarchal society.¹ Before the arrival of the Spaniards, women held essential positions in the local communities, such as in the medical and religious fields. They are known as *babaylan*. Native LGBT Filipinos can be a *babaylan*, too. The natives practised animism as their creed, wherein the *babaylans* held an essential role as the communicator with spirits to help with important rituals such as crop fertility. Crossdressing and different types of sexual activities were not frowned upon. However, when the Spaniards arrived, they were surprised by the culture that they had seen. They felt it was their duty to 'fix' the country by introducing Catholicism and extreme imposition of Catholic teachings to the natives. The Spaniards also held an intense inquisition in the entire country, wherein gay men were sentenced to

¹ This is a condensed overview of the history of LGBT culture in the Philippines. The researcher has published an article detailing the events from the pre-colonial era to the 20th century. See: Ildefonso, 2023.

death if caught having sexual relations with the same sex. The *babaylans* and other sexual practices deemed normal to the natives, such as masturbation, were demonized. The people were told that women attract the devil. As a result, women and LGBT people were stripped of their powers as community leaders and had no choice but to conform to the religious rules, while the native LGBT people had to hide their sexualities, as well. The inquisition was so severe that the natives abandoned their ancestor's traditions "for the privilege of heterosexual Hispano/Catholic masculinity" (Ildefonso, 2023, p. 216). Some have also presented evidence against their spouses to the Spaniards during the inquisition, such as reporting them if they had a relationship with the same sex during marriage. The Philippines was under Spanish rule for 333 years.

The trauma from the long-term influence of Spain, the inquisition and the forced imposition of Catholic teachings, emphasising heterosexuality, can also explain how the gay-straight man and *mars-pars* relationship occurred in the Philippines. The introduction of the 'machismo' notion by the Spaniards, the belief that men are superior to women, resulted in Filipino men's domination and women's (and LGBT people's) oppression in society. The *mars-pars* scenario explained by Marin (1999) is problematic because it also follows a heteronormative practice wherein the masculine one should be dominant, and the feminine one should conform to subordination. Due to colonialism, which resulted in stripping the supposedly diverse practices in the LGBT community that are distinct from the heterosexual dynamic, Filipino LGBT people in the past only knew how to behave in their relationships based on the prevailing heterosexual pattern in society.

Scholar J. Neil Garcia explains the rationale of heteronormativity in gay relationships through the concept of *kalooban*. In a patriarchal society like the Philippines, Garcia (2000; 2012) proposed his ontological view of 'inversion,' which is to view the hegemonic understanding of the SOGIE in the Philippines. In an inverted society, inversion is defined as gendered subjectivity as a form of heterosexually delineated depth or *loob* (inside) (Garcia, 2012). His epistemological stance is that gay men's sexual and/or romantic interests in an inverted society are based on their *kalooban* or interiority. It is premised on a concept, or a firmly held belief, that privileges depth, psychospiritual abundance, and coreness (Garcia, 2000). *Kalooban* suggests that the person's *loob* (inside/depth) "essentializes

desire into either male or female" despite one's outside appearance (ibid., p. 272). He compared it to Freud's Oedipalized model of 'arrested' gender and sexual identification: "All desire – no matter the genital body in which it is housed – is heterosexual" (ibid.). Tan (2008) states that in the inverted society, the Filipino's concept of gender is biologically based and related to roles in reproduction, i.e. the woman's ability to give birth and the man's capability to inseminate. Hence, the *kalooban* concept leads to the gay man's belief that he is a woman trapped in a man's body with a desire that is heterosexual in nature. One example that comes to mind showing the implication of this concept on how it manifests in the local media is the 2006 Filipino comedic song, *Hindi Ako Bakla* (I am not a gay man). The song tells the story of a person who, despite his effeminate characteristics and usage of gay jargon, kept on denying his gayness and then finally revealed in the last few seconds of the song that he is a woman (*di ako bakla, babae ako*: I am not gay, I am a woman). Garcia's (2000) concept reemphasizes the heteronormativity in the gay-straight man and *mars/pars* relationship because "*loob* essentializes desire into either male or female, it denies the possibility that desire can be both or neither - or something else - at any point... and so the most popular conception of homosexual love in our (Philippine) culture remains... fiercely heterosexual, at heart" (p. 272). This is one of the reasons why Filipinos have the notion that the straight man remains straight in the gay-straight man relationship mentioned earlier. The *kalooban* concept allows the straight man to still identify as heterosexual and be viewed as masculine, despite relationship or sexual acts with a gay man, because what is important is how the person feels inside. The heterosexual elements of inversion and *kalooban* are also why the burden of homosexuality is left to the gay man and not to the straight partner (Garcia, 2000).

For some, following their *kalooban* means finding happiness in their relationships. Former beauty queen Liza Diño is a biological woman who identifies as straight and is currently married to a transman. Western ideas might label this as gender non-conforming. However, Diño is certain that she is a straight woman. Critical feminist sociologist Oyuwemi urges people not to lose sight of the "situational" and "fluid" cultural contexts in which social categories are produced (2002, cited in Kim-Puri, 2005, p. 141). When Diño was asked about her situation, she said, "I think the most important thing is we have to look into ourselves first and ask who we really are and accept that. Because that's really important. At the end of the day, happiness comes from yourself" (Pascual, 2014, para. 15).

Diño's understanding of her identity is similar to one of the LGBT participants of this study: Pinky, who identifies herself as the femme in her lesbian relationships but does not identify as a lesbian. This concept is not odd in the Philippines as it is widely accepted (or tolerated) that the femme in a lesbian relationship remains heterosexual despite their sexual and romantic orientations. Similarly, in Ceperiano and colleague's (2016) study, one of the participants identifies herself as the 'girl' in her relationships with an interest in a butch lesbian woman as a partner. This brings us to the earlier notion mentioned in a gay-straight man relationship, wherein, if applied in lesbian relationships, the accepted heterosexual is the feminine one while the burden of homosexuality is on the butch lesbian. Although Diño and Pinky's identity might confuse gender scholars in the West as it does not align with the existing academic understanding, it is valuable to be reminded of the concept of *kalooban* when understanding the Filipino LGBT culture, which is more founded by the quest to find happiness based on what their inside tells them, which is primarily heterosexual in nature - a concept that is unique to a non-Western country such as the Philippines.

Conforming to hegemonic relationships as influenced by their families is also one of the problems that Filipino LGBT people mostly encounter in their lives. To some, family and religion play a significant role in identifying their SOGI or performing gender expression. The family also significantly impacts LGBT people in terms of how they are being treated, the fear of disappointing them, and other various reasons that affect their development as a person. Some are empowered through their family's support and acceptance, and some are traumatised due to traditional, religious, patriarchal, or homophobic actions inflicted upon them. The LGBT participants of this PhD study have shared some experience, information, and insight about how their families affected them growing up. These accounts are presented and critiqued in Chapter Seven. The following section explains the importance of the Filipino family's influence and the need for their acceptance to give the reader a background and further understanding of these aspects of Filipino LGBT culture.

III.III. Family and Religious Influence: LGBT Acceptance or Rejection?

Heteronormativity in the society is also strong within the Filipino family dynamics. The study *Kwentong Bebot* defines heteronormativity in the Philippines as "the

notion that there are only two genders, male or female, and that the only kind of attraction is heterosexual, which is between people of the opposite sex, i.e., between those who were assigned male and those who were assigned female sex at birth. Anyone who lives outside these parameters is considered non-heteronormative" (Atadero et al., 2014, p. 174). As such, the most familiar stories from Filipino LGBT people in local studies are about how they are pressured to conform to heterosexual standards, such as hiding their sexuality, policing their gender expressions, or marrying or having a relationship with the opposite sex due to family pressure (Tang and Poudel, 2018; Ceperiano et al., 2016; Nadal and Corpus, 2013; Atadero et al., 2014). Moreover, non-conformance would mean punishment, disownment, unacceptance, and physical or verbal abuse from their families.

In Ceperiano and colleagues' (2016) investigation on the intersectionality of LGBT lives in the context of the experiences of the urban poor, all participants have similar stories wherein their family and religious beliefs significantly affected their lives. They all have to minimise their masculinity or femininity or act heterosexually to pass as a straight man or woman to protect their family's reputation. Their environment in deprived urban communities tends to exhibit extreme discrimination and abuse, whether verbally, physically, or sexually, on LGBT people. The socio-demographic aspect contributes to a person's homonegativity, wherein the lesser the legal rights afforded to LGBT people within a particular country, the higher the intolerance of people towards LGBT people (Reyes et al., 2019). According to the participants, the mistreatment also extends to their family for having a gay kid (Ceperiano et al., 2016). Hence, concealing their sexuality prevents these occurrences from happening. Another similar narrative that the participants shared is compensating for their sexuality by supporting them financially. They all explained that their family initially felt ashamed for having gay children. However, once they made themselves 'financially useful' in their family, acceptance or tolerance of their sexualities was observed. The idea of compensating for their sexuality is also shared by the LGBT participants of this PhD study, which was further unpacked as to why this is happening in Chapter Eight.

In their exploratory study of LGBT Filipino Americans, Nadal and Corpus (2013) conclude that the primary reason behind homophobia within the family relates to the predominance of Catholic ideology. The main influence of such is the extreme

Catholic belief of their parents. Due to this, a few of their parents believe that being gay is "aberrant or morally reprehensible," that it is "wrong to be gay," and that there should be "religious interventions... to dispel feelings of homosexuality" (p. 170). One participant said that they grew up in a Catholic home wherein they went to church twice a week and prayed in their homes four times a day. Hence, when they started discovering their sexuality, they had difficulty accepting it. One participant felt they could not be practising Catholic and being gay simultaneously. Another participant also said that when she came out to her parents, her mother instructed her to read the Book of Leviticus, which discusses guilt and shame. In the discussion of a famous gay-themed show in the Philippines in the next chapter, 'My Husband's Lover,' the concept of 'pray the gay away' is detailed to explain and analyse the internal conflict that LGBT people experience because of what the Catholic teaching tells the people about how homosexuality is considered immoral. The TV show was excellent in portraying this crucial part of the LGBT lived experiences in the country. Hence, it was viewed as a helpful instrument in helping the masses understand what LGBT people go through and debunk some myths and stereotypes regarding the community. The full discussion can be found in the next chapter. Moreover, the participants in Nadal and Corpus' (2013) study revealed that turning away from Catholicism liberated them by no longer feeling shame or guilt in living as their authentic selves.

Family is highly esteemed in the Philippines, and the cultural traditions emphasise close familial relationships. Unlike Western families who advocate for their children's early independence, Filipino children's full autonomy is not expected until much later in life (Tablan, 2021), and parental support continues up to their 30s. Family orientation is considered a virtue in the country because it is considered that a person's upbringing starts at home (ibid.). Thus, an individual's behaviour, whether good or bad, is considered the reflection of their family, parents, or relatives. Hence, the LGBT participants in Ceperiano and colleagues' (2016) study mentioned earlier have reported that protecting their family's reputation is their motivation for minimising or hiding their sexualities from the public.

Moreover, acceptance from their parents is an instrumental factor that Filipino LGBT people desire to enhance and advance self-development or self-empowerment. According to Reyes and colleagues (2020), acceptance is the most

positive factor that LGBTQ youths consider from their families, while family rejection is their greatest fear. The latter is especially valid in the participants in Ceperiano and colleagues' (2016) study, wherein one reported that his father threatened him to seize educational support if he did not conform to heterosexuality. As a result, the participant forced himself to have relationships with women to satisfy his father and continue his education. In a recent study to determine the correlation of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory) with Filipino transgender people's psychological well-being, it was discovered that parental acceptance strongly affects their psychological well-being positively (Reyes et al., 2020). In contrast, parental rejection significantly affects their psychological well-being negatively. PARTheory states that the quality of parenting affects a person's psychological well-being (ibid.). It is a parental acceptance-rejection continuum wherein:

"the acceptance end of the continuum is concerned with the quality of the affectional bond between parent and child, and the physical and verbal behaviours that express the warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, and love of the parents" while "the rejection end of the continuum is characterized by the withdrawal or absence of these positive feelings, along with the presence of a variety of physically and psychologically hurtful parental behaviors and emotions" (ibid., p. 137).

The same study also discovered that maternal rejection is more damaging to transgender respondents than paternal rejection. According to the study, mothers are naturally accepting of their LGBT children, and they act as a protector if the father is unaccepting of them. However, if the mother exhibits rejection, they feel an overall rejection of the family. The same study concluded that mothers have more influence on their transgender participants regarding all aspects of their psychological well-being (ibid.). This PhD study also discusses how Filipino women are deemed more accepting of LGBT people and same-sex relationships than Filipino men via empirical studies and statements from the survey respondents and LGBT participants. The discussions can be found in Chapters Six to Eight.

However, a critical rationale that the LGBT participants in Nadal and Corpus' (2013) study pointed out that explains why their family seems to have a significant impact

on their lives, especially on being persuaded to conform to heteronormativity, is because of *utang na loob* or filial piety. Tablan (2021) explains *utang na loob* as having a debt to someone because of the good things done to them. However, the deed is not measured by money. It is a “debt from within” and “what is owed is not money but goodwill” (p. 28). *Utang na loob* is supposed to be a positive virtue. However, it can be abused in many ways, especially if the person giving the good deed expects something in return. The Filipino culture heavily expects children to uphold this debt later on, such as taking care of their parents, to repay them for their upbringing. Hence, the other side of keeping the close-knit tie within the family in the Filipino culture, which can be deemed toxic, can be described as for economic objectives. For this reason, a few LGBT children, despite objections to their sexualities, are not disowned by their families because they are needed financially (Atadero et al., 2014). The context of filial piety, based on LGBT people, is “pleasing others (particularly one's parents) and putting others' needs before one's own” (Nadal and Corpus, 2013, p. 170-171). Parents' disapproval of non-heteronormative expressions of their children can also be used to control them to conform to the hegemonic standards (David et al., 2017). Hence, some parents resort to indirectly silencing their children, denying or non-acknowledgement of their sexualities (Nadal and Corpus, 2013). It was also reported by some LGBT participants in Nadal and Corpus' study that they mirror their parent's behaviour of refusing to acknowledge their sexualities in their presence (ibid.). This could potentially be one of the reasons why coming-out culture is not considered normal in the Philippines, with which this PhD study's LGBT participants correlate. Their insights into and perspectives on this culture are examined in Chapter Seven.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution states that family is the nation's foundation, and its priority is protecting its sanctity. It also states that the citizens have the right to mould their families based on their religious beliefs. Even though the rules of the constitution are clear regarding the separation of church and state, it is apparent that the family code of the Philippines is rooted in Catholic fundamentalism (Chiarella, 2012). Hence, the heteronormative family is the only legally recognised form of family in the country. The Catholic Church's influence in drafting the 1987 Constitution is evident via religious-based rules such as banning same-sex marriage, gender identity recognition, abortion, and divorce (Manalastas and Torre, 2016). The church's influence extends to different institutions that affect Filipino people's

lives. As for the LGBT community, this is felt in schools and the government. A few LGBT participants in Tang and Poudel's (2018) study reported that some Catholic schools did not allow them to enrol in their schools because they were not accepting LGBT students. Also, some schools do not allow students to form an LGBT organisation, especially if it is Catholic (ibid.).

Meanwhile, the anti-discrimination bill still faces resistance from the lawmakers even after its filing in 2000 and countless deliberations from the Congress and the Senate. While a few lawmakers base their decisions on their religious beliefs, Atadero and colleagues (2014) claim that the Catholic Church had convinced Congress to derail the bill's passage for years. In 2010, Ang Ladlad, an LGBT political party, was first disqualified by the Commission on Election (COMELEC) to run for a seat in Congress because of moral grounds. The commissioner at the time said that LGBT people are considered immoral and that the COMELEC argues that "if accredited, the party would become a threat to youth and would contravene the religious teachings of the Catholic Church" (ibid., p. 171). The common suggestion by the LGBT participants in Tang and Poudel's (2018) study to possibly address or lessen the religious-based discrimination against them is full implementation of separation of church and state on government rulings, medical services or interventions, and implementation of educational curriculum to help the people gain sophisticated knowledge about the community. Moreover, the Psychological Association of the Philippines continuously strengthens the psychological and mental support available to LGBT people because they know that psychology, with religion and the law, has been used to propagate LGBT stigma in the country (Manalastas and Torre, 2016). Hence, advocating for respectable law is one of the association's goals in helping alleviate the challenging lives of the Filipino LGBT people (ibid.).

While family rejection or non-acceptance is a common theme seen in media or heard from stories and experiences of Filipino LGBT people, some are fortunate enough to grow up in an accepting family and environment despite following Catholic teachings. A 2016 study discovered that Filipino gay male participants already out to at least one parent from different socio-economic statuses feel generally accepted by their mothers and fathers, leading to a low suicidal ideation rate (Tan et al., 2019). However, some still reported a slight internalised homophobia, despite the

acceptance, because of the environment's discriminatory attitudes (ibid.). Also, 73% of Filipinos agree that homosexuality should be accepted in the country (Poushter and Kent, 2020). However, recent studies reveal that the Philippines is still not fully accepting and that the type of acceptance the society shows to LGBT people is tolerance (Reyes et al., 2023; Reyes et al., 2019; SWS, 2018). Responses garnered during the empirical phase of this project prompted discussions around the unspoken dominating attitudes of the Philippine society towards LGBT people: tolerance and not acceptance. In addition, the LGBT participants of this study have shared some information regarding this and their experiences growing up in an accepting and non-accepting family and environment. The discussions are found in Chapters Six and Seven.

VI. This study's rationale: The Filipino LGBT people's stereotypical/negative and positive media representation

Several negative and stereotypical LGBT representations in the Philippines accumulated upon investigation of related literature of Filipino gender and film scholars from as early as the 1970s. These are excessive sexual desires for male flesh (Diaz, 2012), comic relief (Tolentino, 2000), screaming-fag (David, 2012), and *parloristang bakla* or male gays who are working in beauty parlours (Payuyo, 2012). Further discussion of the said literature is seen in the next chapter. This study posits that the general public might have been exposed to these types of portrayals. To determine the effect of long-term exposure to these media portrayals on the general public, the survey questions of this PhD study listed several stereotypes, such as comedic/hysteries, explicitly sexual, closeted, no depth, poor/belonging to low social class, abused/abandoned, and asked the respondents to report if they have observed these type of media representation on the LGBT people in their surroundings. Based on the explanation of the Filipino LGBT culture and the influence of family and religion in this section, the list of negative and stereotyped representation presented to the survey respondents are warranted.

The basis of the 'explicitly sexual' or hungry for male flesh stereotype is due to the heteronormative relationship dynamic within the LGBT community, such as the gay-straight man and *mars/pars* relationship. This was driven by the belief that being in a relationship with a fellow *bakla* is tantamount to lesbianism. The belief, however, started changing upon the introduction of Western concepts, brought by

the middle-class gay men who went abroad, that seeking a fellow gay man as a romantic or sexual partner is acceptable (Tan, 2001). As for 'closeted', the intense influence of Catholic teachings, alongside parents' disapproval, has made some of the LGBT members hide their sexuality or conform to the hegemony to satisfy their parents and avoid discrimination from society. The parent's and family's disapproval of their sexualities, as well as their economic and financial purpose on their families and partners attributed to the 'abused/abandoned' representation. Some families would attempt to correct their sexuality early on through corporal punishments and disownment (Umbac, 2005; Ceperiano et al., 2016; Atadero et al., 2014). For example, a 61-year-old transwoman shared that her brothers kept on harming her physically in a violent way because of her sexuality (Atadero et al., 2014). They were forcing her to act in a masculine way, but she could not do it. Thus, she had no choice but to drop out of school and flee her home to survive. Moreover, the 'comedic/hysterics' and 'parlour gay' or 'belonging to low social class' representations also correspond to their economic disadvantages that result in a lack of education or resorting to lowly jobs such as prostitution to survive. All of the stated representations are further explained in the next chapter while presenting how past movies and television deliver these presentations to Filipino audiences.

In the few instances that a member of the LGBT community is given a lead role in a television show or movie, they are always played by straight actors. For example, heterosexual actors Dennis Trillo and Ken Chan played transwomen in *Aishite Imasu* 1941 and *Destiny Rose*, respectively. Similarly, heterosexual actor Dolphy played as a male gay in several movies such as *Ang Tatay kong Nanay* and *Markova: Comfort Gay*. Such representations were initially celebrated by the Filipino LGBT community as they provide representation in mainstream media. However, as controversies appeared regarding the questionable actions of heterosexual actors who played LGBT members, some members of the community felt that these actors were using their stories and identities for fame. The LGBT participants of this study had an in-depth discussion about the said topic which paved the way for this thesis to produce one of the significant contributions to knowledge, especially about how LGBT people want to be represented in the Philippine media. These are thoroughly discussed in Chapters Seven to Nine. Without giving away much information early on regarding the results from the data gathered by this study, the desire to be accurately characterised by LGBT actors on screen as one of the suggestions, instead

of heterosexual actors, for an improved LGBT media representation in the country is briefly acknowledged. While this suggestion seems like a great idea, this opens the question of how plausible and feasible this idea can be when executed. It also opens another question of whether such representation will lead to a change in mentality or lesser public prejudice against LGBT members.

Burden of representation is defined as the minority groups' expectation to be represented by an individual and "take on the task of redressing systematic patterns of misrepresentation" (Feng, 2020, p. 79). This occurs when "any media text (or work of fiction) that is perceived to speak for a marginalized and "underrepresented" group" transpires that increases the desire for the group for further representation "because media depictions centering on minority groups are rare" (ibid.). The idea given by this PhD study's LGBT participants regarding how an all-LGBT workforce should be the only valid way to produce an accurate and authentic LGBT media content is one characteristic of burden of representation in the Philippines.

The burden of representation is deemed negative by some scholars. For example, Shaw (2015) rejects the idea of putting the burden of representation, in any industries, to marginalised communities. She investigates the politics of representation of race, gender, and sexuality in video games. Shaw states that creating representation on video games puts the burden on the players which makes diversity "reduced to aesthetic pluralism" (ibid., p. 36). This is done through optional representation wherein the design of games call for the players to create their characters' identities which will affect the way they experience the game. One example Shaw gives is that opting for a female character means having to deal with sexist remarks against the player throughout the game. However, Shaw's investigation centered on fictional world. Hence, what players consume while playing the game can be deemed not representative of the reality of the world. One of the examples she gives is the game *Fallout 3* wherein a player can choose races for their characters. But the game itself does not deal with racial problems but with mutants in a postapocalyptic world. Based on Shaw's findings, if the latter scenario is the case, representation of marginalised groups in games would not bring impact to the players that can catalyse shift in perspectives toward the minorities in the real world. Hence, the burden in this scenario is warranted. As such, Shaw argues it is

more helpful in taking account audience studies when burden of representation is being demanded onto marginalised producers or audiences to be more nuanced in the content production.

However, for Filipinos, the burden might appeal to the LGBT community. According to Feng (2020), burden of representation is caused by lack of representation. Hence once represented, they want to be heard and understood. Filipino models in America, who are representing not only their race but also the Filipino LGBTQ+ community, perceive their feature in Vogue magazine as a monumental move (Perez, 2023). They also expressed pride and happiness in being able to represent the community and the country for the world to see, and pushed for further movements in the name of representation (ibid.). The Filipino LGBT Europe group also perseveres in keeping the visibility of the Filipino LGBTQ+ community abroad to help keep the discussion on the anti-discrimination bill alive, increase cultural representation internationally, and showcase the colourful local LGBTQ+ lifestyle (“Amsterdam,” 2019). Bowser and Spence (2000) argue that “in a highly racialised and race-conscious society, the desire for assimilation and acceptance often carried with it a special burden on representation” (p. 5). This can be applied in a Philippine context. However, it is more affected by socio-economic factors. The LGBT community in the Philippines are not equipped enough to provide authentic media representation due to limited resources such as gatekeeping the mainstream media and status in social class. The locals tend to put the burden to those who have the means, economic-wise and those with international or celebrity status, because they are aware that they could not achieve this. However, the Filipino LGBT community are more than happy to represent their country, and do not deem this as a burden. Hence, based on Bowser and Spence’s (2000) argument, the burden of representation in the Filipino LGBT community, which is highly conscious of status and reputation, “assimilation and acceptance” are not accompanied with burden of representation (ibid.). But such a representation validates their place in society resulting for their desire to be represented in only such a way. Hence, the burden in this case, which manifests more as a problem, is how to redefine the narrative, from affluence to a reality based one to ensure inclusive representation for all members of the community. The LGBT participant’s responses of this PhD study concerning their representation in Philippine media resulted to coining a term called *idealised Filipino gay people*. The burden of representation on beauty queen Kevin Balot, who

is the model in the Pantene commercial focused on this study, is also discussed in Chapters Seven to Nine.

An interesting analysis made by Shaw (ibid.) regarding the game Tomb Raider can be applied in making sense of the current LGBT representation in the Philippines, particularly on the five advertisements that are the focus of this study. Shaw accounts the audience's perspective in analysing how the Tomb Raider game's female-lead character Lara Croft was developed and how it succeeded in gaining the attention of the male gamer niche. The risk of Tomb Raider to fail is high because male players might not be able to relate to the female characters. However, game developers made Lara's character normative so that the male players will be able to identify with her, particularly her "class, race, sexuality, and gender presentation" (ibid., p. 59). Lara, despite her massive inheritance, was created as a humble and grounded character to be more relatable to the players. Moreover, the game's narrative never focused on her sexuality. She was not hypersexualised. She was developed as a strong heroine with a focus on overcoming challenges in the game. However, she was not made too strong or a feminist because of the marketing logic's presumption that male players might not be able to relate to the said notions. At the time when the gaming community was riddled with male character protagonists, the developers of Tomb Raider had to architect their female protagonist in normativity to be distinctive, and yet sell, in the market.

Watching the five advertisements that this PhD study is focusing on (Uber, Smart, Bench, Pantene, Close Up), one might argue that similar normative tactics have been applied. LGBT models, particularly in Uber, Smart, and Close Up can be deemed represented in a homonormative way. Homonormativity is a "belief that sexual minorities can and should conform to heteronormative institutions and mores to achieve greater acceptance into dominant society" (Robinson, 2016, p. 1). However, based on the historical and cultural factors in the country, including prevailing patriarchal and religious notions, the representations seen in the ads can be deemed to have no political agenda whatsoever. In the ads, the characters are depicted as nothing similar to drag, not in a cross-dress, and not hungry for male flesh. Those that can be deemed as acting in a homonormative way, such as in Uber and Smart wherein they are dressed in a masculine manner, represent the 'closeted' LGBT culture wherein due to the stigma that the members of the community get from

society, they must behave ‘in a certain way’ to be deemed accepted. Those who are represented in a healthy relationship, such as in Smart and Close Up, are deemed ‘healthy’ because of society’s perception that *mars/pars* and gay-straight man are the only dynamic in an LGBT relationship. Those who are represented as accepted and supported by their families, such as in Bench and Pantene, negate the over-representation of abused and abandoned LGBT members by their families because of their sexualities. Hence, what homonormative is in the Western culture is actually a “humanised” representation here in the Philippines.

Hence, the positive LGBT representations, as deemed by this study, as seen in the five advertisements are called positive because these are considered the opposite of the negative and stereotypical depictions identified by the study. These are ‘highly educated,’ ‘career-driven/belonging to middle to high social class,’ ‘in a healthy relationship,’ proud of their sexuality/empowered,’ ‘good company (friendship),’ and ‘responsible son/daughter.’ The Philippine Association of National Advertisers also considers this representation from the advertisements as a positive one because these humanises the LGBT members and “presenting non-traditional, gender identity-centric, queer themes (among others) as a normal part of life” (Marchadesch, 2018, para. 4). As such, this list is also presented to the survey respondents of this study. However, accounting for the historical and socio-economic factors that affect Filipino LGBT people’s representation in many aspects of the country, specifically in mass media, begs the question of which specific portrayal can be considered a positive one as deemed by the community.

It is also plausible that an element of homonormativity exists, especially on the part of the advertisers so as not to upset the heterosexual or general consumers and the church, and to avoid economic backlash (Marchadesch, 2018). In contemporary Philippine society, wherein the LGBT community is given more traditional and social media exposure, international fame, and political seat, accompanied by the increasing tension that the deliberation of the national anti-discrimination bill is causing, especially to the Catholic Church, it is possible to observe Duggan’s ‘new homonormativity’ on future LGBT media content. Duggan (2002) defines ‘new homonormativity’ as “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay

culture anchored in domesticity and consumption” (p. 179). Duggan explains that members of gay movements apply this strategy to capture the attention of politicians in moving forward with gay-related agendas who tend to disregard such pleas if presented in a non-heteronormative manner.

So far, opportunities that defy the norm, such as Queer Sassa Gurl’s modelling performance as a local alcohol brand’s calendar model for the entire 2022, which usually features physically attractive heterosexual women in their swimsuits, are still available. In the Bench and Close Up commercials featured in this study, the protagonists are portrayed as flamboyant exhibiting a romantic desire for a heterosexual man. Thus, it is safe to say that the LGBT media representation in the Philippines is not yet fully homonormative. However, since the national anti-discrimination bill is not yet a law, the hegemony still has some control over preserving heteronormativity in the Philippines. However once the bill is passed into law, it is perceived to be a catalyst of an extreme cultural shift regarding sex and gender positions in society. Only then, we may observe significant homonormative or 'new homonormative' representations of Filipino LGBT people in media. For now, what they truly crave is representation.

V. Conclusion

The Western representation of LGBT people can arguably be viewed as trying to fit them into heterosexual standards. One overwhelming reason for this is for marketing purposes: to please the advertisers, gain more ads, and please the dominant market to gain more sales. Unfortunately, this strategy is effective as it has successfully inculcated the belief that LGBT consumers, particularly gay men, should be selective in their purchases. However, being selective means supporting only branded or top-tier materials, which has given them a feeling that society has fully accepted them. The situation will not be the same for the LGBT members in the lower strata.

However, the one crucial view that can be gathered in this chapter is how different the media treatment of LGBT people in the US and the Philippines, with the first one being more driven by a capitalistic outlook, whereas the latter is more concerned with societal and cultural factors such as religion and family pressures. The complexity of sex and gender perceptions in the country makes it unique from what

is considered the norm in the West. Local scholars try to explain it via the concept of *kalooban*. But what these explanations also describe is that the country is overwhelmingly heteronormative in many forms, including the LGBT lifestyle. Moreover, due to the scarcity of representation in all fields, 'homonormativity' takes on a different meaning here wherein, as this study perceives, is a mere *humanised* representation of the overtly stereotyped community in media.

This chapter has also introduced important concepts, such as symbolic annihilation, system justification theory, and burden of representation. These theories are essential in understanding the overall answer of this doctoral study's survey respondents and LGBT participants in determining their reactions to the positive LGBT-themed advertisements in the Philippines. The discussions and analysis of these concepts are applied in Chapters Seven and Eight.

4 Chapter

The Philippines: Media, Advertising, and LGBT Representation

I. Introduction

In this chapter, the ideas presented in Chapters Two and Three are combined to explain how the concepts of Cultivation Theory, Relevance Theory, and LGBT media representation in other countries relate to the situation in the Philippines. This chapter discusses the elements that will contribute to understanding Filipino media consumption throughout time. While some argue that Cultivation Theory may be outdated in this digital era because it mainly focuses on television exposure, nevertheless, the Philippine media trend, showing strong traditional media influence, is expected to continue progressing in the following years. The illustration of the Philippine media and advertising landscape explains why the media can significantly impact people's formation of beliefs. The discussion in this chapter entails the media landscape and habits in the Philippines only up to the years before the researcher's data collection commences, which is in 2021. This is to establish arguments why traditional media, which is the main platform Cultivation Theory is concerned, is significant to the potential respondents of the study. This also establishes and explains the type of pre-formed notions the potential respondents had before this study sought their opinions through surveys. Additionally, this chapter discusses two huge recent events in the country that have significantly affected the Philippine media and advertising landscape: the disenfranchisement of one of the leading broadcasting players in the country and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, this chapter summarises the LGBT representations in mass media. It presents the LGBT-themed advertisement that inspired this study and an earlier failed attempt to portray them in a positive manner. Moreover, this chapter

has laid out arguments from the advertising industry on whether the trend of LGBT-themed ads is temporary or here to stay.

II. The Philippine Mass Media and Advertising Industry

The mass media and the advertising industry in the Philippines have an interdependent relationship. Broadcasting companies and other media forms heavily rely on advertisements for revenues, while advertising companies bank on the audiences, listeners, or readers these platforms can bring to provide exposure to the products they are advertising. Caparas (1978) calls this relationship "Siamese Twins," wherein one would not survive without the other (p. 15).

The National Telecommunications Commission (2018) listed 579 television stations nationwide. The National Capital Region (NCR), wherein the capital and the urban cities are located, has 27 TV stations. However, the top broadcasting companies comprise just two: ABS-CBN Channel 2 and GMA Network Channel 7. Both companies use multimedia platforms to ensure a nationwide and international presence to cater to Filipinos living abroad. This means they also have their own radio stations, magazines, online news site, and partnerships with telecommunication companies (Dacanay and Mertalla, 2015).

Television broadcasting companies do not earn directly from their audiences. Most huge TV companies in the country facilitate a free-to-air television business model, providing TV programs where advertisers can buy airtime for commercials (Dacanay and Mertalla, 2015a). Consequently, television companies must ensure their programs generate huge ratings. The more audience shares they gain, the more advertisers they attract. As of December 2019, Kantar Media reported a nationwide TV audience share of 42% for ABS-CBN and 30% for GMA (Balinbin, 2021). While ABS-CBN dominated the nationwide ratings, the 2019 Nielsen TV Audience Measurement report stated that GMA won the urban area rating game, specifically in Urban Luzon and Mega Manila (GMA Network Inc., 2020).

ABS-CBN sells 18 minutes of commercials per hour of a TV show to the advertisers or the advertising agencies that sell it directly to advertisers gaining a 15% standard commission rate (2020, p. 35). GMA allocates different rates depending on the time slot. The time slot is crucial in this business because it determines the airtime price.

The advertising costs that these companies offered are as follows: for ABS-CBN, a 30-second advertisement costs P900,000 (\$16,241)² within non-primetime shows and P1.4 million (\$25,264) within primetime shows, while a 30-second advertisement for GMA Network costs P299,000 (\$5396) within non-primetime shows and P500,000 (\$9023) within primetime shows (Nelz, 2018). The primetime slot is considered the time when audience rating peaks. From 6:30 pm to 12 midnight, it includes shows such as news, *teleserye* drama or soap opera, game shows, comedy, and reality shows (Dacanay and Mertalla, 2015; Dacanay and Mertalla, 2015a). The primetime slot contained the networks' flagship programs and shows that are usually high-rating. Hence, it is unsurprising that more commercials can be observed while watching during primetime. Advertisers prefer to buy more airtime during primetime because of the higher audience numbers it can gather. According to the networks' annual reports, the revenue they gained from advertisements in 2019 was P15.173 billion (\$274 million) for GMA Network and P22.942 billion (\$414 million) for ABS-CBN.

Since rating games fuel the broadcasting field, these two companies tend to have a 'network war' wherein they try to produce more quality content than the other to generate more audiences and thereby secure high advertising revenue. Based on the data mentioned, ABS-CBN has the upper hand in this competition. The advertisers are willing to pay a higher amount of airtime because they know that it will reach more audiences that are potential consumers of their products (Ordinario, 2011). ABS-CBN had broader coverage than GMA Network in the regional areas, and they had more advanced streaming strategies, such as the ABS-CBN TV Plus digital black box that offers both free and premium channels at a more affordable price than cable. This is why GMA values the urban ratings because most urban audiences in the country are in Urban Luzon and Mega Manila, which have a higher purchasing population than other regions (Santander, 2021). Gaining their attention would still keep their position intact in the ratings and advertising game. However, in 2020, the game changed drastically because of the COVID-19 pandemic and ABS-CBN's disenfranchisement, which affected the viewership and advertising activity. This will be explained further in the following subchapter.

² All conversion rates are based on rates on 04 May 2023: 1 PHP = 0.018048 USD via Forbes Advisor (<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/money-transfer/currency-converter/php-usd/>)

Like television, the radio operates as a free-to-air model in the Philippines. The country has 1,182 FM radio stations and 419 AM radio stations (NTC, 2018). Radio is the second most used media because it reaches the country's remotest areas which are yet to have telecommunications technological advances such as stable TV signal and internet coverage. The radio has reached 85% of the country's households, and 41.4% of the population tune in at least once weekly (Estella and Löffelholz, 2019). Ninety per cent of the radio stations are privately owned (ibid.). The radio business is the second highest contributor to airtime sales in GMA Network for 2019 (GMA, 2020). In 2018, the radio contributed 7.6% or \$67.4 million worth of advertisements in the country's total advertising market (Sanchez, 2020).

Unlike television and radio, the print industry gains revenue from both advertisers and consumers by selling its products. There are two kinds of newspapers in the country: broadsheets and tabloids. Around 40 national broadsheets and tabloids, 60 regional newspapers, and 14 newspapers are printed in different languages (Estella and Löffelholz, 2019). The tabloids tend to sell more because they contain more novelty materials than broadsheets, including sensationalised stories, celebrity gossip, and sexual content for adult tabloids (ibid.). A 2013 survey conducted by Philippine Statistics Authority stated that 65.6% of Filipinos are exposed to newspapers and 60.7% to magazines. Despite these huge numbers, many media players claim that this industry is almost dying because of a decline in readership with the emergence of digital media. According to Media Ownership Monitor Philippines (20147), only 21.5% of readership combined from the country's four major print companies is recorded. A cursory review of the Philippine Daily Inquirer's website, one of the country's leading broadsheets, shows that their display ad rates range from P48,600 to P183,600 (\$877 to \$3313) depending on the size and publishing day. Enrich, a health and lifestyle monthly magazine, ad costs range from P16,500 to P85,000 (\$298 to \$ 1534). The community-level paper heavily relies on local advertising and political advertisements during election season (Opiniano et al., 2015).

Out-of-home (OOH) advertising, including billboards and moving vehicles, is another popular platform. It contributes a 2% share of ad spending in the country, having annual revenue of P21 billion (\$379 million) (Ibanez, 2019). According to the DOOH advertising agency website, billboards have a minimum of 400,000 unique

daily viewers in high-traffic locations in Metro Manila. EDSA is where most billboards are installed because, aside from being the main road in Metro Manila, it has the country's busiest traffic (Deville, 2013; De Los Reyes and Santos, 2009). In 2004 alone, there were 8000 billboards recorded in Metro Manila (De Los Reyes and Santos, 2009). Whether traditional or digital, the advertisers utilise billboards because of the following reasons: the target consumers can easily access them, it reaches a broader audience, there is a growing number of daily commuters, people are spending more time outdoors, and it is cheaper compared to TV, radio and print ads (Dy, 2005). A 5m x 4m billboard costs P15,000 (\$271) with a rental cost from P195,000 (\$3519) to P490,000 (\$8843) (Deville, 2013; Gomez, 2013). Billboards were proven effective in getting the public's attention. When launching a product, the Ad Standards Council suggests that outdoor advertising should be the advertisers' second step after television because it can reach people everywhere (Rivas, 2018). For example, people can still see the brands' promotional ads when stuck in traffic or commuting via train or bus. The "Pray for Wuhan" digital display in Edsa caused clamour from the Filipinos after being installed amidst the Taal Volcano eruption in January 2020 that affected thousands of families and caused millions of damages in Batangas City and nearby areas. Some speculated that the government sponsored the billboard, while some expressed that sympathy and support should be focused on the victims of the calamity (Garcia, 2020). It happened during the very early stages of COVID-19 in 2020. The attention that this event caused proved to the advertisers that OOH ads, specifically digitals, are effective (ibid.).

The advertising industry in the Philippines has faced different kinds of adversity throughout the years, including globalisation, changes in technology, global recessions, corruption, high advertising costs, the low commission, which led to the closure of some of the leading advertising agencies in the country (Calero-Racho, 2004; Bautista, 2020; Pe, 2012). Because of this, agencies had to cut their costs or find other ways to remain afloat. One of the valuable strategies that they came up with, which changed the advertising game, is introducing the media specialist agency (Calero-Racho, 2004). In the traditional approach, advertisers would avail one advertising agency's service to handle their brand needs, media buy, and industry supplier. This changed when the advertising agencies decided to stick to the creative aspect of advertising. The advertisers would then seek a media specialist

agency to cater to their media exposure needs. In this way, not only are the advertising costs lowered, the advertising agencies could focus solely on building the brand, as well. This also paved the way for healthy competition among the agencies because clients are not tied to one agency in this scheme (ibid.). Currently, the leading advertising agencies are McCann Worldgroup, Ogilvy and Mather Philippines, TBWA Santiago-Mangada-Puno, BDDO Guerrero, and Ace Saatchi & Saatchi (Nordea, 2021). The Ad Standards Council regulates all advertisements.

Gorospe (1964) argues that "the importance of advertising in the Philippines today is shown by the amount of money spent on it" (p. 605). In 2011, the Philippines spent over \$1.197 billion on advertisements making it the second-highest in South East Asia after Indonesia (Ordinario, 2011). The ad spending from 2015 to 2017 increased from \$1.68 billion to \$1.85 billion (Shum and Liu, 2017). The 4% rise in 2016 was due to economic growth and political campaigns (ibid.). The 2016 national election has contributed over P1.5 billion (\$27.07 million) worth of political advertisement from the top four presidential candidates alone (CMFR, 2016). In 2018, the Philippines was included in the top 10 global contributors to ad spending growth, with an expected contribution of \$2.4 billion from 2017 to 2020 (Zenith, 2018). Growth was observed in the total media ad spending for digital advertising from 13.1% in 2015 to 24.2% in 2020 (Statista, 2017). In 2019, its total digital advertising spending was \$603 million, forecasted to grow to \$638 million by the end of 2020 (NT Technology, 2020). Despite the technological advances and promising numbers, the country was slow to utilise digital advertising. Until 2017, the traditional form of media was forecasted to dominate the advertising platforms, while a larger digital media exposure to the population was yet to transpire (Shum and Liu, 2017).

II.I. Traditional vs. Digital

For many years, the advertising field in the Philippines has continued to acknowledge that television remains the leading player, predicting that the ad expense allocation on digital media may significantly increase in the next few years. This is why traditional media is trying its best to formulate strategies that would keep them relevant in the internet age. ABS-CBN had a dedicated TV channel that simultaneously aired its radio programs on television. GMA also streams a radio show in the morning on television. Most traditional media have already invested in

their online presence. Broadcasting companies repost the live news or shows aired on TV on their websites and social media pages (Estella and Löffelholz, 2019). Most media players maximise their social media pages to disseminate information and content or interact with followers. Most newspapers have updated their websites with the news and stories they feature in their daily paper. Some create a digital format of their daily paper and publish it in an e-reader format to give a traditional-newspaper-feels to the digital readers. The top three broadsheets' websites are some of the country's most visited websites (Media Ownership Monitor Philippines, 2017). Some printing companies have invested in new high-tech printing machines that cater to different printing needs in this digital era, including fast, instant, and laser printing for large-format publications (Dagooc, 2019).

In 2013, a survey proved that television is the most popular form of mass media among Filipinos (PSA, 2013). According to PSA, 81% of Filipinos aged 10 to 64 watch television, and 65% watch TV daily. With the fast-changing technological advances in media being introduced and patronised in the country, one would think that people's traditional TV habits could drastically change to digital media consumption in the next few years. After all, the Philippines has been dubbed the world's social media capital a few times (Llamas, 2020). Seventy-six million, or 71% of the population, are active social media users (Estares, 2019). The average online spending time is 9 hours and 45 minutes daily, while 3 hours and 53 minutes of it are on social media (ibid.). Filipinos also have multiple screening viewing habits (Ordinario, 2014). Due to the surge in online use, advertisers are starting to allocate larger amounts of budgets on online advertising for as much as 25% compared to 5%-10% in the past years (Vibar, 2017). However, this percentage is still low compared to the budget for traditional TV advertising.

A 2019 study showed that traditional TV is still strong and only getting stronger as the years pass. Ninety-three per cent of Filipinos still choose traditional TV, with average viewing hours of 3.4 to 3.7 per day (Camus, 2019). The study also predicted a growth in the traditional TV market with the renewed popularity of satellite TV, similar to ABS-CBN's digital black box. A higher penetration rate of 78% or 20.7 million households by 2024 is predicted. The advertisers are aware of this as they continue to allocate a huge chunk of video advertising money worth US\$2 billion to traditional TV (ibid.). The video advertising business will allocate 80% of ad

spending on traditional TV from 2019 to 2023, while the rest will be to digital video (ibid.).

It can be argued that persistent telecommunication problems such as slow internet speed, high internet fees, and lack of internet coverage in other parts of the country can affect the Philippines' digital media game. However, the overwhelming number of internet users and high exposure time on digital media suggest that such issues may no longer be the main reason digital advertising has not surpassed television yet. So why is traditional TV still dominating the advertising game in this digital era? Filipino consumer trusts ads that they see on television. According to a study by Nielsen, Filipinos' purchasing decisions can be affected by television ads as they are more likely to act on what they see on TV, followed by newspaper ads and then magazine ads (PANA, 2015). TV ads in the country have the highest self-reported action, compared to other traditional media, at 85% and have a 75% trust rate. Also, Filipino consumers rely on other traditional media to help in purchasing decisions, such as the editorial content in newspapers and magazines. They also look at online advice but trust traditional media more. However, the most significant influencer that Filipinos consider is word of mouth. More than 9 in 10 Filipinos trust the recommendations of their peers. The study also mentioned that Filipinos completely or somewhat trust ads on social media. However, they still interact with it because it is easier to access or purchase, and the information is readily available in just a few clicks. A recent study shows that while Filipinos with internet access trust social media more than traditional media, the general public still trusts traditional media more than social media (Ballaran, 2017). The trust ratings of television (89%), radio (85%), and newspaper (75%) still surpass the social media (55%) and online news sites' (54%) trust ratings (ibid.).

In 2020, media consumption, the advertising industry, and consumer behaviour were significantly affected by two important events in the country: the COVID-19 pandemic and the disenfranchisement of ABS-CBN channel 2. While the incident was surrounded by political issues involving then-President Rodrigo Duterte, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) maintained that ABS-CBN had committed different violations, which led to its refusal to renew its 25-year franchise. These violations were illegal operations on their cable channels and allowing foreign investors into the company while hiding it under the corporate veil

– which the company denied (Gutierrez, 2020). Under Philippine law, media companies should be 100% Filipino-owned. The NTC issued a cease and desist order mandating the broadcasting company to shut down its free-to-air TV and radio channels on May 5. Then the House of Representatives denied its franchise renewal in July. However, the company can still air online, in video streaming apps, and on cable channels (ABS-CBN News, 2020). The company maximised the online industry to continue its operation. In addition to cable and video streaming apps, they air live on their Facebook and YouTube pages. Although the programming has been hugely modified, they still kept their flagship news and entertainment programs and shows gaining high ratings when broadcast on television.

ABS-CBN has always been the game-changer in the broadcasting industry. They were the first to utilise an affordable satellite TV that allowed them to access more households than their competitors. Their migration to the internet platform is also a first in the country. Their first live broadcast on their social media channels garnered a reach of 30 million and 80,000 comments on their Facebook page (Bautista, 2020). As the managing director of Kantar Media, Bautista proclaimed that this is the start wherein the meaning of the 'new normal' in the industry will evolve. GMA, however, continued to expand on the traditional media and released its own satellite TV called GMA Affordabox. In 2021, they covered 98% of households or 84 million viewers in the country (Balinbin, 2021). Because of this, the audience share of GMA has significantly increased and gained the highest number of ratings on television and radio, leading audience engagement in digital platforms, as well (Manila Bulletin Entertainment, 2021). This phenomenon could mean that traditional media is still here to thrive despite the imminent shift to digital media. However, it is essential to note that the ABS-CBN closure caused a 23% decline in overall TV viewership, a decrease of 60-minute viewing time for those who are still watching TV, and no television at all for people in the area that can only access ABS-CBN (Bautista, 2020).

The advertisers admitted they were unprepared for the changes the pandemic brought, and the ABS-CBN closure made it hard for them to recover. The top 10 brands in the country had lower revenue during the pandemic because of new factors that contributed to the Filipino's purchasing decisions, mainly jobs lost, prioritising needs over wants, and the proximity because of quarantine measures

(Sachitanand, 2020). Because of this, the advertising budget was affected. The absence of one of the major players in the advertising industry was predicted to create an imbalance among media buyers. The options, which allow the advertisers to be cost-effective, will be eliminated, and the new main player can now impose a higher advertising cost (Manila Standard Business, 2020). The report added that the branding strategy is now at risk because the advertisers' preferred shows that successfully reached their target markets in the past are now compromised. After the closure, the advertisers bought more airtime from GMA. GMA had a 44% increase in advertisements just a week after the shutdown, and they have also added three minutes' worth of ads per hour (Elemia, 2020). As ABS-CBN transferred their operations online, the advertisers are looking to put more chunks of the budget into digital media. However, they acknowledged that since the internet is a "stateless and difficult to control" territory, with the pandemic's economic complications, the advertising industry is now in a wait-and-see phase (ibid., para. 34).

Before these recent changes, traditional media dominated the Filipino culture for the longest time. As a result, it is not surprising that television can be considered one of the players that could influence people's formation of beliefs. As the advertising industry heavily relied on traditional media too, its advertising messages could have also contributed to this development. Filipino audiences are heavily exposed to media messages due to their heavy traditional and digital media habit, specifically on television and social media. The television industry only has two leading players. This suggests that the sources available to the audiences are limited. At this point, the audiences' established beliefs that could have been influenced by long-term exposure to television and other traditional media, such as LGBT stereotypes, may be difficult to challenge.

III. The Filipino LGBT Representation in Mass Media

It is not the first time the Philippines has had relatively fewer players in the media industry. From 1972 to 1986, during the Marcos dictatorship era or martial law, the Philippines experienced massive economic and political problems along with the government's total control of mass media and press freedom. The government made an effort to showcase the capital, Manila, as a fabulous city in the global eyes. The Marcos administration exploited all forms of mass media platforms to materialise this and inculcate its authoritarian leadership's positive effects on the Filipino

people's minds (Juan Jr., 1978). But in reality, this spectacle was a combination of showing-off and concealment (DeVilles, 2013). The *bomba* film or erotic films genre emerged and dominated during this period. Despite these films showcasing the country's problems during martial law, like the large numbers of sex workers, as well as issues like poverty, abuse, and corruption, which contradicted the 'beautification' agenda of the Marcoses, they were not censored (Cañete, 2011). The administration exploited the nudity depicted in the films to direct people's attention away from what was really happening (ibid.). It was also during this time when LGBT-themed erotic films gained momentum. Aside from sex, these films' common themes include poverty, drugs, romance, and violence. Some critics, therefore, argue that these films dealt with more than an exclusive focus on homoeroticism. The urban area's worsening situation prompted directors such as Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal to produce films that subtly raise the country's problem. The trend caught on as similar films were created in the years after.

While Brocka's 1975 film *'Maynila: Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag'* (Manila in the Claws of Light) centres on a heterosexual romantic relationship and depicts gay men in a stereotypical sense, it is still considered one of the most studied films under Queer discourse. In his analysis of the film, David (2012) argues that the film represented the class struggle during martial law while being a historical record of the country's situation during this era. The male protagonist works as a callboy in a brothel to survive the poverty life in Tondo, Manila. He needs to do this because he is on a quest to find his loved one, who left their province for education but got tricked into prostitution. However, critics accused Brocka of sensationalising same-sex sexual scenes (Sotto, 1993, cited in ibid.), and David even called these elements the "queer-baiting" part of the film (p. 32). In the film, gay men are portrayed as hungry for sexual intimacy and "screaming-fags" (p. 29). It also shows intense disgust of the male protagonist for gay men. When Brocka was asked about the issue, he said that he needed the sex scenes to "dehumanise" the man so he could relate to the plight of his love interest (David, 2012, p. 30). Interestingly, Brocka perceived same-sex sexual relationships among men as singlehandedly the way to degrade a man's life. David argues that Brocka operated in a patriarchal manner while expressing his anti-Queer sentiments in this film (2012: Diaz, 2019). First, the film is protective of the male protagonist's image by justifying his motives for committing violence (David, 2012). Second, by integrating male gay characters and gay themes in the film

but relying on stereotypes with homophobic lines in the script, it strengthens the message that the male protagonists' masculinity is intact despite his sexual activities caused by his job as a callboy (David, 2012; Diaz, 2019). The said film representation is an example of the gay-straight man dynamics explained in the previous chapter wherein, despite a man's same-sex activity, he is allowed to feel and be perceived by society to remain straight.

In Tolentino's (2000) review of Brocka's 1978 film '*Ang Tatay kong Nanay*' (My Father, My Mother), he sees the act of drag as the country's representation during martial law (p. 325). The gay protagonist, a drag queen working as a parlour beautician, felt the need to police his gender expression to be a role model to a young kid he is parenting, which his former paramour left for him to take care of. To analyse the film, Tolentino (2000) used the gay discourse called *panggagaya* or mimicry and defined it as "an alternative to the pedagogical or historical construction of bodies and sexualities during the Marcos era" (p. 325). Like how the Marcoses could distract the public by hiding the country's actual status, Tolentino associated the protagonists' *panggagaya* through drag as a fulfilment of his desire when performed, but goes back to the melancholy of his reality after the act was done. The drag and the protagonist's profession hinted at the social classification of gays during the dictatorship era. At that time, the word 'gay' was associated with wealthy people, while *parloristang bakla* (gay parlour beautician) was applied to the poor ones (Tan, 2001). Tolentino compared mimicry in the film to the poor gays' affirmation of their desire to belong in the country's upper society. Tan (2001) recounted that in these years, to be gay was rich and beautiful; and embodied approval from the higher authorities. The first lady, Imelda Marcos' spectacle of her gay fashion crew and gay-approved styles represented the acceptance of gays to the world of elites – something that a *parloristang bakla* fantasises about. Through drags, gay men in the lower strata can enjoy temporary affirmation and concealment of their reality. Tolentino also links drag to the Marcoses' Manila beautification agenda, wherein it simultaneously showed its beauty and hid the city and the country's deteriorating state due to autocracy. He also parallels the character's excessive mimicry while in drag to the Marcos family's current status at the time: the embodiment of beauty and power accentuated by their amassed wealth and conjugal dictatorship.

Aside from gay male portrayals in film, any lesbian representation in films during this era is significantly lacking. Their exclusion can be traced back to the determination to erase the records of their existence during Spanish colonisation in the 1500s. During the *bomba* era under the Marcos regime, their representation was very limited. David (2012) argues that some films only include women's issues as an excuse to exploit the female bodies and show same-sex sexual scenes to create a pornographic-like film. However, the most disturbing portrayal was that a lesbian could be converted to heterosexuality (ibid.). This portrayal exists in reality as sexual violence among lesbians, driven by the idea that sex with a man can cure their lesbianism. (Umbac, 2005). In Bernal's 1980 film 'Manila by Night,' a lesbian character is portrayed as a notorious drug dealer. Bernal's film has been dubbed as one of the best Queer films of this era. This film's fame is not about the lesbian and male gay characters but an appreciation of Bernal's new and distinguishable narration techniques at the time: non-linear, multi-character technique, and open-ended finale (Diaz 2012; Diaz, 2019). Unlike Brocka's technique, Bernal applied Queer cinema techniques (Diaz, 2019). The film centres on Manila's reality through the hardship of its ten main characters with different professions: from taxi drivers to prostitutes and from drug pushers to drug addicts (Beller, 2001). Contrary to Brocka's incorporation of male gay characters in '*Maynila*' to reiterate the protagonist's masculinity, Bernal made the LGBT people as main characters to describe the real Manila during martial law: "condones sex work and drug abuse on the city streets," which furthered the corruption among police force as they prey on these people through bribery (Diaz, 2012, p. 7). Thus, the film was banned by the former first lady as it contradicted the positive portrayal of the country's capital. Although the film has been misunderstood, Diaz (2012) argues that Bernal's film was ahead of its time because it opened up an analytic way to discuss gender and sexuality in Queer films as experienced in a patriarchal society during the time when the said discourse was "not yet ripe" (Baytan, 2019, p. 191). A few years later, David (2012) claims that lesbian portrayal had improved somehow, based on two films, through the consistent portrayal of their sexual orientation throughout the movie with character dimensions that are more recognisable than before. In contemporary films and TV shows, other lesbian stereotypical portrayals include acting and looking masculine, wearing men's clothing, and refusing to wear make-up (Morales, 2004).

In the era of 2000s male gay-themed films, Payuyo (2012) calls attention to the gap between what people see in the media and the realities of Filipino gay men. Gay men have been stereotyped as having excessive sexual desires for male flesh (Diaz, 2012), as providing comic relief (Tolentino, 2000), and as the "screaming-fag" (David, 2012, p. 29) and *parlorista*. However, Payuyo finds that the two leading male gay stereotypes in the five successful gay films she analysed were *parloristang bakla* and Brokeback Mountain gay (masculine gay). Although slightly different from the earlier representations, these tropes suggest that the stereotypes persist and are not improving. If anything, it somehow normalises that being a closeted masculine gay or funny gay is the current way to be accepted by society. But beyond this, Payuyo points to abuse on gay men as a common issue. The sexual, physical, and verbal abuses are present in the three films she analyses. Like David's analysis of Brocka's film, Payuyo (2012) attributes the constant stereotypical portrayals to society's patriarchal values. The violence portrayed in films and TV, such as bullying, sexual exploitation, and a disappointed father or relatives' actions that may result in corporal punishments, can be attributed to the machismo's bruised ego. Aside from this, Payuyo argues that the Catholic Church is one of the more influential purveyors of heteronormativity. Having worked in one of the country's biggest TV companies, she has first-hand information, for instance, about why the show 'Out!' was pulled off air after only two months of airing in 2004. 'Out!' was the first lesbian and gay lifestyle TV show in the Philippines, shown on GMA Network, and was hosted by a lesbian and two young gay men. Even though the ratings were good, it was cancelled when the advertisers 'mysteriously' pulled out of the show. Payuyo, later on, claims that the Archbishop of Manila urged the advertisers to do so.

The absence of bisexual media representation is overwhelming. According to the records collected by Beller (2001) and David (2012), a bisexual character was only shown in films twice. In Bernal's 'Manila by Night,' a bisexual man is portrayed as a drug addict, and wasted his life away because of his addictions (Beller, 2001). In Joel Lamangan's 2008 film 'No Way Out,' the bisexual man was depicted as a rogue cop (Diaz, 2019). During the martial law era, the stereotypical representation of gay men and lesbians, and the lack of visibility of some members of the LGBT community, continued to proliferate even until years after. Due to the absence of other media sources and the government's control of which content should be released, these representations remained in the people's minds. Gay men are more present than

lesbian, bisexual, and transgender characters. There would be gay men and lesbian characters in television shows, but their traits, roles, and personalities would be limited to their established characters. Filmmakers even admitted to exploiting the stereotypes, like "screaming faggot" to gain profit because they knew this was what the public wanted (Soler, 1988, cited in Payuyo, 2012, p. 297). The alleged censorship that 'Out!' suffered heralded in attempts to both educate the public on gender and sexuality issues and portray the LGBT community in a non-stereotypical manner in media. However, one television show courageously took the role to do both of these things that 'Out!' tried to do.

'My Husband's Lover' is a 2013 primetime TV show on GMA Network. It was considered the first *teleserye* drama to discuss homosexuality deeply, especially gay men and transgender people (Pulumbarit, 2013; Diaz, 2015). The story revolves around a love triangle between Lally (heterosexual female), who was married to Vincent (closeted/masculine gay), who was having an affair with his former lover, Eric (effeminate gay). While the description provided hints at stereotypical approaches, those were considered essential elements in the show because to educate the public, the comprehensive struggles of being gay should be laid out. One of the celebrated outputs that the show has provided was the opportunity to escape stereotypes. The *parloristang bakla*, screaming-fags, comic relief, and lower class were replaced by middle-class, professional gay men with character depths (Diaz, 2015; Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015). They were also the main protagonists in the show, which provided the visibility of gay men in media, especially in primetime TV (Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015). However, certain stereotypes were still shown. Being a husband and expected to be a breadwinner, not to mention having a homophobic father, Vincent's constant struggle was questioning his sexuality. Because he was not out yet, his gender expressions were masculine (Diaz, 2015; Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015). This was reinforced through his clothing, his wardrobe's colours, and his profession as a car salesman (Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015). Incorporating religion into the discourse, Joaquin (2014) calls Vincent's character *madasaling bakla* or "a gay man who loves to pray" (p. 21). Because of his struggle, he turns to the church to "pray the gay away" (ibid.). Joaquin explains that a *madasaling bakla's* dilemma is reiterated by a society that believes his sexuality is "deviant, sinful, and immoral" (ibid.). He further compares it to reality expressing how the Roman Catholic Church's customs confuse a Catholic Filipino gay man by

shaping their sexuality according to it. As a result, a *madasaling bakla* would seek the church to help cure his sexuality. Lastly, Vincent's attempt to commit suicide because of his father's stigma was also one of the show's crucial plots (Pulumbarit, 2013; Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015).

It is also important to note that society's typical reactions have also been depicted in the show. Extreme attempts of their relatives to cure or not accept their sexuality were portrayed: the forced military training for Vincent, Lally's strong denial of her husband's sexuality, Vincent's mother's insistence to fix his sexuality, Zandro's (Vincent's cousin) childhood disciplinary experience from his father after he discovered him wearing his mother's clothes, and Zandro's agreement to momentarily police his gender expression to be allowed to visit his sick father (Pulumbarit, 2013; Diaz, 2015; Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015). There was a scene wherein Vincent was shamed by the police, despite being a victim of a crime, and was told that his gayness made it happen. Su, Castro, and Cenizal (2015) argue that this specific scene summarises the country's view that if a man acts feminine, he is not considered a real man.

These plots contributed to educating the public on gay-related issues. An 'eye-opening' moment for the show's characters and the public was when Lally and Vincent's mother went to a psychologist to ask for an explanation behind Vincent's sexuality. This scene explains in-depth that homosexuality is not a mental illness, disease, abnormality, or a product of the environment but a "positive and normal variation of human sexual orientation" (Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015, p. 6). The show was also able to debunk myths, such as only gay men are the carrier of HIV and explained the difference between gay and transwoman (Pulumbarit, 2013). Vincent's character has also clarified that not all gay men feel trapped in a man's body while introducing the concept of "everything in between," which means having a combination of feminine and masculine identities (Su, Castro, and Cenizal, 2015, p. 09). It is an additional help, through media, familiarise the audiences that there is a spectrum of sexuality in the Philippines which is not specifically exclusive to the prevailing assumption founded by hegemonic beliefs that there are only a man and a woman in a same-sex couple. The levels of "coming out" were perfectly portrayed from self-identification, denial, confession, struggle, and freedom (ibid.). Simple non-stereotypical representations were observed too: Eric's 'masculine profession'

as an architect, despite being effeminate, and heterosexual male Paul's career in the fashion industry, which is typically not associated with straight men (ibid.).

The love triangle between male couples and one's wife (*lalaki-bakla-babae*) is a common trope in some LGBT-themed movies in the Philippines. Therefore, such a storyline is familiar to Filipino audiences. This depiction typically involves a closeted married gay man who is trapped in a heterosexual marriage but secretly engages in affairs with other men. The motivation for concealing one's sexuality and adhering to conventional marital practices often revolves around maintaining a macho image in a homophobic society. For example, in the 1971 movie *'Tubog sa Ginto'* (Gold Plated), the leading gay male character hires a female escort to uphold the façade of being a womaniser (Capino, 2020). These stories often feature twists, such as the inevitable discovery of their sexuality and sexual activities by their partners or children, and sometimes conclude with tragic outcomes like murder, homicide, or suicide (ibid.). Similar love-triangle storylines are also present in some LGBT-themed Indonesian films such as *'Istana kecantikan'* (Palace of Beauty), with familiar elements including staying married despite issues related to sexuality and infidelity (Murtagh, 2011). These narratives often end in tragedy, with the male gay protagonist facing unfortunate consequences, such as imprisonment for accidentally harming his male lover (ibid.). Hence, *'My Husband's Lover'* is seen as a deviation from these misconceptions, fostering acceptance of the *lalaki-bakla-babae* love triangle concept. The series provides a positive ending, involving forgiveness and granting Vincent and Eric the freedom to continue their relationship, a departure from what previous movies had presented to Filipino audiences.

The current main player in gay representation in media is gay comedian Vice Ganda. He is currently one of the most famous celebrities in the Philippines. His daily show, *'It's Showtime'*, is one of the most-watched noontime shows in the country. He had a seven-day exposure on television through *'It's Showtime'* and Sunday night's talk show *'Gandang Gabi Vice'*, both aired on ABS-CBN. His movies have all been blockbuster successes. He is also a multimedia star having music albums and a YouTube channel. Before rising to fame, he worked in comedy bars, where he practised vulgar and sexual jokes. Diaz (2015) describes Vice Ganda's comedy as "existing archives of *bakla* (gay man) performance that have historically circulated

in Philippine cinema and television from the 1960s onwards" (p. 730-731). While Vice Ganda paved the way for broader visibility of gay men in mainstream media, his comedic style opens up a question of whether he reinforces stereotypes such as comic relief and hungry for male flesh. Even though the professions of his characters in all of his films were not confined to the typical stereotype portrayal, such as a soldier, working in the corporate world, a superhero, and a CEO, most of his jokes, scripts, and actions still portrayed the mentioned gay stereotypes in this study. For example, his characters showed lust for heterosexual males in the movies 'The Super Parental Guardians' (2016) and '*Petrang Kabayo*' (2010), participated in a gay beauty contest in 'Beauty and the Bestie' (2015), a closeted gay in 'The *Unkabogable Praybeyt Benjamin*' (2011) and subtle gay sexual jokes in 'Fantastica' (2018). Moreover, most of his movies' most common theme is his male gay friends portrayed as comic-relief, subjecting their physical characteristics into derogatory jokes, with hysterical screams and effeminate movements.

Because of his popularity and extreme visibility in mainstream media, not just in any media but in one of the main TV stations in the country - ABS-CBN, his perceptions of the life and struggles of Filipino gay men reached out to many people. Indeed, other famous LGBT celebrities in the country can add to the discourse, such as talk show host Boy Abunda (gay man), male gay actors Paolo Ballesteros and John Lapus, singers and transmen Ice Seguerra and Jake Zyrus, singer Mark Bautista (bisexual), Broadway star Monique Wilson (lesbian) and BB Gandanghari (transwoman). However, his long-time popularity suggests that the novelty character and witty comedy of Vice Ganda have more impact on the public than all of these celebrities combined. The danger of this is that his opinions, good or bad, can influence many people—for example, his derogatory rape and fat jokes to the news personality Jessica Soho in 2013. Diaz (2015) argues that this joke reflected the country's existing problem regarding violence against women and children. Diaz adds that Vice Ganda contributed to the desensitisation of violence and normalisation of rape as a fetish in mainstream media through these jokes. In a study regarding the use of Vice Ganda's sarcastic and criticism style of joking in daily life among college students, the majority of the respondents expressed negative feedback: they felt discriminated against when subjected to these jokes, this type of jest threatens a friendship, and they reject to be treated with the same expressions and jokes of Vice Ganda (Bautista, 2012). However, when live audiences of both

noontime shows from GMA Network (*Eat Bulaga*) and ABS-CBN (*It's Showtime*) were studied regarding their reactions to LGBT contestants, entertainment performances, relationships, and discussions on lived experiences, positive responses were observed. Their joyful and appreciative reactions showed "acceptance of the notion of homosexuality within the realm of media" and acceptance, delight, and tolerance of LGBT relationships (De Leon and Jintalan, 2018, p. 412). However, these findings showed that while there is an emerging acceptance of LGBT people in mainstream media, society still differs. De Leon and Jintalan add that the audience does not reflect societal acceptance because of the religion's influence and lack of national anti-discrimination law to protect Filipino LGBT citizens. Vice Ganda mirrored this sentiment when he explained his frustration in a segment in 'It's Showtime' saying:

Picture 1: Vice Ganda's Statement

“ It's already 2020, and we're still explaining. How long should we keep explaining that we are part of the world? We're normal. We're not abnormal. We're not a disease. We're not a problem. Until now, we're explaining because many people, beliefs, cultures, and traditions say we don't belong here. It's hard.

Original message:
Hanggang ngayon, 2020 na, nag-e-explain pa din kami. Hanggang kailan kami mag-e-explain na part kami nito, part kami ng mundo? At okay kami. Normal kami. Hindi kami abnormal. Hindi kami sakit. Hindi kami problema. Hanggang ngayon nag-e-explain pa din kami dahil maraming tao, at maraming paniniwala, maraming kultura, maraming tradisyon ang nagsasabing hindi kaya belong. Ang hirap.

Vice Ganda
It's Showtime, 02 December 2020



Photo from The Filipino Times
<https://filipinotimes.net/entertainment/2022/09/03/tv-5-apologizes-to-vice-ganda-over-wrong-news-involving-marian-rivera/>

'My Husband's Lover' and Vice Ganda's success in opening up the LGBT discourse in mainstream media allowed other shows and films to discuss the topic bravely. GMA *teleserye*'s 'The Rich Man Daughter' (2015), about the romantic relationship between two lesbians, portrayed real-life lesbian problems such as struggle with identity, domestic abuse, child custody, marriage, and conversion therapy (Mendoza, 2015; LalaTai, 2018). GMA Network has also produced *teleserye* drama soap operas that tackle the struggles of a transwoman, from their transformation to the problems they encounter as they discover themselves. These shows are 'Destiny Rose' (2015) and 'Asawa Ko, Karibal Ko' (2018). Although having the same theme, the shows have different approaches. For 'Destiny Rose,' they cast a male actor. For 'Asawa Ko, Karibal Ko,' they cast a female actress for the transwoman role. The

director said they wanted to make the sexual reassignment surgery believable, hence casting a heterosexual female actress (Chua, 2018). However, the director reiterated that they are cautious and meticulous in portraying the trans experience, claiming they have consulted the trans community and studied related films to represent transwomen properly (ibid.). This declaration shows that, unlike the filmmakers in Payuyo's study, the current mainstream media is more concerned with properly representing LGBT people than stereotyping them to benefit from advertisers, revenues, and ratings. However, the participants of this PhD study have different opinions about this. The discussion is found in Chapters Seven and Eight.

It can be argued that mass media should not be entirely blamed for inculcating LGBT stereotypes into Filipino minds. After all, the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic and patriarchal country. One can easily start analysing the culture by looking into those aspects. However, people have been unaware of the mass media's role in directing their attention away from the country's social, economic, and political problems. Nevertheless, the media has arguably produced some positive attitudinal societal changes in recent years. In particular, this research is interested in exploring the positive effect caused by a 2018 LGBT-themed advertisement called "How long can you keep a secret?" by Bench. Bench is a local clothing shop in the country. The advertisement is one of the few commercials positively portraying an LGBT member. Its success paved the way for other advertisers to produce ads that leaned on the same approach, prompting advertisers to ask, 'Is this the new normal?' (Marchadesch, 2018). But before this phenomenon, one of the earliest moves to portray them in a non-stereotypical manner through a billboard advertisement did not get much recognition, unlike the 2018 Bench ad. On the contrary, it gained controversies but, nevertheless, caused a public discourse regarding LGBT issues in the country.

*III.I. "The Billboards that almost didn't make it."*³

In 2015, a few days before Valentine's Day, Bench produced its "Love all kinds of love" billboard advertisement in EDSA. The ad showed four different couples showing four different kinds of love. The first billboard showed a grandson hugging his grandmother. This picture was labelled as "Love." The second picture, "all

³ Bench's 2018 statement on their Twitter account, remembering the billboard controversy in 2015.

kinds," featured a heterosexual couple embracing each other. The third one, "of," is a male gay couple wherein one's arm is on another person's shoulder. The arm was able to reach the other person's hand, which allowed them to hold hands. The last picture, "love," is of a lesbian couple wherein one is hugging the other person from behind. One thing that stood out from the billboards was the black paint that tried to cover the male gay couple's holding hands. The billboards quickly gained fame and controversy when internet users protested this on social media, which led to the creation of the hashtag #PaintTheirHandsBack.

Picture 2: Bench's "Love all kinds of love" billboard



Photo from Preview: <https://www.preview.ph/fashion/preview-s-vince-uy-and-boyfriend-appear-in-bench-s-valentine-billboards>

A first look at the situation may suggest that the ad regulating body Ads Standards Council (ASC) was responsible for this restriction and that Bench only followed orders so the billboards could be allowed installation. However, the narratives changed as issues unfolded.

Bench's blog editorial in Chief Paolo Lorenzana said that the idea to showcase gay couples was pitched to the company owner and was approved but instructed to add other forms of love (Occeñola, 2015). Once presented to ASC, the regulating body had some concerns over the pictures of the male gay couple presented to them due to its principle of maintaining the "traditional Filipino family values" in advertisements (Occeñola, 2015a, para. 8). The Philippine Family Code states that the only accepted marriage is between a man and a woman. From this standpoint, the ASC had legal grounds to reject the ad to protect traditional Filipino family values. However, despite ASC's reservations, Bench continued to install the defaced billboard. At this point, the controversy was already gaining momentum in the public discourse while ASC had been getting the public's ire. The public's

disappointment over the censorship prompted them to create various memes to express their support (Arsua, 2015). In different news articles, Lorenzana and Jojo Liamzon, Bench's Advertising and Promotions Manager, expressed their happiness about how the Filipinos reacted to the controversy creatively and wittingly through the production of funny memes of the defaced billboard on Twitter, showing their disbelief at the censorship (Occeñola, 2015; Dabu and Takumi, 2015).

Picture 3: Bench's defaced billboard



Photo from Finance MD, 2015.

However, there were indications that the controversy was premeditated and that ASC's rejection was sensationalised. ASC released a statement saying they did not censor the ad but merely called out Bench after putting up the billboard without clearance to display (Occeñola, 2015a). ASC added that they did not instruct Bench to deface the billboard and maintained that Bench did it thinking the ad would be approved if they did so (ibid.). After this, Bench released a thought-provoking statement. It turned out that the picture that ASC initially rejected due to traditional family values (no black paint) was different from what was installed (ABS-CBN News, 2015). Despite acknowledging that the ad they printed was already obscured, Liamzon maintained that it was done to comply with the ASC's decision (Preview, 2015). Bench's camp said they still chose to use the blackened picture "because the company believes that its message was still intact" (ABS-CBN News, 2015, para. 7). Liamzon added that they earlier released an unobscured digital mock-up of the billboard to the press which could be the cause of the public's confusion on whether the defacement was ordered by the ASC (ibid.). Some interpreted this move by Bench as taking an opportunity to create noise and attract the public (Biado, 2015;

Finance MD, 2015). It would not be hard because 112% of Filipinos had mobile access in 2015 (Kemp, 2015). With the hashtag' help, all the advertisers left to do was watch how Filipinos would escalate the discussion in social media. At the height of the controversy, an issue that Bench's motivation for the ad was to win back the gay market circulated (Finance MD, 2015). Biado (2015) recognised the scheme, called out the conflicting narratives, and suggested Bench intended to release the defaced ad all along as they assumed that it would catch the public's attention.

This is not the first controversy in the country involving billboard ads. In 2011, the Catholic Church called for removing the Philippine rugby team's billboard, calling it indecent because they wore underwear that highlighted their crotches (Devilles, 2013; Cornelio, 2014). In 2014, the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) asked the advertisers to remove the billboards that contained semi-nude models printed with words that, according to MMDA, were offensive, profane, and have sexual overtones that can lead to the "breakdown of the morals of the public" (Rappler, 2014, para. 7). Devilles (2013) argues that these billboard controversies and censorships already suggest "who and what we are" (p. 65). The power and gatekeeping capability of some institutions in the country could suggest that they control the country's moral and social standards and anticipate people's complete adherence to the values they set. Similarly, Cornelio (2014) uses the concept of 'sexualisation' in analysing society's response, particularly to the government and the church, to the most contested billboard advertisements in Metro Manila due to their sexual elements. Sexualisation is "representational techniques or modes of using sexual images in the media" (p. 74). One of the principles Cornelio applied was how sexualisation could be an all-encompassing symbol of society's general discomfort. Suppose one's setting is a patriarchal society, like the Philippines; a purposive sexualisation would elicit condemnation, while a referential one would provide a space for a cultural critic of the norms. Purposive sexualisation has a clear and justifiable reason for its portrayal, whereas referential only hints at it. Adopting Cornelio's analysis, it could be viewed that the sexualisation in the Bench advertisement, representing the country's 'discomfort,' was the showcase of gay and lesbian couples. The presentation of this ad is purposive. The tagline "love all kinds of love" is the definite message that the advertisers wanted to send to their audiences. Cornelio, however, added that adopting the purposive technique limits the ad's capacity to be a platform for discourse, for it is mainly focused on the

product's benefit to its consumers. Assuming that this was the case, Bench's spectacle was intentional because the unobscured billboard alone would not be enough to stipulate intelligent debates regarding the existing LGBT problems in the country. As the symbol of oppression, the black paint was the referential element in this ad that launched the noise. Hence, this advertisement was both contested and celebrated. According to Cornelio, a sexualised advertisement would not afford to be both purposive and referential. But suppose sexualisation is in the context of social change. In that case, Cornelio argues that it may provide a path to navigate different opinions and combine different trajectories that could help critique or reinforce a social change. A cultural change using advertisements might still not be the Philippines' case as it is still controlled: "the government has to protect the public morals" (p. 73). Although this phrase raises the question of what precisely public morals are, Cornelio's take on sexualisation as a cultural change - and based on the regulatory body's response to the Bench's ad - was that Metro Manila was not ready for it.

III.II. Positive Portrayal: An Emerging Trend or a Fad?

A few years after the billboard controversy, which could have possibly catalysed the rise of LGBT-themed ads in the country, a series of similar advertisements were released. All of which gained support and positive feedback from the public. In 2016, Smart Communications released a 30-second drama advertisement about a son who has yet to come out to his father and is reluctant to accept his father's Facebook friend request because his page is full of pictures of him and his partner. He later accepts the friend request and texts him, "I have accepted you," to which his father replies, "Son, so have I." The ad gained 4.5 million views on Facebook and tons of positive feedback from the netizens. In 2017, Uber Philippines adapted a series of tweets from a young man's experience of sharing an Uberpool with his male crush and turned it into a short feel-good romantic advertisement. The video gained 6.7 million views on Facebook. Moreover, in 2018, two advertisements gained worldwide attention because of their positive portrayal of LGBT people.

In February, Bench released a two-minute online advertisement called "How long can you keep a secret?" about a father who shows his acceptance of his closeted gay son through his note, placed beside his son's favourite perfume, saying "*amoy kita*." This ad's product is their new fragrance collection; hence the story circled on the

word "*amoy*" or smell. In the Philippines, "*amoy kita*" is slang for "I know you're gay." This rom-com ad gained 4.9 million views on Facebook and 2.7 million on YouTube. The advertisement caught the global eye as it was featured on websites like the global LGBT+ community website PinkNews as one of the top gay commercials globally, including the Smart commercial from 2016 (Butler, 2019). Many positive YouTube reaction videos on the ad by YouTubers from different countries have also been published, proving that the ad's effectiveness extended through different cultures. In 2019, Bench's Facebook page announced that the said ad won an award from Webby's Awards, the highest award-giving body on the internet. Bench's well-received advertising strategy went well in terms of revenue. According to Spikes Asia (2018), the ad's digital presence gained \$2 million in media values and a 31% increase in Bench's fragrance sales. A similar scenario occurred in Pantene's advertisement featuring the struggle of a transwoman beauty queen Kevin Balot – a first of its kind. Balot is the first transwoman ambassador of Pantene Philippines (Arcano, 2018). Released in November 2018, the #StrongerNow campaign advertisement shows the inclusion of transwomen in the roster of Filipino women who are celebrated because of their resiliency. The advertisement gained international fame because of its positive message on transwomen and has trended on social media sites (Henderson, 2018). The video had over 4 million views on Twitter and was retweeted by Ellen Pompeo of the US TV show 'Grey's Anatomy' (Persio, 2018).

The common themes observed from these recent advertisements are family, emotions, love, and acceptance. These themes are why these advertisements are such a hit among Filipinos. According to Nielsen, these types of ads would guarantee a positive reaction from consumers (PANA, 2015). Advertisements that centralise real-life stories, family, health, value, and humour are the best formula for reaching out to consumers because Filipinos are most likely to resonate with these themes (ibid.). They also appreciated that they were not watching a stereotype and could finally see the LGBT members as ordinary people doing normal daily activities in mainstream media (Marchadesch, 2018). Additionally, advertisements that reflect the country's culture allow people to comprehend the messages better and empathise with them (Marquez, 1975). Hence, brands and advertisers are now tapping into LGBT people's positive portrayal because these matters are timely, controversial, and most discussed. Current social and political issues like the fight

for the passage of national anti-discrimination law, along with the positive trend and wider visibility in mainstream media, map out a probability that this matter will only be progressing from here on.

Ultimately, the emerging power of the 'pink peso' indicates that this phenomenon is not a fad. According to the Project Pink Study in 2011, one in 20 people is a member of the LGBT community, with approximately 600,000 LGBT consumers; both ratings are in Metro Manila alone (Sison, 2014; Cigal, 2019). The pink peso, or the Filipino LGBT people's purchasing power, is auspicious because 70% of the transgender and 70% of gay respondents in Sison's (2014) study are revealed to hold the purchasing decision in their households. A study profiling the gay market in the Philippines showed that 77% of the respondents are single, highly educated, with good professions indicating high salaries but less to no child expenses (Costales and Arguelles, 2015). The pink peso spending profile is as follows: they spend more on services and products than daily essentials, their personal care product purchase is twice than the heterosexual consumers, they spend a lot, they are impulsive buyers, and the bisexual and transgender people spend more than the others (Sison, 2014; Cigal 2019). The LGBT consumers remain untapped because there are advertisers who are still hesitating to invest in this niche market for fear of backlashes like criticism from the public and economic repercussions on their brands, citing the conservative norms and beliefs in the country, including the influence of religions (Marchadesch, 2018; Cigal 2019).

Moreover, some advertisers maintain that there is no need for LGBT market segmentation because they are already included in the male and female segmentation (Cigal 2019). The advertisers are aware of the two main problems: the stereotypes in advertisements that emerged from the 1980s and the lack of research on LGBT consumers, which led them to use different studies abroad as one of their source materials (Marchadesch, 2018). These reasons prompted them to make advertisements that subscribe to the new normal: "equality, acceptance, and inclusion" and should be practised by brands not just in ads but also in their business policies and practices (ibid., para. 11). While the LGBT consumers spend a lot more than the general public, they can also withhold their spending on brands that exhibits discrimination against the LGBT communities (Sison, 2014). Moreover, they are brand enthusiasts or exhibit higher brand awareness than other

consumers (Sison, 2014; Cigaral, 2019; Arguelles, 2015). This is where the importance of the positive representation and emotional impact in advertisements comes in because they can go out of their way to avoid brands that are not fair towards them, even if it would cost them more than they usually do (Sison, 2014). Finally, the promotion and price of the product create a homogenous gay market wherein the price is an element that causes them to be brand enthusiasts or consumers who prefer and stick to a specific brand – something that all companies and advertisers hope to achieve (Arguelles, 2015).

IV. Conclusion

The heavy television and social media exposure describe a typical Filipino audience. Their traditional television influence was also limited, exposing them to fewer players that might have affected the formation of their beliefs. These elements could support that the Cultivation Theory among Filipino audiences could be effective. This information is helpful as a point of departure in understanding the data analysis section in Chapter Six regarding the general public's opinions on positive LGBT-themed advertisements.

The LGBT people's stereotypical representations in media throughout time showed consistency. While the change is still in its infancy through its newly emerging visibility in media, it shows promising transformations in the advertising field through the power of the pink peso. The trend in both media exposure and LGBT representations shows a singular event: the history and the current situation remains consistent. This discussion encompasses problems that transcend beyond media representation: the struggles of the LGBT community in a patriarchal society, the ability of the powerful institutions to distract the public from the real problems and to gatekeep and regulate things that do not align with their beliefs or might impose threats to the status quo. These ideas, as corroborated by the data collected by this doctoral study, are further explored in Chapter Eight.

5 Chapter

Methodology: From Curiosity to a Research Project

I. Introduction

This chapter explains how this study is formed, from its abstract to its theoretical form, then from data collection to analysis. The principles of the chosen theories of the study, which are George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory and David Morley's Relevance Theory, serve as the fundamentals of the research design. Moreover, the study's goal of contributing to Filipino LGBT people's status improvement is detailed in this chapter. The data collection section outlines the challenges this research faced due to the pandemic, as well as a natural calamity in the Philippines, and the reluctance of some LGBT members to participate for fear of revealing their sexualities. The coding principles of the study, based on thematic analysis and the theories' coding processes, are also explained. Lastly, this section provides synopses of the five LGBT-themed advertisements that are the focus of this study to give an overview of the importance of such media content to the LGBT community and Philippine society.

II. Research Questions, Design, and Methods

From the researcher's curiosity about a social phenomenon to formulating a simple research question that eventually leads to addressing current societal issues involving LGBT media representation, this section explains the research design based on conceptual plans founded by a theoretical framework discussed in the following section.

II.I. The Research Question

According to Punch and Oancea (2014), research questions serve as the "backbone of empirical procedures" that guide a study's research planning, organisation and development of the questions, research design, and methods (p. 7). In Social Science Research, Punch and Oancea state that it is essential to answer questions about society, people or behaviour based on empirical evidence from real-life data. They define empirical research as an "organised, systematic and logical process of inquiry, using empirical information to answer questions" or simply "scientific research as organised common sense" (p. 11). Even though the data comes from what we see daily, they emphasise being "organised, systematic and logical" (ibid.). Hence, they offer the four main features a research question should have to achieve these:

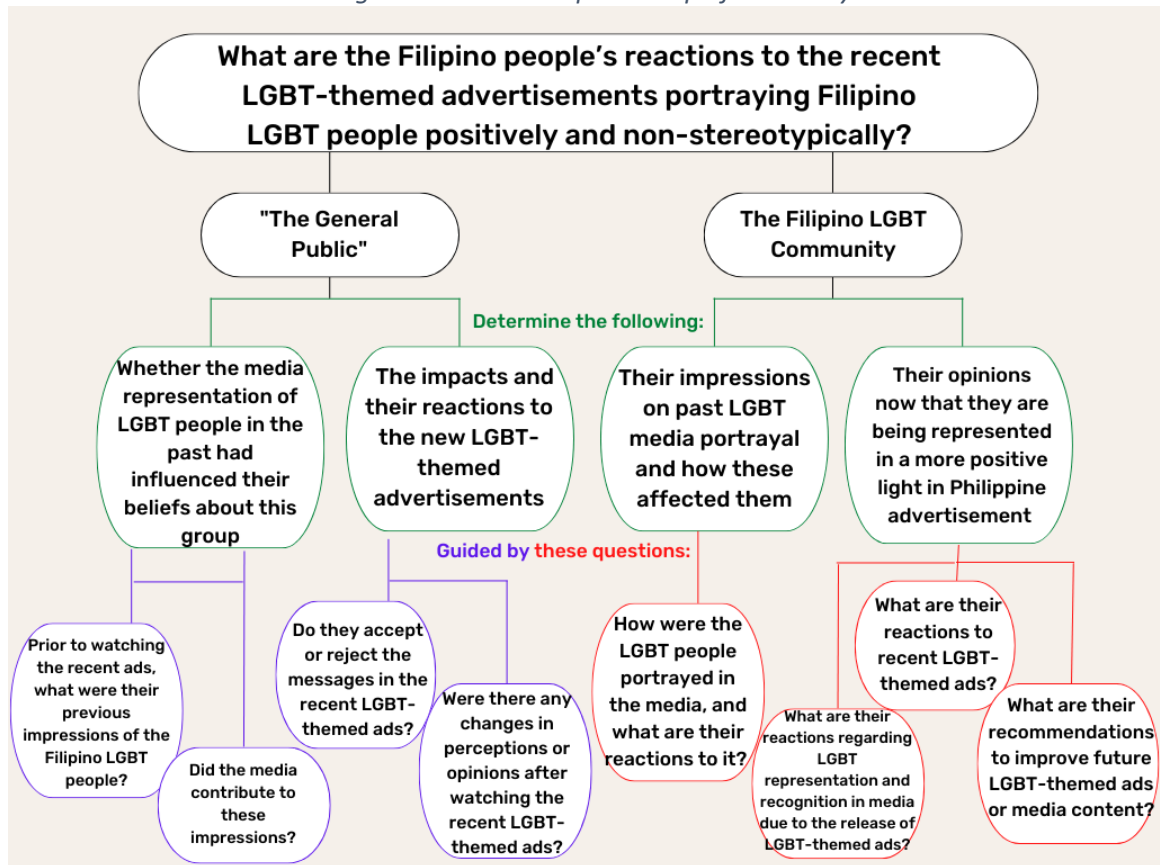
1. Shaping the research contingent upon research questions
2. Finding out the type of data needed to answer the questions
3. Plan and organise the data collection and analysis
4. Answering the research question based on the data collected

The ultimate goal of this study is to answer the question, "what are the Filipino people's reactions to recent LGBT-themed advertisements portraying Filipino LGBT people positively and non-stereotypically?" This curiosity was triggered by the success of Filipino clothing brand Bench's 2018 advertisement entitled "How long can you keep a secret?" The campaign resulted in an increase in revenue (Spikes Asia, 2018) and international attention (Butler, 2019). The video itself gained recognition from the Webby Awards, the highest award-giving body on the internet, after being nominated in the 'Audience Choice' category and winning the 'Fashion & Beauty (Video) Social' category. It also garnered massive support from the Filipino public through online audience interaction as it went viral on social media and led to much public social discussion. After this success, a few advertisements promoting positive LGBT messages and featuring them in a non-stereotypical manner were released, which raised the question, 'is this the new normal?' in the Philippine advertising industry (Marchadesch, 2018). The Bench ad, along with four other advertisements with similar concepts released in recent years, is the focus of the discussions among the respondents in this study.

The main research question is subdivided into more specific inquiries as the study aims to determine the reactions from two sides: the Filipino heterosexuals (aka "the general public") and the Filipino LGBT community. The "general public" in this study is firstly defined as Filipino heterosexual audiences. Moreover, as a respondent in this study, the term "general" is used because it aims to seek the opinion of anybody in the country. A respondent from the general public does not have to be a part of a particular organisation, have a specific idea about LGBT social issues, or should belong to a specific social class. This study is detached from a participant's affiliations, welcomes people from all walks of life, and seeks random sampling during data collection. Hence, this study delivers results of the opinions that came from the members of the public who have no specific common interest but their sexual orientations. Moreover, as explained in Chapter One, Gerbner's Cultivation theory states that the dominant group of the audience can dictate what the messages in the "centre of the gravity" can contain (1986, p. 24). As a result, the audiences can form similar opinions about an issue which later on manifests in that society's television system as the dominant opinion of the country. Hence, in the issue of LGBT media representation, the non-LGBT people, as the dominant group, has the power to dictate what the messages in the centre of gravity should contain. This could be in the form of content that a producer from the dominant group can produce and the content that the said group would prefer to consume. By tapping into the general public's opinions on LGBT media representation, this study can determine what heterosexual Filipinos think about the topic. In the explanations in the analysis chapters in the following pages, the term "general public" is used to mean the heterosexual respondents of this doctoral study. This term is also used interchangeably with "survey respondents" and "heterosexual respondents."

The research question formulated in this study is essential as it served as the basis and the foundation of this study's formulation of research designs, methods, and analysis. This study applies the ideas presented by Punch and Oancea (2014) as it also aims for organised, systematic and logical research derived from empirical data found in people's daily lives; in other words, their opinions. Guided by the above-stated first feature of a research question, which involves framing the study based on the research questions, diagram 1 shows the conceptual map of this study that shows how the entire research was shaped and executed.

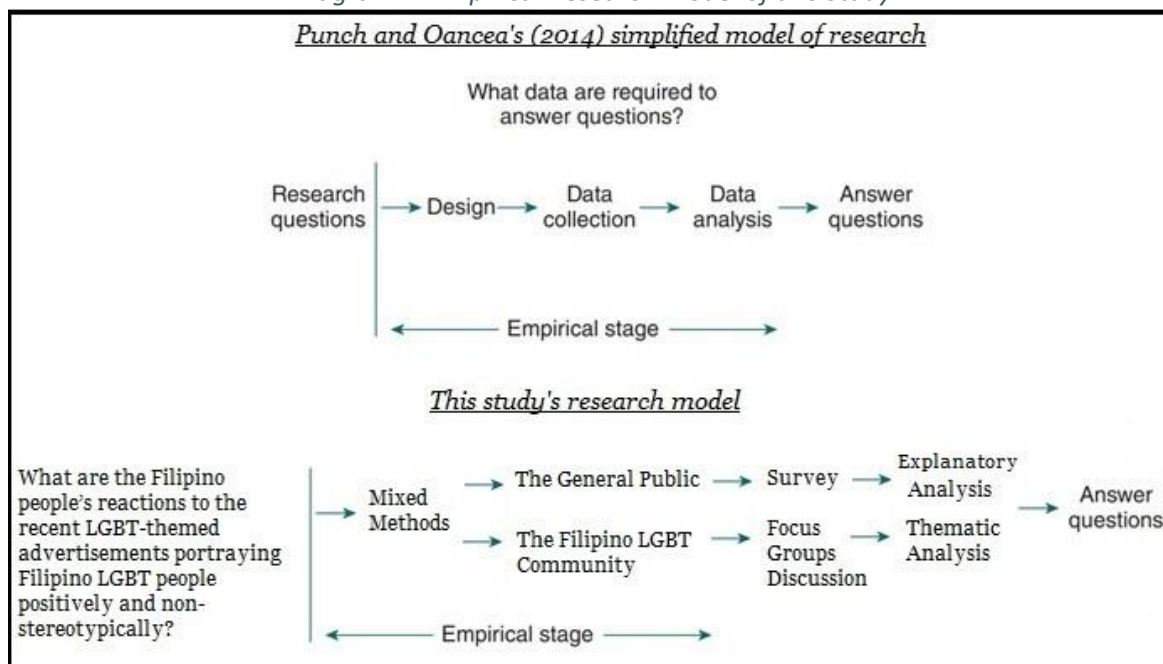
Diagram 1: The Conceptual Map of this Study



After establishing the principles and primary and secondary questions, Punch and Oancea's (2014) second and third steps are to decide on the type of data the research needs to answer the questions and then plan and organise the data collection and analysis. This research is heavily focused on what they call 'real-life data' as it strives to collect opinions, which constitute part of the study's dataset, from both the target respondents. Diagram 2 shows how the opinions were collated. This part of the research is what Punch and Oancea call 'the empirical stage.' Further explanation of this process is provided in the subchapter discussing the data collection method.

The inquiries were focused on LGBT media representations in the Philippines and the respondents' reactions to them. Moreover, it is focused on both the stereotyped or negative portrayals, as well as positive portrayals of Filipino LGBT people and the respondents' possible feelings, reactions, and opinions on future LGBT representation in the Philippine media. As explained in the literature review, some of the stereotyped and negative portrayals of LGBT people that were shown in the media for decades include excessive sexual desires for male flesh (Diaz, 2012), comic relief (Tolentino, 2000), screaming-fag (David, 2012), and *parloristang bakla* or

Diagram 2: Empirical Research Model of this Study



male gays who are working in beauty parlours (Payuyo, 2012). Furthermore, the discussions on positive LGBT portrayal were drawn from the five chosen advertisements that were recently released, from 2016 to 2019, wherein they were portrayed in a non-stereotypical manner, different from how they were being portrayed prior to the release of these advertisements. Their feelings on potential future LGBT representation were also based on these advertisements. The synopses of the five LGBT-themed advertisements are provided below to understand their significance in this study further.

The Advertisements

Uber Philippines (2017) "Kilig #UberStories"

Ride-sharing company Uber's advertisement centres on a series of Tweets from a young man who finds himself in an Uberpool with his long-time college crush. The young man, calm during the ride, expresses his emotions in real-time through Twitter.

Picture 4: Uber Philippines



He even creates a poll asking his followers what he should say to his crush. The ending of the advertisement shows the "crush" offering to let the young man exit the

car through his side at the end of the trip. This surprises our protagonist and makes him "kilig" or giddy. Uber ends it with the tagline, "Sometimes, it's more than just a ride. It's the moment you've been waiting for."

Bench/ (2018) "How long can you keep a secret?"

Picture 5: Bench/



This advertisement from the Filipino clothing brand Bench inspired this doctoral thesis. The commercial features a closeted gay college kid who expresses his sexuality openly in school but hides it and acts masculine at home with his father. His flamboyant personality is always

accompanied by the way he sprays the perfume that is being advertised. The story's twist is revealed when it is made clear that the young man's father has been aware of his son's sexuality all along. We discover this when the father gifts his son a replacement bottle of perfume after he has run out. The new bottle is accompanied by a note to his son that says, "*amoy kita*." This phrase, which literally translates to "I smell you," is slang for "I know you're gay."

Smart Communications (2016) "Break down barriers and welcome change!"

With a dramatic genre, this advertisement by telecommunications company Smart Communications features a scenario in which a father shows his acceptance of his son's sexuality and how the son came out to his

Picture 6: Smart Communications



dad via Facebook. The son faces a dilemma over whether to accept his father's 'friend request' on Facebook, as his timeline is filled with pictures of him and his boyfriend. The advertisement hints at the protagonist's family background, his father being a military veteran, which gives clues why he is hiding his sexuality. He finally accepts the friend request and texts his dad, "Dad, *in-accept na kita*" (Dad, I have accepted you). His dad replied, "*anak, ako din*" (Son, so have I), which suggests a secondary meaning of also accepting his son's sexuality. It ends with Smart's tagline, "Welcome change."

Pantene Philippines (2018) "Strength knows no gender. #StrongerNow"

Picture 7: Pantene Philippines



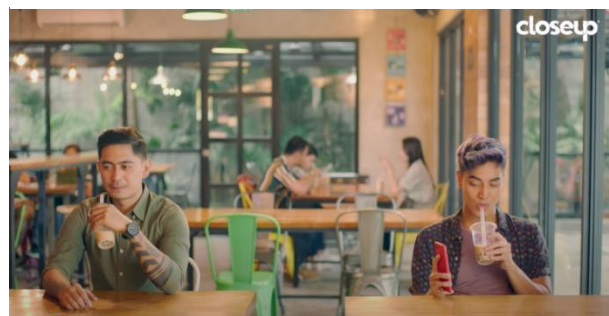
This ad by haircare brand Pantene, encouraging young members of the LGBT community not to be afraid to discover themselves, features transwoman Kevin Balot. This is the first time a transwoman has been featured in a Philippine advertisement. Balot was crowned Miss International Queen in 2012 and became an icon in

the Filipino LGBT community after that. In the ad, three young kids are featured, showing the early phase of discovering their gender identities. Balot's "before" (as a kid) and "after" (as a beauty queen) pictures are also shown to tell people she went through the same situation. Words of encouragement to inspire the audience are mentioned, such as "everything beautiful about you has nothing to do with your gender" and "the journey won't be easy, but I know you will be stronger like me." This Pantene ad culminates with the tagline, "This week, Pantene celebrates strength in everyone, regardless of gender."

Close Up Philippines (2019) "#MakeYourMove Films - P.S. I Love You, Bro"

The toothpaste brand Close Up features a love story between two men in a milk tea shop. From the protagonist's confusion on whether his crush is straight or not to the other man holding back in responding to what he feels due to his fear of what his

Picture 8: Close Up Philippines



co-workers might say, the advertisement details what two people in different stages in their sexualities are thinking when it comes to pursuing romance. Close Up ends it with a tagline, "Don't let doubts stop you. #MakeYourMove to get close. #FreeToLove."

The study anticipates a number of different opinions from the public due to different ideas presented in these ads and the old negative and stereotyped LGBT representation in media. Considering that the study has two sets of respondents,

this study utilises a mixed-method design to organise the data collection and analysis to answer the research question "what are the Filipino people's reactions to recent LGBT-themed advertisements portraying Filipino LGBT people positively and non-stereotypically?"

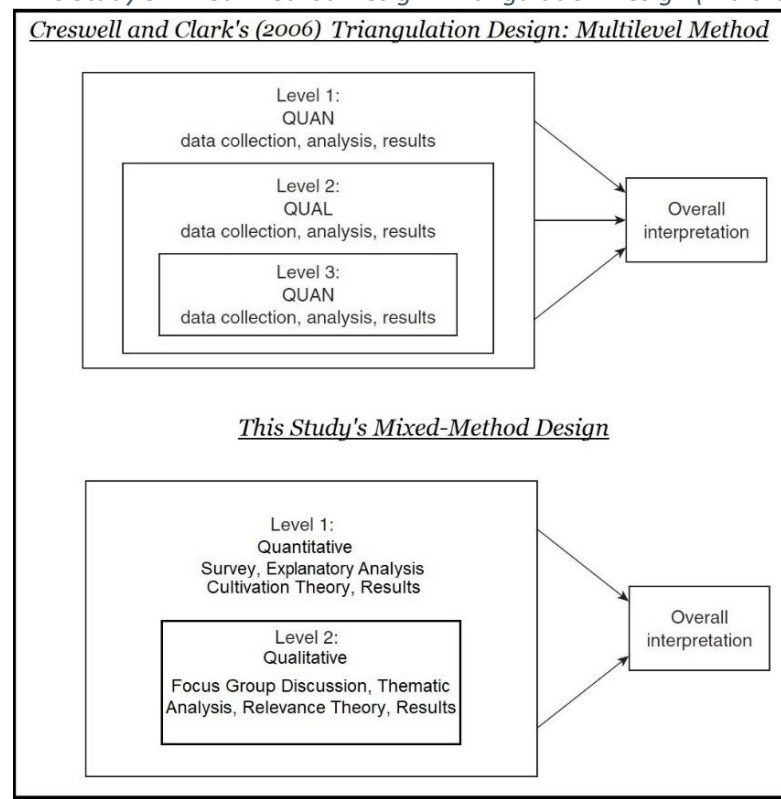
II.II. The Research Design

This study is founded on one primary research question. However, because the study seeks the opinion of two different groups, the question was divided into two parts to cater to the two groups' different opinions and experiences regarding LGBT representation in the Philippine media. The first part was through a quantitative dataset for the general public, which took the form of a survey. This method was applied for this cohort because this is the best approach when dealing with a large population. This study aimed to gather a sample size of 385 out of 110.6 million in the Philippines. However, only 158 valid responses were collected. For the Filipino LGBT community group, qualitative data collection through focus group discussion was conducted. This approach is fit for a study that deals with fewer number of participants. These processes are explained in depth in the 'Research Methods' section. Given that there are two sets of respondents, data, methods, and a series of questions, this study considers the mixed-method design as the best way to achieve what this research aims to answer.

As such, a mixed-method design was adopted because of the usage of two different methods, quantitative and qualitative. Creswell and Clark (2006) express a caveat to mixed-method researchers in choosing the right design for a study, as different types of mixed-method approaches are available. After familiarising herself with different classes of mixed-method designs used in research, the researcher deemed it fit to apply the traditional triangulation design. The triangulation design is the best choice in comparing and contrasting the results and findings from quantitative and qualitative processes to corroborate or develop the results from the qualitative method with the quantitative method or vice versa (ibid.). More specifically, this study's chosen model uses the traditional triangulation design's multilevel method. The model served as the foundation for collecting and analysing data. The multilevel method utilises "different methods (quantitative and qualitative) to address different levels within a system", and then "the findings from each level are merged

into one overall interpretation" (p. 65). Diagram 3 shows how the triangulation design: multilevel method was used in this study.

Diagram 3: This Study's Mixed-Method Design: Triangulation Design (Multilevel Method)



II.III. The Research Methods

Survey and focus group discussion, the two most used data collection methods in Social Sciences, were utilised in this study. As shown in diagram 3, the mixed-method model states that this study used two methods to gather data: quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group discussion).

Group 1: The General Public

A survey helps a researcher deal with a large number of respondents because it is essentially a statistical inquiry. Answers are converted into numbers that can help provide a holistic picture of what the study is trying to find (Elkatawneh, 2016). An added advantage is that people are familiar with the concept and format of surveys, which makes it easier to convince them to participate (Neuman, 2014). For this PhD study, a survey is an ideal tool for finding out more about the general public as it enables the researcher to reach a sizeable number of respondents from a larger

population. The total population of the Philippines has increased from the time this research was proposed (2019: 107 million) to the time the survey questionnaire was created and produced (2021: 110.6 million). Nevertheless, the sample population suggested by Raosoft, an online sample size calculator, remained the same. With a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level, and 50% response distribution, Raosoft recommended a sample size of 385 in order to be a representative one. This research applied a random sampling method on the population as long as they met the criteria of the research:

1. Filipino citizen
2. A resident of the Philippines at the time of the survey
3. Aged 18 years old and above
4. Heterosexual

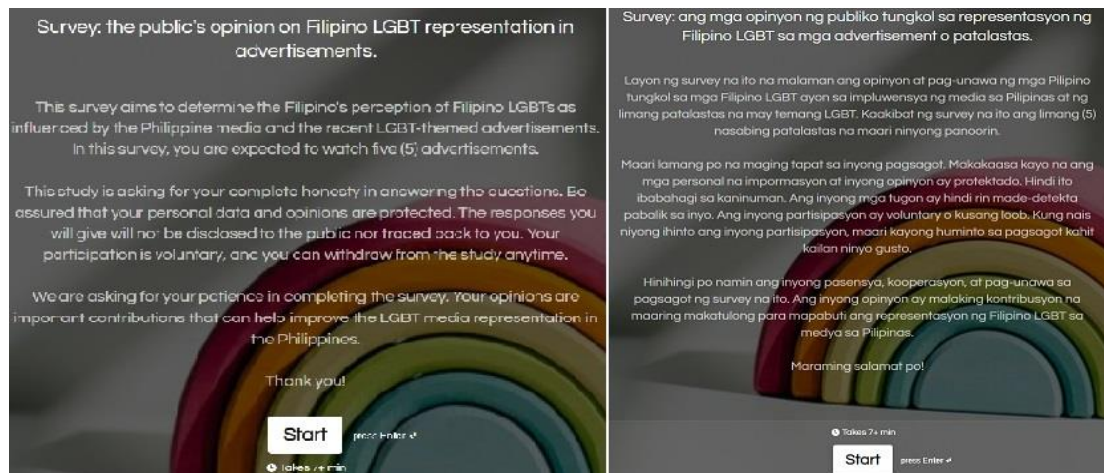
The survey design used a filtering system to let those who qualified to continue with the survey and weed out those who did not. If a person did not meet all of these criteria, they were automatically diverted to a page informing them that they would not be directed to continue with the survey. Those who indicated other than 'male,' 'female,' and 'heterosexual' in the 'about you' section were diverted to a 'call for focus groups participants' page. This page contained information about different data collection for LGBT people and encouraged them to join the focus group discussions if they were interested.

The survey was designed in an online survey tool called Typeform. The researcher chose this website, out of other online survey tools such as Google Form and Survey Monkey, because Typeform's aesthetic is more pleasing than the others. It also allows a faster transition from one question to another, which is crucial in this situation because there are risks of getting incomplete answers from the respondents if they find the survey too long. Typeform indicated at the start of the survey that it would take 7 minutes or more to finish. The total number of questions in the survey is 40 to 41. It is 41 if they want to ask questions before continuing the survey and 40 if there are none. The survey was designed into six parts:

1. Plain language statement – 4 to 5 questions
2. Online consent form – 2 questions

3. Section 1: About you – 8 questions
4. Section 2: Your media habits – 11 questions
5. Section 3: Your opinion on the LGBT-themed advertisements – 10 questions
6. Section 4: Your opinion on Filipino LGBT people – 5 questions

Picture 9: Survey in English and Filipino Languages



The survey has two versions, one in English and one in Tagalog, to encourage people to answer the survey in whichever language they feel more comfortable with. The questions were designed as nominal and ordinal. To measure their feelings on some LGBT issues, such as "is showing LGBT empowerment in the ads a good thing?", an ordinal method such as ranking their answers from 5 to 1, with 5 as "strongly agree" to 1, which is "strongly disagree," was used. For other questions that did not involve their feelings or opinions, a nominal procedure was applied wherein a set of data needed were provided in the form of answers. The answers were preselected, and the respondents chose the best answer for their circumstances (Treiman, 2009). For example, they were asked where they had seen LGBT-themed advertisements before the survey. The choices of answers provided to them are "television," "online or social media," "I have not seen it," and "others."

The survey questionnaire lent heavily towards the ordinal method because the majority of the questions were about their opinions. The quantitative part of the study was framed within the principles of Cultivation theory. Hence, the survey design was based on the survey questionnaire used by George Gerbner, the theory's founder. In one of Gerbner's Cultivation Analysis questionnaires analysing the violence in US TV dramas in the 1970s, the answers to each question were in ranking format ("Cultivation Analysis Questionnaire," n.d.). For example, the choices of

answers for the question "in your opinion, how widespread is violence in our country?" was ranked from 1 (extremely widespread) to 4 (not at all widespread). Hence, applying such a design to this study, the general public's feelings were measured by ranking it from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Group 2: The Filipino LGBT Community

A series of semi-structured focus group discussions were conducted to gather data from the second group, namely, the Filipino LGBT community. This data collection method is the best fit for this group because they are fewer in number than the general public. It also allows in-depth analysis to help answer this study's research questions. Although an updated estimate of the LGBT population in the country is yet to be determined, this study used the 2011's Project Pink Study as a basis for their population, which states that one in 20 people is a member of the LGBT community in Metro Manila alone (Cigaral, 2019). Even that information cannot be considered accurate because the project could only count those who are open about being members of the LGBT community. The said information, together with the concept of a focus group, having 6 to 12 respondents in one room for a discussion that could last up to 90 minutes (Neuman, 2014), is what this research followed. The qualitative process of this study aimed to conduct six sets of interviews with 5 to 6 people per group. The following criteria are needed to qualify as participants in the discussion:

1. Filipino citizen
2. A resident of the Philippines at the time of the focus group discussion
3. Aged 18 years old and above
4. Identifies as a member of the LGBT community

The focus group discussion was chosen for the LGBT community because this research strives to attain first-hand and in-depth opinions of Filipino LGBT people about how they are represented in media. A survey cannot achieve this since it provides only a limited capacity to express in-depth answers from the participants. Since the contributions of LGBT people are based on their experiences and insights into social phenomena that have affected their lives, nominal and ordinal values could never measure that. Guest and colleagues (2013) back this up, saying that focus groups can "create a narrative that is rich, has depth, and informs the overall

study objective," in contrast with the survey wherein "response categories are fixed, and interval and probing is absent" (p. 21). Moreover, the open-ended and semi-structured form of discussion applied in this study allows the researcher to follow up on answers or information given by the participants that were not anticipated or not initially on the list of questions (ibid.). This method suits this study as its flexibility welcomes different insights and encourages the participants to lead the conversations. The questions structured for the interviews were not rigid and only served as an overview of the topics that will be explored during the discussion:

1. Initial phase: Demographic information
2. First phase: Discussion on LGBT representation in media
3. Second phase: Watch the five advertisements
4. Third phase: Discussion on media recognition
5. Fourth phase: Discussion on advice for future advertisements

According to Punch and Oancea (2014), some research questions are required to be explicitly answered by qualitative data gathering and analysis. The focus group design of this study is based on David Morley's Relevance theory. Applying this theory requires gathering participants with similar experiences, such as belonging to the LGBT community, and allowing them to discuss LGBT media content freely. In that way, they can form a bond that will lead them to provide media interpretations that differ from those of people who do not belong to that group. This method has been proven effective based on past studies using this theory and utilising focus group discussion as their data collection method (see Cooper, 1998; Lind, 1996; Rockler, 2002). Further details of how the data collection transpired are found in the subsequent sections. The following section also unpacks the theories that guided this study: the Cultivation and Relevance Theories.

III. Theoretical Framework

While it has already been established that the social phenomenon that the Bench ad caused is what prompted the researcher to explore this topic, it also aims to respond to one of UNDP-USAID's recommendations to eradicate discrimination against the LGBT community (2014). The UNDP-USAID study reviewed the Filipino LGBT community's life and experiences in several sectors in the Philippines, including their mass media representation. Some of their recommendations corresponding to

the media sector include information dissemination through establishing a physical or online library that provides LGBT-related information, engaging mainstream media by developing an agreed-upon LGBT advocacy plan, and supporting LGBT media outlets. Aside from these recommendations, this study recognises the need to produce more academic literature, research, and studies about how they are represented in media. Most of the LGBT media studies found by the researcher, which were also discussed in the literature review, were generally about content analysis, commentaries, and reviews. Research about seeking and assessing their opinions about LGBT media representation is lacking. This type of research approach applied to Filipino LGBT people is only mostly utilised in health, psychology, discrimination, anthropology, and legal studies. Hence, this doctoral project aims to address this gap in research by producing media research wherein Filipino LGBT people were consulted. In addition, this study also aims to respond to the recommendations by UNDP-USAID, carrying out a media study that centres on issues of gender and sexuality in the Philippine media.

Moreover, the main contribution of this study is to centre this media research on the LGBT community at a participatory level. The study aims to explore one of the current LGBT issues in the country, which is the effects of media stereotyping, based on analysis derived from the experiences gathered directly from them. This study approaches it in a manner that is not by observing them from a distance as opposed to some of the most used research designs in this field, like content analysis of visual LGBT media content (see Diaz, 2019; Beller, 2001; Payuyo, 2012; Cañete, 2011). This type of research approach risks the possibility of misinterpreting data or excluding LGBT lived experiences if the analysis is done from the point of view of a non-expert or does not belong in the LGBT community. One of the current problems in Philippine media is that some producers or writers do not research how they should depict LGBT characters in TV shows or films (Payuyo, 2012). According to a director in Payuyo's study, the film industry sticks to the stereotyped representation because it is more concerned with what would ensure revenue and support from the public. Hence, the accuracy of LGBT portrayals in Philippine media was not prioritised. Payuyo gathered the viewpoints of the media sector but not the LGBT community. Hence, this PhD study aims to collect the perspectives of LGBT people regarding this matter. This study's focus group participants also discussed the problem that Payuyo stated. As a result of engaging with the LGBT people to collect

datasets and approach them at a participatory level, this study is able to present the side of the LGBT community regarding the said issue. Moreover, this research is able to provide viewpoints on how the community feel they should be depicted to ensure successful and inclusive mainstream media representation in the country. These results will not be reached if frequently used research method in Philippine media and gender academic field, such as content analysis and the author's commentaries, is used in this study.

As this research aims to understand the LGBT community's perspectives on the selected advertisements, it also wants to understand how they are being viewed by the general public as influenced by media. Heavy exposure to stereotyped and negative interpretations for an extended period can significantly affect people. Hence, the general public group and this part of the study are guided by the theoretical principles of Cultivation Theory.

III.I. Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory, or Cultivation Analysis, is the third stage of a three-pronged study in the Cultural Indicators Project. George Gerbner founded the project in 1968 because he wanted to know the public's opinion or views on a specific societal issue at a specific time based on the culture's "shared public message system", which he described as "images and motion as well as words" (1969: p. 141-142). At this point, he was not concerned with the relationship of senders and receivers of media messages like the concept of Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding analysis wherein the audiences are predicted to have one of the three types of readings: dominant/preferred, negotiated, and oppositional. Gerbner wanted to determine how the media influenced a particular culture generally, not individually. The Cultural Indicators Project presented three stages to help identify answers to these inquiries (Gerbner et al., 1986):

1. Institutional Process Analysis – studying how policies are formed by media players that are contributing to the public message system
2. Message System Analysis – content analysis of television media content being investigated
3. Cultivation Analysis – analysis of the audiences' responses based on their exposure to television or the TV media content in question

Even Gerbner's technique does not emphasise content analysis as an essential part of determining the media's influence on people and only categorises it as one of the stages to investigate the public's opinion on media messages. Hence, one of the reasons why this PhD research aims for a different research method that steers away from the overused content analysis technique in limited studies available. Gerbner argues that a particular culture's television system may already give an idea about that society's collective viewpoint on a particular societal issue; hence the content analysis was only used to establish a pattern of the message system that will provide the basis for a Cultivation Analysis (Gerbner et al., 1986).

This doctoral project applies the third prong of the Cultural Indicators Project, the Cultivation Analysis, to investigate how the prolonged exposure to stereotypical and negative LGBT media representation in the Philippines has affected the attitudes of Filipino heterosexuals towards Filipino LGBT people. The timeline of the prolonged exposure in this study is LGBT-themed TV shows, movies, or any media content from the 1980s up to the 2010s, but before the release of the five advertisements (2016 to 2019). The Cultivation Theory states that the longer audiences are exposed to television, the more likely they will perceive their social reality as similar to what they see on television. For example, the respondents in Gerbner's 1976 study 'The Violence Profile,' analysing the effects of violence on television shows from 1967, discovered that those who spent more time watching television sense greater danger in their social reality – similar to what they see on television – than the respondents who spend fewer hours watching television. Gerbner (1976) explains that this perception occurs because heavy television viewers spend less time in the real world, allowing television to condition their views instead of spending time on activities that could give them a different type of perception on different matters. For example, children and young adults whose daily routine only involves school and home and watching television for long hours tend to mistrust people more than light viewers as they have developed violence-related fears based on the crime and police television programs they were exposed to around the time of the study (Gerbner, 1980). The study stated that the violent content between the characters of the weekend daytime children's television shows the respondents were exposed to increased violent content by up to 80%, compared to only 56% during prime-time (8 to 11 pm) on weekdays. Another example is the children and young adults with no direct experience with people in the older generation had been led to believe that

this generation was fewer in number in the population than they actually were because of the relative absence of older people on US television at that particular moment (Gerbner et al., 1986). The children and young adults also thought that the people in the older generation were not open-minded, unhealthy, and not in good financial standing in their social realities because this was the consistent media portrayal of the said group during this time (Gerbner, 1998).

Based on the principles of Cultivation Theory regarding prolonged exposure to television, this doctoral project applies Cultivation Analysis to determine whether the dominance of the negative and stereotypical roles of the LGBT community in the Philippine media contributed to the Filipino heterosexual audience's perception of them and if such perceptions are still influencing them. More specifically, as stated in diagram 1 (the conceptual map of the research questions), inquiries of the general public are centred on two main categories:

1. Whether the LGBT media representation in the past had influenced their attitudes towards this group. This study's timeline of "the past" for this group is any LGBT-themed media content, including movies, aired on television from the 1980s to the 2010s, but before the release of the five advertisements (2016 to 2019).
2. What are the impacts and their reactions to the new LGBT-themed advertisements?

The second question corresponds to the ultimate question of this study, which is "what are their reactions?" However, the first question is vital to determine the cultivation effects of the negative and stereotypical roles of the LGBT community to the audiences. The cultivation effects will be evident upon analysing the answers to the first question as guided by Cultivation Theory. This is needed to compare and contrast the general public's reactions to two different LGBT media content, the negative/stereotypical and the positive portrayals, so this research can also provide a few Cultural Indicators. The Cultural Indicators are clues that can be found in a society's television system that can provide a possible trajectory of the TV messages or the possible reactions of the audiences to future TV messages. This study aims to provide some predictions on the probable future reactions of audiences to future

LGBT media content based on the analysis of the respondent's answers to the survey.

The crucial part of this analysis is determining the number of hours they spend watching television and for how long this habit is being made. For example, information such as a viewer's habit of watching X hours of television per day is done consistently for X years is essential in Cultivation studies. Most studies in the Cultural Indicators Project applied a longitudinal design involving a massive amount of television content and respondent population to examine the progress of TV exposure and cultivation tendencies accurately. While it is beyond the scope of this research project to incorporate a longitudinal aspect, it does apply the theory's tenets and adapts the essential components of the theory for its survey design and analyses with the aim of discovering the feelings and opinions of the general public towards the Filipino LGBT community as influenced by the Philippine media. Therefore, one criterion to qualify for the survey is to be ordinarily resident in the country at the time of the study. This research argues that respondents who are not in the same cultural location at a certain time may consume a different content dictated by a different message system. This could result in different media exposure and influential rates that may or may not impact a person who is not a resident of the society on which this research focuses. For example, Filipinos in Saudi Arabia cannot participate in the study because their media consumption might only be limited to what the Saudi media exposes them to.

III.II. Relevance Theory

Like Gerbner's strategy, David Morley also explored a study of the relationship between media and audiences with an approach different from Hall's encoding and decoding system. In his studies, 'The Nationwide Audience' and 'Family Television,' he positioned the audiences as 'active readers' by interviewing them in a group setting, focusing on their opinions regarding certain television content rather than investigating how they decoded them. Through these studies, the Relevance Theory was formed. The theory states that audiences place meaning on texts based on shared experiences with people in the same socio-economical situations (Morley, 1980).

In 'The Nationwide Audience' study, Morley (1980) uses the current affairs program called 'Nationwide' as the focus of the group discussion, particularly an episode about budget, economic, and political issues. His study participants were from different social and cultural backgrounds, as he was curious about how audiences would decode media texts when they were already in a "group that had some existence as a social identity" (p. 158). His study showed that because the participants had decoded the messages from the episode differently, audiences were not homogenous. This contradicts the findings produced by the Frankfurt School, stating that audiences have monolithic and predictable responses. Morley discovers that the participants' reading was more heavily influenced by the group discussion and the situation or institutions each individual belonged to than the visual codes and signs that were the focus of Hall's encoding and decoding system. For example, one news featured in the 'Nationwide' episode was about two student-designed projects. First, students from Midland College invented a machine that could help blind students to create 3D drawings. Second, students from Wolverhampton created survival kits made of waste materials. The discussion in the skilled working-class group showed that all of them similarly viewed this specific report as a failure to represent the projects' full potential, together with the student representative of the survival kit project's inability to explain the project well:

"A load of rubbish... and he couldn't answer..."

"Yeah, he didn't answer..."

"He didn't give an answer... it's not an answer" (p. 166).

When the upper working-class group discussed the same report, an agreement on perspectives among the participants was also observed, but was different from the skilled working-class group, wherein they focused more on the quality of the project:

"They tell you... they express what it's doing for them."

"I think you learn from that interview."

"The one with the blind was about the most interesting..."

"--- yeah the blind" (p. 173).

It can be observed that their social positions affected how they interpreted the media texts. While the skilled working-class cohort paid attention to the representation of the student projects on the news, the upper working class appreciated the value of the projects. Their opinions were based on the participants' real-life situations. The skilled working-class group agreed that the project was not helpful and did not

envision the importance or contribution of the project to alleviate one's daily life. However, the upper working class appreciated the project but acknowledged that it was irrelevant to them.

Relevance Theory was again applied and demonstrated in Morley's (1986) 'Family Television' study. The findings revealed that the housewives in the study placed more importance on crime news that happened near or within their area than elsewhere, as there was a perceived higher possibility they might be affected by it than the crime news that happened in a place that was not close in proximity. Aside from that, upon analysing each family member's television show preferences, Morley discovered that each family or family member's program preferences, response to texts, and viewing behaviours were affected by different personal situations, such as domestic and job responsibilities. Hence, Relevance theory centres on the audiences' social and cultural factors relevant or irrelevant to them when interacting with the media.

Fiske (1988) enhances the theory. Like Gerbner and Morley's view on audiences, Fiske argues that audiences have the power over media text, not the other way around. Hence, shared discourse among audiences could give meanings to text derived from social or cultural factors. According to Fiske, media interpretation among audiences is a "cultural process" wherein each person is influenced by their own set of personal experiences that will, later on, be combined when discussed with people having similar experiences (p. 247). He called this process "social allegiance" (ibid.). Moreover, the theory emphasises audiences with similar social histories or cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, as they can interpret meanings from television further based on their shared experiences. However, the rich interpretation could only be made once the social allegiance had been activated. Consequently, the social allegiance would not be activated, and there would not be any meaningful readings if the audiences in one group had no shared experiences. For example, the heterosexual audiences in Cohen's (1991) study missed some gay-related cues in some scenes of the show 'Tidy Endings' as these were not relevant to their lives, whereas the gay audiences did not miss them and they were able to transcend their commentaries into real-life situations. In Lind's (1996) study about the audiences' responses to a news story showing different treatment of white and Black potential house buyers, the white audience groups felt the story was irrelevant.

Hence, their discussions were limited. However, the Black audience groups elevated the discussion of discrimination due to race from merely buying houses to a bigger social context. In Cooper's (1998) study about a film called 'Do the right thing' that showed racism and discrimination, with a white person portrayed as an antagonist, the white audience group focused the discussion on the white person's portrayal more than the societal issues presented in the movie. Conversely, the Black audience group discussed racism, violence, and discrimination.

Following the mentioned ideas, this doctoral project also aims to centre the LGBT audiences and their experiences to give a better reading on the chosen LGBT-themed advertisements to answer the question, "What are their reactions?" Moreover, this research expects that the similarities in their social realities have the possibility to:

1. Transcend the discussion from the media content to real-life situations and struggles based on their shared experiences that can provide a bigger context of their social realities portrayed differently in media and possibly seen differently by those who do not belong in their group.
2. Give different readings, meanings, and interpretations of some of the elements of the chosen LGBT-themed advertisements that audiences outside the group can easily miss.

The principles of Relevance Theory emphasise the need to activate social allegiance to get a better interpretation and discussion from the chosen group. Hence, the ideal data collection method for a study guided by this theory is focus groups with participants who belong to the same categories or have similar experiences. This study applies this data collection method by targeting participants who are Filipino LGBT members living in the Philippines at the time of the study. The data collection was conducted during the pandemic caused by the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Despite facing different challenges and regulations preventing in-person social gatherings, the study nevertheless sought to conduct face-to-face focus group discussions because it was considered that a social allegiance might not be activated if the discussion took place online. In other words, communication via the internet might eliminate personal interactions that can facilitate and activate social allegiance among participants. These include the opportunity to socialise and chat

before the interview starts, as well as the sense of belongingness they may come to feel when they see the emotions of the other participants as they share experiences that might be similar to theirs. Furthermore, this study also set out to gather collective and collaborative opinions of the Filipino LGBT community in the Philippines on how they are represented in the Philippine media. Taking into account the lack of studies in media and communications that explore their opinions and feelings, this study aims to find a consensus of opinions about the LGBT media representation that directly came from the members of the said community. This study considers that this consensus can only be attained if it seeks the opinion of LGBT members all over the Philippines. The country is divided into three main regions: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Each region has different sets of characteristics. For example, the Mindanao region is predominantly Muslim. Hence, this study recognises that the social realities differ for LGBT members in all regions of the country. Focusing on only one region would invalidate the study's goals, as well as Morley's beliefs of not treating the audience homogenously because the situation of the LGBT members in the Luzon region is different from the ones in the Visayas and Mindanao regions. This study explores these differences and establishes positions, viewpoints, and opinions on their media representation specific to LGBT members' socio-demographic situations.

Punch and Oancea (2014) argue that theories and data have a symbiotic relationship. A theory can be tested and proven using the data gathered, or a researcher can formulate a theory based on the data and results gathered (2014). They also explain that data could come first prior to the theory or vice versa. The important thing is that both should be present in research. This study agrees with these ideas as the research design, collection, and analysis were shaped and moulded based on the principles and research practices explained by the two theories discussed in this chapter. The application of these theories to data collection, management, and analysis is presented in the next section.

IV. Data Collection, Management, and Analysis

It has already been established that this study collects real-life data from the Filipino people, their opinions and feelings in order to answer the primary and secondary research questions. According to Punch (2005), real-life data would not come magically in numerical format. What Punch and Oancea (2014) mean by empirical

research as "an organised common sense" is a type of research wherein it is "within reach of many people," "can simplify the more technical aspects of research methods, and enhance understanding, by showing the logic behind them" (p. 9). Hence, a structured data collection process should be imposed to maintain an "organised, systematic and logical research" (p. 11). This section explains how this research project collected, managed, and analysed data.

As previously explained, this research aims to gather opinions from the Filipino LGBT community on their views on how the Philippine media represents them. In order to reach out to all opinions nationwide, the study sought the LGBT community in all three main regions in the Philippines: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao region. The focus group participants representing the Luzon region reside in different cities in the National Capital Region (NCR). The NCR, comprising 17 metropolitan cities, is the capital region of Luzon and is the centre of economic and political affairs in the country. The capital, Manila, is included in the NCR.

IV.I. Data Collection

Survey: The General Public

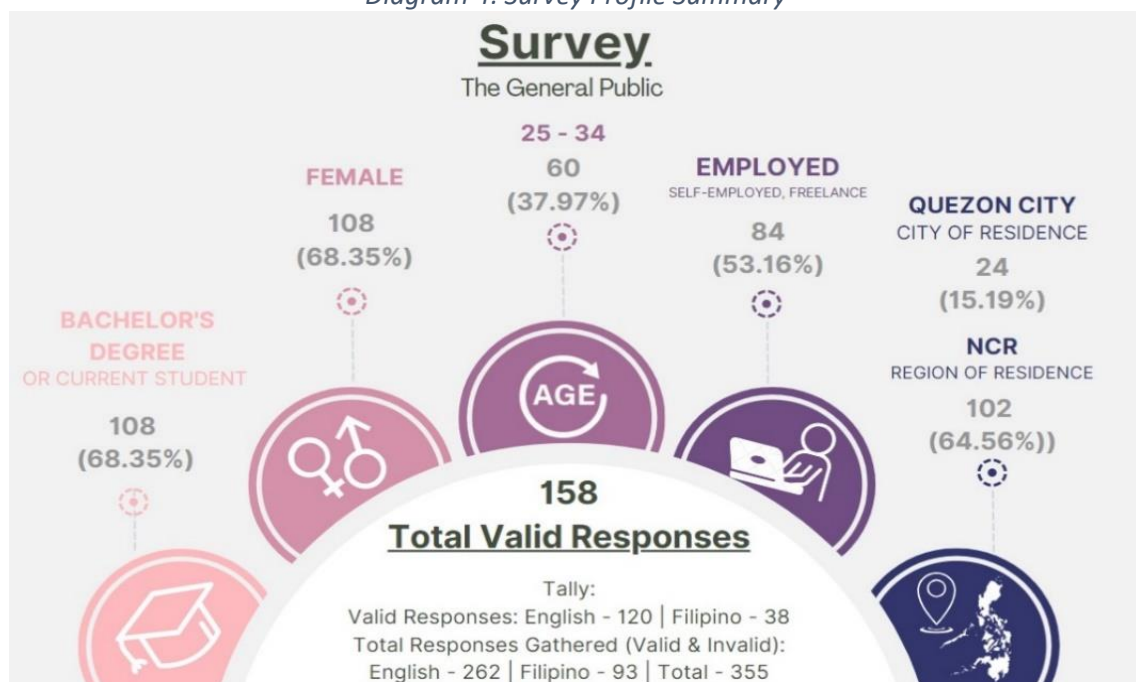
First phase: A pilot survey was done from September 13 to 16, 2021, to test its effectiveness before launching the questionnaire. The survey links were disseminated among the researchers' friends and families in the Philippines. It gathered 23 respondents (8 valid and 15 invalid responses). The pilot survey aims to anticipate potential problems by gathering the pilot respondents' comments and applying solutions before officially launching it. The pilot survey also helped determine whether or not the filtering system for the respondents who did not qualify for the survey was working. Most of the problems raised were confusion on the following:

- the buttons and boxes to tick (too many boxes for the online consent form)
- the ordinal numbers (no label on answers such as "strongly agree")
- misinterpretations of some of the answer choices presented to them

Second phase: The official survey was disseminated online from September 17, 2021, to April 13, 2022. The survey links for both English and Filipino versions were

shared on the researcher's social media pages: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger. The secondary dissemination was through the help of her previous colleagues in GMA Network Inc., one of the leading television networks in the Philippines. The researcher asked a few television news reporters to repost or retweet the links. This was helpful because they have a substantial number of followers considering they are public figures in the country. Another secondary dissemination process was randomly posting a call for participation on over 1000 public Facebook pages in the Philippines. Examples of the themes of these pages are a marketplace, buy and sell, university or school forum, and local community pages. The researcher endeavoured to share the links to Facebook pages in all of the main regions in the country that she could find to ensure its nationwide exposure. Word-of-mouth was also utilised and asked people to repost the call for participation on their social media pages or share the survey links with their friends and families. As previously stated, Raosoft recommends a 385 sample size to study a country with an estimated population of 110.6 million in 2021. Despite the effort to disseminate the survey online in all ways possible, as deemed by the researcher, it only gathered 158 valid responses. As seen in diagram 4, a total of 355 responses were gathered, but not all were valid, as some respondents did not qualify for the survey. Either they were below 18 years old, not a citizen and resident of the Philippines, or did not belong to the heterosexual community.

Diagram 4: Survey Profile Summary



Focus Group Discussion: The Filipino LGBT Community

First phase: The invitation to participate in the focus group discussions was sent out via e-mail to different LGBT organisations in the country. Two organisations responded and assured the participation of some of their members in the study. These organisations are from the NCR (Luzon region) and Mindanao region, which already covers the two main regions. It was a challenge to gather participants from the Visayas region due to the lack of responses from organisations. It was later decided to recruit respondents via recommendations from friends and acquaintances. All the potential participants were sent a letter of invitation, a plain language statement (PLS), and a copy of the guide questions. The initial dates for the focus groups were set on January 8, 2022 (for NCR), January 15, 2022 (for Visayas region) and January 21, 2022 (for Mindanao region).

Second phase: The Omicron surge in the Philippines from the last week of December 2021 to January 2022 prompted the national government to restrict travel and social gatherings nationwide. This resulted in the cancellation of flights and the closure of public and private facilities, such as coffee shops, where some focus groups would be held. An increase in people who have acquired the virus or close contact was also observed. Due to these reasons, among others, most of the participants in the NCR region cancelled their participation in the focus groups. The interviews in the Visayas region were also cancelled because of super typhoon Odette that hit many parts of it on December 16, 2021. All of the participants in the region are residing in Cebu City. However, this city was majorly hit by the typhoon, and the aftermath was still evident in January. Establishments, houses, and buildings were damaged; phone lines and towers were down, resulting in inaccessibility to reach out to them. As a result, the interviews had to be cancelled, and a new recruitment phase was commenced to gather respondents from another city in the region unaffected by the typhoon. The only interview conducted as scheduled was the ones in the Mindanao region. The region had fewer restrictions and health concerns at the time of the interview because the virus had not yet reached the area. The protocols, restrictions, and health concerns were only enforced and observed a few days after the interviews took place.

Third phase: The rescheduled interviews for NCR and the Visayas region took place as scheduled. However, the main problem was the number of participants. This

research aimed to conduct six focus group interviews with 5 to 6 people per group. However, many have withdrawn from participating because of the complications brought on by the Omicron surge and typhoon Odette. The interviews could no longer be rescheduled due to the researcher's limited time in the country for the purposes of data collection. As such, it was decided to proceed with the interviews. The ideal number of participants was achieved in the Mindanao region due to fewer complications during this pandemic season. A total of 11 participants were gathered: 6 in Group 1 and 5 in Group 2. As for the other regions, there were only 8 participants in NCR (4 in each group) and 6 for the Visayas region (3 in each group). There were fewer participants in the Visayas region because of two reasons. First, the selected city has a smaller population than other cities in the region. Second, some LGBT members in the selected city declined to participate in the interview because they were not yet open about their sexualities. Only six participants were willing to participate at the time, and the researcher was faced with the dilemma of whether to continue with the interviews or postpone again and restart the recruitment process in a different city. However, Krueger (1994) states that the data collection is



deemed valid when a series of discussions have produced a pattern of statements and information from all the groups (cited in Rabiee, 2004). The Visayas interview was the last set of interviews conducted by the study, and at this point, several patterns were already observed from the previous four interviews from the Luzon

and Mindanao region. Moreover, Krueger (ibid.) also states that having three to four participants for simple research like this doctoral project is acceptable. At this point, the researcher decided to proceed with the interviews in the Visayas region despite the reduced number of participants there. Overall, the study has gathered 25 participants from the Filipino LGBT community. Diagram 5 shows the profile summary of all the focus group respondents. Each participant's profile information is listed in Appendix A.

IV.II. Data Management

The usage of quantitative data analysis software is recommended when analysing survey data as it helps the researchers organise the mixed data better than when done in an Excel spreadsheet (Bazeley, 2006). While Typeform, the survey tool used in this study, has features that allow data storage and analysis, the researcher only specifically utilised the storage feature. This study mainly utilised Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in data organisation and management because its features allow a faster analysis of different variables despite a large number of data. It also allows categorising data in nominal (choosing from a set of preselected answers) and ordinal (ranking) forms, which helps compare and contrast several variables in an organised way. For example, since the Cultivation Analysis focuses on the number of hours spent on television as an independent variable, SPSS allows comparison of this independent variable to other variables (such as demographic profile and opinions on LGBT-themed ads) and ordinal data to cater to this inquiry. This process in SPSS is called cross-tabulation (crosstabs). A cross-tabulation analysis is one of the helpful analytical features in SPSS as it helps analyse two or more dimensional tables that contain particular characteristics for each table cell (Jays et al., 2011). This is particularly helpful when analysing ordinal data as it allows the comparison of one massive set of data to another. An example of crosstabs analysis in SPSS is shown in picture 10. All data from Typeform were uploaded to SPSS for analysis.

Picture 10: Cross-tabulation Analysis in SPSS: TV Hours (independent variable) and answers to "The Media Influenced my Perception of the LGBT people" (ordinal).

TVHours * MediaInfluencedMyPerception Crosstabulation

Count		MediaInfluencedMyPerception					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
TVHours	0	1	1	3	7	2	14
	1	4	4	10	11	10	39
	2	2	5	12	18	9	46
	3	0	3	4	7	5	19
	4	0	0	6	10	2	18
	5	1	0	2	5	3	11
	6	1	0	3	3	1	8
	7	0	0	1	0	0	1
	10	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total		9	13	41	62	33	158

The data management for the focus groups is more complicated and requires more work than the survey. The interviews were recorded in audio-visual (via camera, GoPro, and mobile phones) and audio format (via mobile phones and dictaphone). There were four to five recording devices for each interview. The need to use this number of devices was due to difficulty in getting clear and audible sound from the participants due to the pandemic protocols such as social distancing and wearing face masks. The devices were strategically placed around the participants to ensure complete coverage and elimination of blind spots to help with the transcription later. The data went through several phases before getting uploaded to NVivo for analysis:

Phase 1: Editing the video and audio materials using a video editing tool (cleaning the background noises and volume adjustments).

Phase 2: All the interviews were transcribed.

Phase 3: All the transcribed interviews were translated into the English language.

Phase 4: The data were uploaded in NVivo.

This study utilised NVivo software to help manage and analyse a set of qualitative data containing a massive amount of texts such as interviews. NVivo helps organise the data by categorising them in codes, which helps the researcher develop themes (Bazeley, 2006). NVivo allows the easiest way to organise the data through tagging as opposed to the traditional way, which is coding the data through coloured highlighters and post-it notes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). According to Richards (2005), one of the advantages of using qualitative coding is that the texts will retain

their original meaning as opposed to quantitative coding, wherein data are translated into numbers (cited in Bazeley, 2006). Bazeley (2006) adds that qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo corresponds to Richards' points because it allows data organisation without compromising or altering the original meaning of the texts, which was very useful during the second coding phase in this study. As part of the analysis process, this study implemented a second coding phase to ensure that no themes or important information were missed during the first coding phase. The software was helpful during this part of the analysis as it allowed the opportunity to reanalyse and recode the data easily. In this software, everything was readily available, the texts' meanings remained intact, and recoding the data did not compromise the initial coding system in place.

IV.III. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilised in analysing all the data in this research. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this analysis is motivated by the researcher's theoretical approach to the study. They add that a researcher using the theoretical thematic analysis would use related studies as sources when analysing the data. As a result, the coding process from these studies would be utilised by the researcher and could result in having a number of themes that are similar to the other studies (ibid.). Similarly, Bazeley (2009) advises researchers to draw from the theoretical literature as an additional source when explaining the analysed data, as it could give ways to enhance and extend the discussion into areas outside of the researcher's field.

While the analysis of survey data applied a few elements of the deductive and inductive approaches for the focus groups, the thematic analysis remained the primary method of analysis because it allowed the researcher to analyse with flexibility. The thematic analysis aims to identify patterns or themes given by data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The said patterns and themes served as guides in giving rich narratives when answering the research questions in this study. Contrary to the aims of deductive and inductive approaches, such as proving a theory by presenting a hypothesis and creating a new theory, respectively (Brotherton, 2015), this study's aims were more focused on answering the research questions rather than corroborating or producing a new theory. This study contends that the empirical data and the knowledge formed from the answers given by the survey respondents

and focus group participants constitute substantial contributions to the academic discourse about Filipino LGBT representation in the Philippine media.

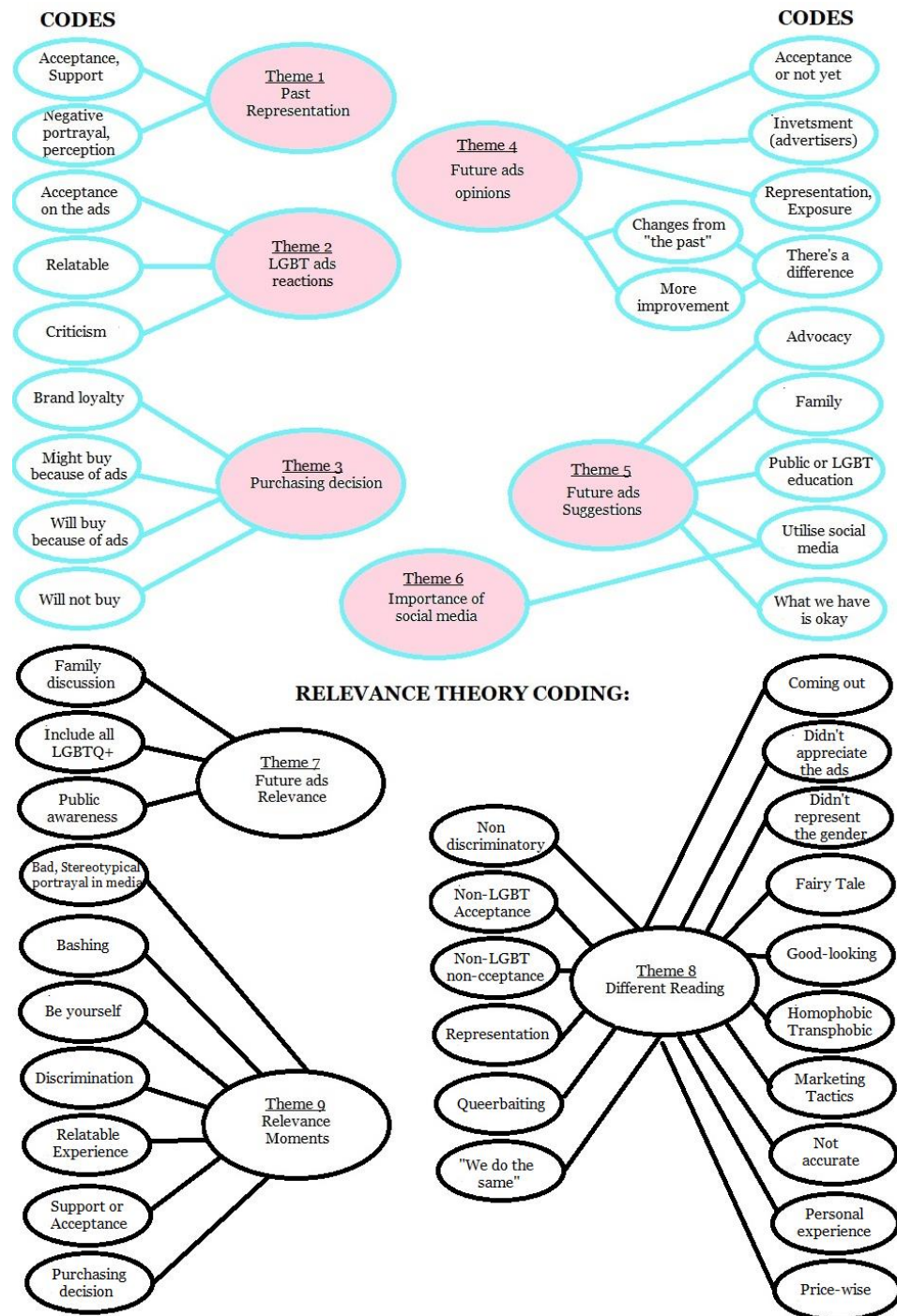
The deductive approach's element applied in the survey was the usage of theoretical and empirical knowledge as its starting point (Elkatawneh, 2016; Brotherton, 2015). This was used when analysing the influence of the independent variable, the number of hours spent by the respondents on television and social media, to the other dependent variables that can show the cultivation impact of media. However, no hypotheses were formed because this study aims to find the answers based on the respondents' responses. When the deductive approach was not needed, thematic analysis was applied. For example, themes were determined by explaining the general public's reactions to the five LGBT-themed advertisements. This is one type of flexibility that thematic analysis provided in the study, especially because the data derived from these reactions do not need to be corroborated by the theory. Furthermore, this study endeavours to give explanations that are not statistical in nature. Especially for the survey data, the descriptive analysis was ruled out as it only focuses on reporting numbers, statistics, themes, or categories given by the data (Bazeley, 2009). An explanatory approach was applied because this approach "includes descriptive elements but goes beyond this to identify and explore the causes lying behind the effects and the nature of the relationships between the two" (Brotherton, 2015, p. 12). The numbers gathered from the survey questionnaire, cross-referenced with Cultivation Theory studies, served as tools for finding themes that guided this study in answering the research questions. Aside from these, 'prevalence' was also applied in identifying themes. Prevalence is "a patterned response or meaning within the dataset" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Moreover, the study also applied Bazeley's (2009) idea of "using divergent views to challenge generalisations", wherein a researcher provided alternate explanations based on unexpected responses from the data (p. 12). This is evident in divergent answers from a small portion of the survey respondents (light social media users) discussed in the next chapter.

Qualitative research is said to be "inductive in nature" because "the research questions, the data collection, the data analysis is not based on a theory or preconceived notions that the researcher has, the researcher let the data speak for itself, and form itself into themes without the bias of an existing theory,"

(Elkatawneh, 2016, p. 3). This study agrees with these statements because, while Relevance Theory guides this part of the study, the process of inquiry and analysis are not exclusive to this theoretical knowledge. The questions formulated for the focus groups did not precisely aim nor persuade to activate social allegiance nor find moments of relevancy. In fact, the questions were open-ended, and the discussions were flexible. This study focuses on determining the participants' feelings and opinions regarding how they are represented in media. Hence, the discussions were more focused on that. The moments of relevancy and social allegiance are identified based on the themes produced by the data. Hence, the thematic analysis is heavily applied because this study considers that conclusions should be based on the participants' statements, not on the researcher's assumptions grounded by the principles of the chosen theory. Moreover, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised that themes and coding processes should link to the data, not the researcher's existing philosophies. It is on this part wherein the inductive coding process was applied to determine "patterns, connections, relationships and so on in order to interpret its significance and produce meaningful explanations" (Brotherton, 2015, p. 16). Similar to the survey analysis, Braun and Clarke's 'prevalence' and Bazeley's usage of 'divergent views to challenge generalisations' was also applied to identify the themes in the interview datasets.

These ideas were followed during the first coding phase, determining 25 themes, 13 of which contained sub-codes. This number of themes was more than expected. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), several decisions will be implemented during the analysis, including choosing necessary and crucial themes for the study. They also state that not all patterns can be counted as themes. During the initial coding, participants' answers that were not related to media were also coded (e.g. life anecdotes and quotable quotes from the participants' experiences that were non-media related), resulting in having a few themes that were a mixture of media and non-media related answers. Hence, a second coding phase was initiated to narrow the themes into more media-related answers. The second coding phase produced nine themes, 8 of which have sub-codes. The coding map of the second and final coding phase of this study is illustrated in diagram 6.

Diagram 6: Second (and Final) Phase of Coding



V. Ethical Implications

Punch (2016) states that it is the researcher's ethical responsibility to ensure that "the overarching principles of academic integrity, honesty, and respect for other people" are observed (p. 23). In this research, the participants' privacy and personal circumstances are accounted for and protected. Dublin City University (DCU) Research Ethics Committee classifies this doctoral project as 'expedited'. This category describes research dealing with some sensitive information, but the risks

to the participants are moderate. This research is mainly classified as 'expedited' due to the involvement of participants considered part of a 'vulnerable' group. Among other categories under this classification, this research responds to the category wherein the opinions collected from the participants might trigger strong responses from them and could lead to long or short-term effects. The said category corresponds to the focus group participants of this study. The 'expedited' classification is also concerned with the private information collected by the research, which best describes the survey respondents as they were encouraged to express their honest feelings about the Filipino LGBT community. Their e-mail addresses are collected in case they have questions about the study. Thus, it could cause worry and prevent them from answering honestly for fear of their answers getting traced back to them. This study welcomes all types of responses from the general public, whether positive or negative. Hence, by showing the plain language statement (PLS) at the start of the survey, they were informed that the survey gives privacy and anonymity, and their answers will never be traced back to them. Their e-mail addresses are only collected when they have questions about the study. If they do not have any questions, then there is no need to give out contact information. The data collection did not take place without ethical approval by the DCU Research Ethics Committee, which was granted on August 31, 2021.

As for the focus group participants, Filipino LGBT people are considered a 'vulnerable group' based on the DCU Research Ethics Committee's standards and the fact that they are considered sexual and gender minorities in the Philippines. Some part of the discussion touches on the subject of their personal experiences as affected by media representation. Hence, strong responses were expected. Their privacy, anonymity, and mental and emotional states are prioritised. To address these, they were given a debriefing document containing a list of mental health and counselling service providers offering free services to the people. They were also asked to identify and address each other under an alias of their choosing to maintain anonymity during the discussion. The researcher ensured they were informed of their rights from the recruitment to the interview stage. Upon recruitment and before the interview started, they were given a copy of PLS in both languages. The contents were also summarised to them verbally by the researcher before the interviews commenced. The interview did not start until they were given chances to ask questions and address any concerns before the discussion. The survey also

provided the same opportunity to the respondents. Afterwards, all survey respondents and focus group participants were asked to acknowledge and sign the consent form to assure the researcher that they understood all the information given to them. The focus group participants were given several critical pieces of information before the interview, including the fact that they would be discussing with random people in a group setting. This is important as Neuman (2014) states that experiments could sometimes be intrusive and put people in awkward and anxious situations. Neuman adds that it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure a safe and controlled environment for the participants, which was done by conducting interviews in areas that were only accessible to those who were part of the study. In events where non-participants were present during the discussion (a contact person for an organisation and the researcher's temporary research assistant), they were asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement informing them that they have the responsibility to observe the privacy and security in place to protect the participants and the research. Lastly, the participants were asked to keep the place a safe space to allow participants to express their opinions, that non-dominant opinions are welcome, and, as it was an election season at the time of the data collection, to avoid adding political opinions during the discussion. Table 1 summarises the important ethical information given to the survey respondents and focus group participants as indicated on the PLS.

Table 1: Summary of information in Plain Language Statements

Survey	Focus Groups
What to expect...	
- Participation is voluntary - Free to withdraw participation anytime - The data will be used for future studies up to 5 years after the date of collection	
- Personal data (e-mail address, age, city of residence) will be asked to eliminate bots or fake participants - To answer over 39 questions - To watch 5 advertisements	- Personal data (age, sexual orientation, gender identity, city of residence) will be asked - Group discussions with 5 to 6 people up to 90 minutes - It will be audio and video recorded. Then transcribed and translated into English - They can withdraw participation or redact some statements they gave post-interview
Confidentiality	
- All personal information are privatized, anonymised, pseudonymised	

- Their details will never be traced back to them, divulged in this study ,and future studies of the researcher - Their data is protected under the limitations of law	
Data management	
- All the data will be stored in encrypted, password protected storage devices - The data is only accessible by the researcher and her supervisor - Hardcopies will be stored in a locked envelope - The data will be stored for 5 years. After which, all with be deleted and destroyed.	
Potential Risks	
- No substantial risk due to anonymity	- No substantial risk to personal and professional reputation due to anonymity of data - Strong responses are expected to be triggered. Hence, the discussion will remain in the LGBT media representation. Refusal to answer the questions is always welcome.
Benefits to the participants	
- The survey may help the respondents reflect on how they truly perceive the Filipino LGBT community and discover whether these are media influenced or not.	To provide a platform to the LGBT community to express opinion about media representation and inform the media how they would want to be represented.

VI. Conclusion

The researcher's curiosity over the social phenomenon caused by the Bench commercial started this study. From a simple question, "what are the reactions of the Filipino people..." it branches into two inquiries to understand both sides of the fence: the Filipino heterosexuals (aka general public) and the Filipino LGBT people. Hence, this study utilised two types of data collection: survey and focus group. It also has two types of theories. Because of the nature of the inquiry, the study utilises a mixed-methods design to collect two different datasets to answer the primary and secondary research questions. The explanatory analysis is used for the survey answers, while thematic analysis is utilised in focus group data. Despite using some elements of deductive and inductive approaches, the analysis was heavily driven by theoretical principles and thematic analysis concepts because this study agrees that conclusions should be drawn from the data, not the researcher's preconceived notions. The privacy and anonymity of the people involved in this study remained the priority. This chapter has explained how the study endeavoured to maintain a safe environment for everyone because it is aware that it deals with vulnerable groups, sensitive information, and privacy issues. Moreover, the study is not

concerned with establishing new theories but with providing information to help the LGBT community improve media representation in the country. Hence, the analytical approach applied in this study is driven by answering the research questions and contributing empirical data about the Filipino LGBT community and their portrayal in the Philippine media.

Finally, this chapter reminds us what this doctoral project means when the term "general public" is used. This has been thoroughly explained in Chapter One. The general public comprises this study's survey respondents who are heterosexuals, Filipino citizens and residents, and 18 years old and above. The term "general" is used because the survey does not target any specific type of person, religion, or affiliations. Moreover, it is called "general" because, according to Cultivation Theory, the dominant group of a particular issue can dictate what can be seen in media. In the issue of LGBT media representation, the dominant and general group in the Philippine media landscape that can dictate who and what to show in media is the non-LGBT people. Hence, the general public of this study is one key to determining the dominant attitudes of Filipino heterosexuals about LGBT people in the Philippines. Moreover, the analyses in the following chapters use the terms "survey respondents" and "heterosexual respondents." interchangeably with the "general public."

6 Chapter

The General Public's Reaction To LGBT Representation in Philippine Media

I. Introduction

This chapter is the first in a series of analyses in determining the reactions of the Filipino people to LGBT representation in the Philippine media throughout the years. This chapter answers the question, "what does the general public think about the recent positive LGBT portrayals in the Philippine media?" But before that, the old, negative and stereotypical LGBT media representations are discussed to determine if these portrayals had a subsequent negative impact on the general public. The study aims to determine the impact of negative and positive LGBT representation in media on the non-LGBT community and whether such depictions affect how they think about Filipino LGBT people in real life. Hence, this study welcomes any opinion regarding LGBT people and media content from different types of people in the country as long as they meet the requirement to be qualified as survey respondents.

As explained in Chapters One and Five, this study calls the survey respondents the "general public" because it pursues any Filipino citizen or residents who are heterosexual and unaffiliated with any organisation or not a member of any socio-economic class. Under Cultivation Theory, they are also considered the dominant group that has the power to dictate the messages in the country's television system regarding LGBT media representation. The said term is used interchangeably with "survey respondents" and "heterosexual respondents. The general public was reached via survey. It was open to all Filipino citizens and residents, from 18 years

old and above, heterosexuals, irrespective of their employment or educational status. It garnered 158 valid responses. A profile of the general public regarding their television and social media use is detailed in the first section of this chapter. This profile has enabled this study to analyse how their media interactions reflect how they view Filipino LGBT people in their social realities. The need to determine the said profile aligns with George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, which guided the analyses in this section. The theory states that the longer an audience watches television, the higher the possibility of forming a world belief similar to what they see on television. Hence, this study would set out to discover if heavy exposure to stereotypical and positive LGBT media representation affects the general public and their social realities. More specifically, exposure to LGBT-themed TV shows, movies, or any media content aired on television from the 1980s up to the 2010s, but before the release of the five advertisements (2016 to 2019). The study applies Holmes' (2000) definition of "social reality," which is the people's experiences "relating to the lived-world they inhabit" (p. 19). Following this definition, the study recognises that each person's social realities differ depending on the influences they have, such as religion or the socio-economic status they belong to. However, since this survey study focuses on the general public in the Philippines, it considers two parts regarding "the lived-world they inhabit." The first degree of the general public's social reality is the physical aspect, which is the Philippine society, while the second degree is the metaphysical aspect which is a person's unique social reality based on influences different from one another, such as religious or traditional beliefs.

This chapter is divided into three sections: "the past," "the present," and "the future LGBT representation." Their descriptions are further defined in the following sections. "The present" section focuses on the general public's reactions to the five positive LGBT-themed ads released in recent years. These are the commercials from Smart (2016), Uber (2017), Bench (2018), Pantene (2018), and Close Up (2019). "The future" section offers clues on the general public's possible reactions, feelings, opinions, and actions if such positive LGBT media representations continue in the next years. Additionally, the discussions of "the past" describe the extent of the influence of the old, negative, stereotypical LGBT media representation to the general public. More specifically, LGBT-themed TV shows, movies, or any media content aired on television from the 1980s to the 2010s, but before the release of the

five advertisements (2016 to 2019). The results from "the past" indicate the current prevailing views of Philippine society towards Filipino LGBT people. Analysing "the past," along with the findings from the survey, has raised the dominant but undiscussed LGBT issue in the country: they are tolerated, not fully accepted.

II. "The Past:" Reactions to the LGBT Representation Pre-Positive LGBT-Themed Ads

This section explains the study's survey respondents' views on Filipino LGBT people based on traditional media influence in the past. This study defines "the past" as the LGBT media representations in the Philippines from the 1980s to the 2010s and before the release of the five positive LGBT-themed ads on which this research focuses. These advertisements were released from years 2016 to 2019. "The past" corresponds to any LGBT-themed media content aired on television. This extends to movies that have been aired on television after cinema premiers and screenings.

Several media effects theories regarding television's divergent influence on its audiences can help analyse and explain the data gathered. For example, the agenda-setting theory states that the media places a specific issue highly, making the public unconsciously prioritise thinking about the said issue (McQuaill, 2010). The agenda-setting theory can pinpoint if the general public's responses mirror the country's producers' conscious or non-conscious intentions to exclude or misrepresent the LGBT community in the Philippine media. Another is the hypodermic or magic bullet theory, wherein audiences are predicted to have a particular response based on the stimuli a media player places (ibid.). This theory could help analyse if the survey respondents could grasp the messages about the LGBT people that the producers were trying to impart through strategies like signs and symbols. However, this study uses Cultivation Theory to ascertain whether the dominance and prolonged negative and stereotypical roles of the LGBT community in the Philippine media contributed to the audience's perception of this group and if such perceptions still influence them. This part of the survey targeted their pre-formed opinions on the Filipino LGBT people as influenced by the negative and stereotyped LGBT characteristics they have observed in media in "the past."

Gross (1984) explains that one of the ways television can be powerful in cultivating negative perceptions toward LGBT people is "through infrequent but consistently

stereotyped depictions of homosexuals and the implicit references to them in the form of demeaning innuendos" (p. 358). Based on media depictions of the Filipino LGBT community in the past years, media messages mostly contained offensive words against them, stereotypical and negative portrayals such as comic relief, sexual deviants, limiting them into parlour gay roles, and abused by their relatives, their partners, and the society (Tolentino, 2000; Tan, 2001; Diaz, 2012; Payuyo, 2012). Parlour gays are gay men working in a beauty parlour as beauticians. The role gained the status of belonging to a low social class during the martial law era in the 1970s, was reinforced in the media, and became one of their stereotypical representations (Tan, 2001). The LGBT community had less TV presence, and their representation during those short screen times was usually guaranteed to be either stereotypical or negative. It was rare to see a non-stereotypical representation or content with depth regarding the LGBT community during their short presence on the screen. With this in mind, this study aims to determine if the media representation of LGBT people has made the general public view LGBT people similarly in their social realities.

Table 2: How did the Philippine media contribute to your perceptions of Filipino LGBT people?

A. The media influenced my perception of Filipino LGBT people.			B. I have my own understanding based on my experiences, observations, relatives, etc.		
	<i>n=158</i>	%		<i>n=158</i>	%
Agree	62	39.24%	Strongly Agree	80	50.63%
Neutral	41	25.95%	Agree	59	37.34%
Strongly Agree	33	20.89%	Neutral	19	12.03%

When the respondents were asked whether the media influenced their perceptions of LGBT people, the results in question B seemed to suggest that their own understanding overtakes the media influences. Despite this, their answers to question A also indicate that the media has influenced their perceptions of LGBT people. This is where the analytical ideas of Cultivation Theory come in. Table 2's results gave a generalised overview of their answers on whether media has influenced their perception of the LGBT community. By applying Cultivation Theory, the study can discuss the extent of the media's power in influencing its audiences based on the respondents' different exposure and habits using television and social media. But first, the general public's media habits in this study should be determined.

II.I. What are the general public's media habits?

The founders of the Cultivation Theory articulate that television is powerful enough to cultivate information that can influence one's sense of reality through its ability to display a "repetitive pattern of mass-produced messages and images" (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 18). In order to measure television's influence on audiences, the theory requires determining the number of hours they spend watching television per day as those who are on it more (called the heavy viewers) are more likely to give 'television answers' about societal perceptions than those who spend less time on TV (called the light viewers). 'Television answers' is defined as reactions which suggest that an audience's social reality is noticeably based on what they see in the world of television (Gerbner and Gross, 1976). According to the theory, successful TV cultivation is if the audience's responses to societal situations align with what they see on television. Alternatively, as the Cultivation scholars say, if the viewer (heavy, light or medium viewer) responds with a television answer. They tend to do this because the time that they could have spent doing something to gain more information about the world, like social interaction or reading books or newspapers, is taken away by television (Hammermeister et al., 2009). For example, a US-based study in 1986 revealed that heavy TV viewers with no direct experience with older people tended to think they were few and living in poor conditions, as this was how they were represented in US media during that time (Gerbner et al., 1986). However, the US population records at that time showed that people aged 65 years and above were growing faster than other age groups, which was the opposite of what was depicted on TV (ibid.).

Heavy TV viewer (HTV) – 4 hours or more per day

Medium TV viewer (MTV) – 3 hours per day

Light TV viewer (LTV) – 2 hours or less per day

In order to determine whether exposure to television's negative and stereotypical representation of Filipino LGBT people had a significant effect on Filipino audiences' perceptions toward them, their television hours (TV hours) should be measured. The theory defines TV hours as the time an audience allots for television viewing daily. According to Gerbner and Gross (1976), heavy viewers spend four hours or more watching television, medium viewers spend three hours, and light viewers spend two hours or less daily.

Upon analysis of their TV hours, table 3 shows that the majority of the study's respondents describe themselves as light TV viewers, with 62.7% (99 respondents) spending 0 to 2 hours watching television per day. 25.4% of the respondents are heavy TV viewers (40 respondents) and watch TV for 4 to 10 hours daily.

Table 3: The General Public TV Viewer

Heavy TV Viewers			Medium TV Viewers			Light TV Viewers		
<i>Number of Hrs.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of Hrs.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of Hrs.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
10 or more	2	1.3%	3	19	12%	2	46	29.1%
7	1	0.6%				1	39	24.7%
6	8	5.1%				0	14	8.9%
5	11	7%						
4	18	11.4%						
25.4% (40 respondents)			12% (19 respondents)			62.7% (99 respondents)		

The majority of the heavy TV viewers reported that their heavy viewing TV habits had been consistent for ten years or more (table 4). This is an essential factor in Cultivation Theory as it states that the more people watch television, the more they create views consistent with the messages and ideologies embedded in the medium. Such views then become their dominant way of thinking about an issue or subject (Shrum, 2017).

Table 4: The General Public's TV Viewing Consistency

	TV Viewing Consistency					
	Heavy		Medium		Light	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than a year	4	2.5%	6	3.8%	33	21%
One year	7	4.4%	5	3.2%	20	12.7%
Past 2-3 years	9	5.7%	5	3.2%	23	14.5%
Past 4-5 years	5	3.1%	1	0.6%	8	5%
Past 6-9 years	1	0.6%	1	0.6%	2	1.2%
Past 10 years and above	14	8.9%	1	0.6%	13	8.2%

While the majority of the respondents said they are light TV viewers, and the theory would interpret it as not heavily exposed to TV messages, the possibility of television's cultivation effect on this group should not be discarded because a considerable number of them reported that this behaviour had only been consistent for a year (12.7%) and less than a year (21%). There is a possibility that their TV exposure before they took the survey (from September 2021 to April 2022) had been longer than that. One possible explanation for their sudden behaviour change is the effects of the global pandemic in the Philippines. First, during this time, the

Philippine media had less TV content because of the adjusted rules regarding work and social distancing, which made it hard for TV companies to produce and air new materials. Second, their TV viewing habits were also affected because of the quarantine and lockdown protocols forcing people to stay home. A survey by Kantar in September 2020 revealed that Filipinos became the heaviest users of OTT content all over Southeast Asia during the pandemic (The Trade Desk, 2021). The said study defined OTT (over-the-top) content as video materials produced professionally and available via the internet and online streaming services that can be accessed via mobile phones, computers, and smart TVs. Two billion hours of OTT streams per month were recorded, with every Filipino consuming 3.3 hours of content per day for those in urban cities and 2.5 hours per day for those in the regional area. The survey also revealed that one in five Filipino respondents (22%) had zero traditional TV viewing three months before the survey took place. Aside from these, it was also in the middle of the pandemic when the Philippine government shut down ABS-CBN Channel 2. This move eliminated one of the country's biggest players in the broadcasting industry, resulting in less TV content on free TV channels available to the masses. It also led to less TV exposure to the people living in areas where channel 2 was the only channel frequency they could access, particularly in the provinces and hard-to-reach areas due to geographical location and challenges in satellite placements and other technological facilities. One strategy that ABS-CBN used to continue its operation was to broadcast its TV shows online on its YouTube and Facebook pages, which could have contributed to the Filipino's increased OTT habits during the pandemic.

In line with the recent online streaming trends and the study's goal of applying Cultivation Theory to analyse the general public's social media habits to determine if the theory would also work on this medium, this study also utilises the respondents' social media hours during the analysis. This doctoral project defines "social media" as the usage of social media platforms such as Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and TikTok and "social media (SM) hours" as the number of hours the respondents spend on different platforms on social media per day.

In the early studies of Cultivation Theory, researchers exclusively focused on television's impact on the audiences among other traditional media that existed at

the time (radio and print). Gerbner (1998) establishes that television has more impact on people as he considers it the "significant source of general values, ideologies, and perspectives as well as specific assumptions, beliefs, and images" and that people are exposed to it since infancy (p. 185). While audiences schedule their TV viewing based on their free time, they have no control over the TV content given to them during this time. Some studies have discovered that heavy TV viewers were more likely to watch during prime time (Mosharafa, 2015). Gerbner (1980) considers the evening TV slot, from 8 to 11 pm, during the weekday as prime time. Gerbner argues that prime time is crucial because this is where the "stability and consistency of basic patterns" of TV messages are established over the years (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 26). Gerbner adds that the imagery of the shows in prime time is also compelling, which guarantees the audience's continued attention and time spent on television (ibid.). This echoes some arguments that television viewing is homogenous (Rössler and Brosius, 2001) because, as Gerbner explains, all TV content, regardless of the genre, may be perceived as containing the same messages due to its centralised storytelling pattern. In Gerbner's words, TV shows are not only isolated stories about violence, comedy, or romance, but they are "a message system" formed through a centralised storytelling pattern and represent a particular culture's situation (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 26). This representation also gives a clue as to what people think about any societal matters because a message system can be consistent over the years, influencing people's perceptions on different issues (ibid.).

One possible effect of this formed message system is that TV messages tend to remain in the audience's long-term memories (Hetsroni, 2012). This is why years after these early Cultivation studies, the theory's leading researchers agree that cultivation can still happen in the current media environment wherein people utilise the internet and the new media more than the traditional ones. Morgan, Signorielli, and Shanahan (2015) argue that regardless of the media platform the audiences use, if the messages they receive from them remain fundamentally unchanged, "the cultivation will be as relevant today – and tomorrow – as it was 50 years ago" (p. 687). Following Gerbner's argument that TV contents are "a message system," if the social media users are still receiving the same pattern as observed in the television based on Gerbner's arguments, then it does not matter which platform an audience uses to watch a video program because repetitive messages or representation would still incur cultivation. Moreover, the current media environment, wherein audiences

can stream videos from different platforms, further drives people to spend more time on the screen than before as the new media gives more content and personalised choices but less effort to access them (ibid.). Prolonged exposure leads to higher cultivation effects.

In line with this, this study's respondents' social media hours were also determined. Cultivation Theory's heavy, medium, and light TV viewer classification was applied to categorise their SM hours.

<i>Heavy SM user (HSM) – 4 hours or more per day</i>
<i>Medium SM user (MSM) – 3 hours per day</i>
<i>Light SM user (LSM) – 2 hours or less per day</i>

Upon analysing their social media hours, the results in table 5 show that a vast majority of the respondents (80.5%) are heavy social media users, using social media platforms from 4 to more than 10 hours per day. This result echoes a study stating that Filipinos are heavy social media users, with 82.4% of the population spending 10 hours and 27 minutes on the internet daily (Kemp, 2022).

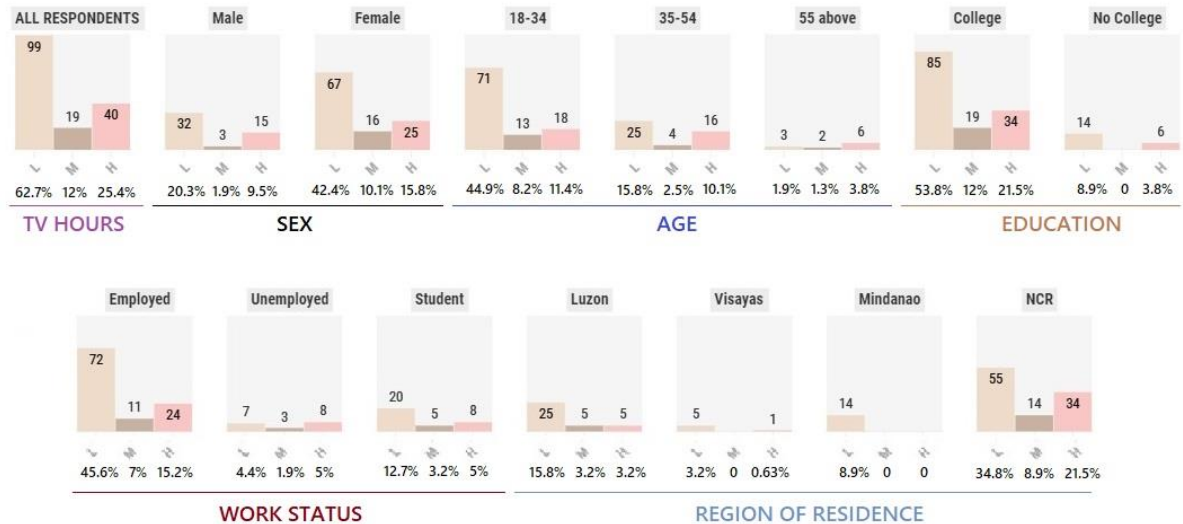
Table 5: The General Public SM user

Heavy Social Media Users			Medium Social Media Users			Light Social Media Users		
<i>Number of Hrs</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of Hrs</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of Hrs</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
10 or more	45	28.5%	3	20	12.7%	2	10	6.3%
9	3	1.9%				1	1	0.6%
8	17	10.8%						
7	5	3.2%						
6	11	7%						
5	27	17.1%						
4	19	12%						
80.5% (127 respondents)			12.7% (20 respondents)			6.9% (11 respondents)		

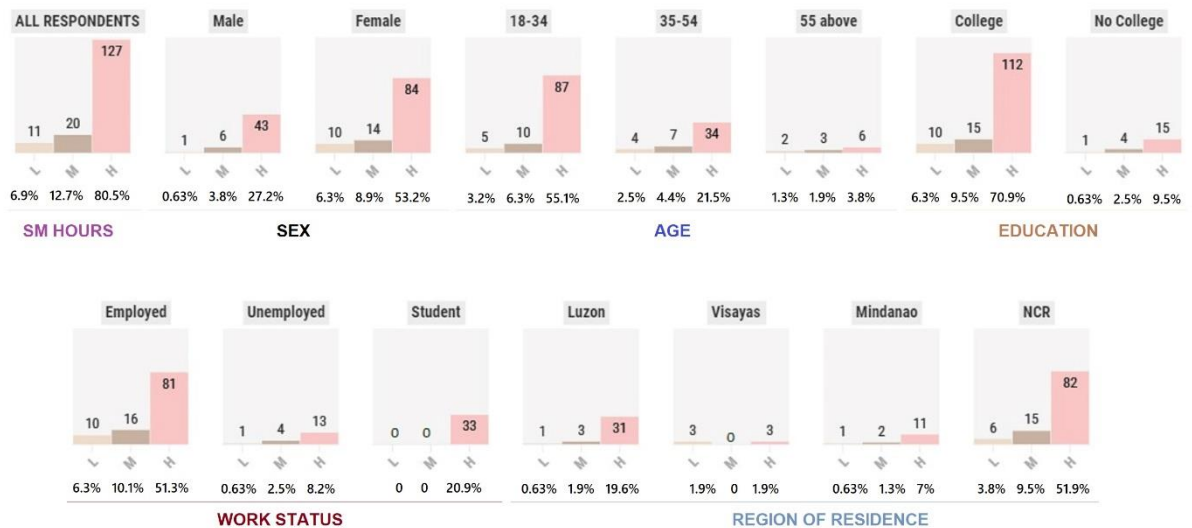
Aside from TV hours, Cultivation Theory puts emphasis on profiling the respondents based on their demographic information because there were trends from the previous studies showing that their education, age, and sex could contradict expected results from a heavy or light viewer. For example, a study from 1976 revealed that some respondents with a college education tend not to give television answers when asked questions about safety in society after great exposure to violence on television at the time (Gerbner and Gross, 1976). Removing the education factor, the respondents who were heavily exposed to TV violence were expected to give television answers, such as believing their area was also unsafe. However, the heavy viewers in Gerbner and Gross' (1976) study who had college

education reported not observing their area, as the other heavy viewers did. Following this idea, this study also identified the demographic profile of the respondents based on their TV hours (graph 1) and SM hours (graph 2), which will later be used to cross-examine their answers to the survey.

Graph 1: Measurement of TELEVISION hours across all demographics



Graph 2: Measurement of SOCIAL MEDIA hours across all demographics



After examining their TV and SM hours and the demographics based on the fundamentals of Cultivation Theory, this section offers the general public's overall profile: light TV viewers but heavy social media users. More specifically, both light TV viewers and heavy SM users are 18-34 years old, college educated, employed or working, and living in NCR. Sex was not considered in the overall profile, as it would give a misleading profile of who tends to be more negative or positive towards the

Filipino LGBT people because there are more female (68.35%) than male (31.65%) respondents in the survey. Moreover, the medium TV viewers and SM users were excluded from the analysis because their answers did not give a discernible pattern or trend that could contribute new findings to the discussion. They were also few in number. Thus, their answers did not indicate any impact compared to the data given by the heavy and light TV viewers and SM users.

This study also aims to explain to the readers that the general public's habits were analysed and categorised into two platforms: television and social media. To elaborate further, they are the same cohorts, answering the same questions, but analysed into two categories because this study is aware that a respondent's TV hours may not be the same as their SM hours (i.e. if a person is a heavy TV viewer, it does not automatically guarantee that they are heavy SM user, as well). Since the overall profile offered by the study was quantified based on the observed majority, there is a possibility of a different set of participants per platform, per TV or SM hour, or per answer if analysed using different dependent variables (their demographic profile). For example, graph 1 shows that all the respondents from the Mindanao region (14) reported that they were all light TV viewers. However, graph 2 shows that their SM hours varied and that most (11) are heavy SM users. This potentially means that 3 out of 14 partakers from the Mindanao region have lesser exposure to social media, which might lead to a different opinion of the LGBT people that is not aligned with the views of the other 11 respondents who are more exposed to the medium. Categorising them into these two habits gives a more precise profile of the respondents who perceive Filipino LGBT people positively or negatively based on the platforms they are more exposed to – this study's contribution to the growing number of Cultivation studies analysing the new media environment.

II.II. What does the general public think of “the past” LGBT representation?

This part of the study determines whether the general public was exposed to "the past" LGBT media representations and if they think that portrayed characters are similar to the characteristics of the LGBT people in their social realities. As stated earlier, this study defines "the past" as any LGBT-themed media content, including movies, aired on television from the 1980s to the 2010s and before the release of the five ads that are the focus of this research (2016 to 2019) and that the general public was profiled as light TV viewers but heavy SM users. This inquiry aims to determine

if there were cultivation effects of prolonged television exposure to negative and stereotypical representations of LGBT people on the respondents. The theory states that cultivation is successful if audiences give television answers to questions regarding society. Thus, this section establishes that the television answer is when they agree that the stereotypical or negative LGBT characteristics they see in media are similar to what they see in their social realities.

To determine exposure to "the past" representations, they were asked to identify the negative and stereotypical roles of Filipino LGBT people that they have seen in the media. They were given a list of characteristics, such as comedic or hysterics, explicitly sexual, closeted, no depth characteristics, poor or belonging to low social strata, and abused or abandoned. These portrayals are based on previous studies and analyses of past media representations from the 1970s to the early 2000s discussed in Chapter Four (Tolentino, 2000; Tan, 2001; Diaz, 2012; David, 2012; Payuyo, 2012). The rationale as to why these are considered a negative or stereotypical representation, as significantly affected by the culture, religion, and hegemonic notions, is explained in Chapter Three. The respondents were given a chance to provide their own observations through the "others" category, and some of them revealed observations such as being noisy or disorderly (*magulo*), arrogant (*mayabang*), and differing comments about their appearances or behaviours (*may ibang maayos at iba ay hindi*).

Table 6: Which negative/stereotyped Filipino LGBT portrayal have you observed in media?

STEREOTYPES	TV Viewers				SM Users			
	Light (n=99)		Heavy (n=40)		Light (n=11)		Heavy (n=127)	
Comedic	68	68.7%	27	67.5%	6	54.5%	96	75.6%
Sexual	54	54.5%	19	47.5%	6	54.5%	63	49.6%
Closeted	37	37.4%	18	45%	3	27.3%	55	43.3%
No Depth	21	21.2%	5	12.5%	2	18.2%	25	19.7%
Poor	21	21.2%	11	28%	0	0%	35	27.6%
Abused	59	59.6%	22	55%	6	54.5%	76	59.8%
Others	3	3%	1	2.5%	1	9.1%	3	2.4%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

Table 6 shows that the respondents have observed all the given LGBT stereotypes in media. Regardless of the TV and SM hours, the top three characters with the most confirmation of exposure from the respondents are comedic or hysterics, abused or abandoned, and explicitly sexual. It should be noted that the respondents were allowed to skip or give multiple answers to the question in table 6. Due to these

choices given to them, it is observable that there were no stereotypical LGBT characteristics in media that garnered 100% respondent observation. For example, light TV viewers (LTVs) have 99 respondents, but not one stereotypical role garnered full recognition from all 99 LTVs. This is the case for all groups. While the study recognised the possibility of non-exposure to all of the listed characteristics in the survey, they may also have gotten bored filling up the survey questionnaire (it takes more than 7 minutes to finish the survey), they possibly were not interested in the question, or perhaps they did not know what to answer. This may explain why the respondents skipped the question. Moreover, the study also recognises the likelihood that the respondents were uncomfortable answering the question as they were being asked questions about the LGBT community that may be perceived as controversial. Some respondents who may have negative perceptions of the LGBT community may have also found the questions antagonistic or confrontational and decided to skip some stereotypes instead. Albeit incomplete responses, this study argues that the respondents have been exposed to most, if not all, of the listed LGBT stereotypes in media. Additionally, all light SM users (LSMs) reported non-exposure to the "poor" stereotype.

After identifying the stereotypes in media, the respondents were asked to reflect on their social realities on whether they have observed these characteristics in the LGBT people in their communities.

Table 7: (Stereotype) I agree that Filipino LGBT people have these characteristics in my reality/community:

Negative/Stereotype	TV viewers						SM users					
	Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)		
Comedic/Hysterics	SA	50	50.5%	SA	21	52.5%	SA, A*	5	45.5%	SA	67	52.8%
Explicitly Sexual	N	39	39.4%	N	15	37.5%	A, SA*	3	27.3%	N	49	38.6%
Closeted	N	36	36.4%	N	14	35%	A	4	36.4%	N	41	32.3%
No Depth	N	34	34.3%	N	15	37.5%	N	5	45.5%	N	44	34.6%
Poor/Low Social Class	N	28	28.3%	N	15	37.5%	SD, N, A*	3	27.3%	N	39	30.7%
Abused/Abandoned	A	35	25.4%	N	13	32.5%	A	5	45.5%	N	39	30.7%
Others	N	14	14.1%	N	5	12.5%	A	2	18.2%	N	18	14.2%

SA – Strongly Agree A – Agree N – Neutral D – Disagree SD – Strongly Disagree

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

*Same points/percentages for all answers

The results in table 7 show that the majority of the LTVs and heavy TV viewers (HTVs) tend to be neutral in these stereotypes: explicitly sexual, closeted, no depth, poor or belonging to low social class, and other characteristics they have observed in their everyday lives. Neutral answers can be interpreted as either undecided or

ambivalent. Both LTVs and HTVs strongly agreed on having observed the "comedic/hysterics" stereotypes in their social realities, while only the LTVs agreed on the "abused/abandoned" depiction, while HTVs maintained their neutrality on the latter stereotype.

The two groups of SM users gave different answers. While the LSMs agreed on observing most of the stereotypes in their communities, the heavy social media users (HSMs) gave neutral answers to most of them. The only stereotype the HSMs agreed on was the "comedic/hysteric" role. As for the LSMs, the only stereotype they remained neutral on was "no depth." An interesting finding is the LSM's differing answers on the "poor or belonging to the low social class" stereotype giving three answers (SD, N, A) echo the findings in table 6, indicating that they have not seen this portrayal in media. Their different answers could be non-media influenced, such as the environment they work or live in since they reported non-exposure to this specific stereotype in media. Chapter Eight offers possible explanations for why this result could have occurred.

These answers tell us that most of this study's respondents, regardless of their TV and SM hours, gave a strong television answer on the "comedic/hysteric" stereotypes (SA and A). This stereotype is the number one observed LGBT stereotype in media, as seen in table 6. This indicates that the survey respondents tend to believe Filipino LGBT people are funny and hysterical in real life. The respondents are more likely to associate this characteristic with the comedic representation of gay men in Philippine media wherein they are seen as hysterical, shrieking, with funny punchlines, and sometimes coordinated with comical actions. Additionally, the LTVs and LSMs both reported having the same perception regarding the abuse or abandonment of LGBT people in their social realities (A), as opposed to the HTVs and HSMs. This stereotype is the second most observed stereotype by the respondents after the comedic roles.

After analysing their perceptions of "the past" representation, an important key finding, which is the occurrence of a mainstream answer from the respondents, was discovered. While LSMs tend to give television answers about LGBT stereotypes more than the other groups, the rest give "neutral" answers. Cultivation studies call this "mainstreaming," wherein a trend defines the dominant perspectives of the

people (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 24). It is observable that the LTVs, HTVs, and HSMs gave an overwhelming response of being "neutral" when asked if they have observed the LGBT stereotypes in media on LGBT people in their social realities. This trend shows us that the dominant perception of the general public regarding LGBT stereotypes is ambivalence. Only the LSMs were observed to tend to steer away from the mainstream when they gave television answers more (5/7 stereotypes) and one non-television answer (SD) than mainstream answers (2/7 stereotypes).

Gerbner and colleagues (1986) state that it is hard to pull away from the 'centre of the gravity,' or the mainstream because this dominant current overrides the differences in people's views, behaviours, and other demographic influences as it homogenises and converges divergent perspectives and audiences. The centre of gravity is strong that it becomes easier to flow with the current than fight it. Mainstreaming also creates and increases resistance to change something about society (Mosharafa, 2015). In line with this, the mainstream answer in this study, "neutral," is currently being viewed here as supporting the Philippine society's prevailing but undiscussed view of the citizens towards LGBT people: not fully accepted but tolerated. This means that the public's support of the LGBT community does not extend to full acceptance in different aspects of society. These actions were just enough to show help and encouragement but might not cause a huge difference in elevating the status of this community in Philippine society. For example, while 73% of Filipinos agree that homosexuality should be accepted in the country (Poushter and Kent, 2020), 61% of the citizen also do not agree on same-sex marriage or civil union (SWS, 2018), which can be deemed as one of the basic legal rights a Filipino LGBT person must have. Even the LGBT community is aware of this, expressing sentiments such as "it's okay that you're gay as long as you're not working in my company," "it's okay that you're a transgender woman but don't use our female toilet," "it's okay that you're human but don't ask for your rights" (Gutierrez, 2017, para. 2-3). The effects of this view can be observed in their personal situations and even in national issues, as they also reported feeling like second or third-class citizens in the country due to the different types of discrimination that they had to endure (ibid.).

Moreover, the first study about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) diversity and inclusivity in corporate environments in the country in 2018

showed that zero out of 100 companies surveyed had policies protecting their LGBT employees' SOGIE (Casal, 2018). This reflects the views of LGBT people about being treated as second or third-class citizens in the Philippines. The 2018 survey shows an imbalance between their employers' expected high work effort from them and the rights given to them. The employers' expectations of LGBT employees regarding work effort are similar to all employees, regardless of gender. However, working rights are in place for non-LGBT employees, but none for LGBT people. In addition, there is still no national anti-discrimination bill in place to protect all Filipino LGBT people in the country. This lack of recognition of legal rights and protection paints a picture that being an LGBT citizen in the Philippines is not as safe and comforting as the findings in a 2013 survey, "The Global Divide on Homosexuality," conducted by US company Pew Research Center stating that this country is one of the few most gay-friendly places on earth (Tubeza, 2013). The said findings were also part of the introductory note of the Senate's version of the SOGIE bill stating that the Philippines ranked second most gay-friendly country in Asia-Pacific, and it is about time to join several countries that already implemented an anti-discrimination law designed for the LGBTQ people (Eighteenth Congress, 2019).

The application of Cultivation Theory in the analysis of "the past" LGBT depictions revealed that the media's cultivation is successful in aligning the television reality's "comedic/hysterics" and "abused/abandoned" representations of the Filipino LGBT people to the general public's social realities. Moreover, it was also discovered that the majority of the general public tends to give mainstream answers (neutral) in almost all of the stereotypical roles presented to them, revealing ambivalence as the general public's dominant outlook on this issue. The LSM's tendency to withstand the mainstream was also discovered, offering a possibility that there are members of the general public in this study who still hold a different view on the LGBT community from the majority. The theory argues that a culture's standpoint on societal issues is reflected in that culture's television system. The trends being seen here suggest that the negative and stereotypical LGBT roles that dominated the Philippine media have influenced the general public's perception of LGBT people in a sense that "tolerance and not full acceptance" has been unconsciously promoted in the country's "past" message system in media.

This study also considers that "neutrality" may mean that some of "the past" portrayals may no longer exist in some of the respondents' social realities because progress in the status of some LGBT people could have been observed. For example, LGBT people in some respondents' social realities may be affluent, proud to express their sexuality, educated, and belongs to the middle to high social class. This study also recommends this interpretation as some LGBT members of this study's focus group discussion have reported feeling more comfortable showing who they are since "the present" media portrayal started. "The present," explained in the next section, is defined as the positive LGBT media portrayals from 2016 onwards. However, this study also argues that remaining "neutral" is also being perceived as not making any decision at all about the LGBT media stereotyping issue to limit complications that expressing their honest opinions about them may bring. This argument was confirmed when asked a direct question on whether they realised that LGBT people were being stereotyped in media.

Table 8: I realised that...

<i>I realised that...</i>	TV viewers						SM users					
	Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)		
(A) ...the <u>negative/</u> <u>stereotyped</u> media representation is similar to the characteristics of the LGBT people in my reality/community	N	34	34.3%	N, A*	15	9.5%	N, A*	3	27.3%	N	46	36.2%
(B) ...the <u>positive</u> <u>portrayals</u> are similar to the characteristics of the LGBT people in my reality/community	A	37	37.4%	A	21	52.5%	N, A*	4	36.4%	A	53	41.7%
(C) ...the media has been stereotyping Filipino LGBT people	A	40	40.4%	A	16	40%	N, SA*	4	36.4%	A	51	40.2%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

**Same points/percentages for all answers*

In table 8, all the group's answers to question C, "I realised that the media has been stereotyping Filipino LGBT people," shows that they can decide or take a stand about an important LGBT issue in the country. If the general public resolutely thinks that the stereotypes they see in media are not similar to their social realities, an ideal, non-ambivalent response to the previous questions regarding stereotypes is to disagree or strongly disagree. This study perceives giving a non-ambivalent answer as taking a stand because they are bravely sharing their opinions about LGBT issues in the country. However, their answers to question A contradicts this decisive stand. When asked if they agree with "I realised that the negative/stereotyped media

representation is similar to the characteristics of the LGBT people in my reality/community", the majority of the people in all groups are still neutral or undecided about this issue. In other words, the respondents have clear awareness that the Philippine media is stereotyping LGBT people. However, they could not decide whether the stereotyped representation is present or not in their social realities. Explaining this from the Cultivation Theory's standpoint, it suggests that the media has successfully cultivated the LGBT stereotypes in the survey respondents' mindset. The media's ability to dictate what an LGBT person should look or act like has been deeply enforced, influencing a viewer's thinking into giving in to the dominant perception. If cultivation was absent, an ideal answer should be either to agree or disagree. Those who can give decisive answers, such as the LSM who answered A or SA on all the questions, are deemed as the ones who can withstand the mainstream perception.

In short, these answers tell us that the general public is aware of the stereotyping issue and yet was not willing to give a definitive answer or take a stand, hence remaining "neutral" about LGBT stereotypes. This indecision might be due to fear of backlash from people if they present their negative perceptions about LGBT people, even though the respondents were informed before the survey that their answers would not be traced back to them. This may also reveal the surface of the people's dominant undiscussed belief of tolerance, not acceptance. However, they tend to be receptive and welcoming to positive LGBT portrayals if asked a direct question. Question B in table 8, "I realised that the positive portrayals are similar to the characteristics of the LGBT people in my reality/community," opens up the discussion of the general public's reactions to "the present" LGBT portrayal, which is more positive than "the past." Except for some of the LSMs who gave a neutral response, all groups gave television answers. In other words, they tend to believe that the positive LGBT portrayal they see in media is similar to their social realities – contradictory to their neutral responses to stereotypes. Following this result, the study is curious if the same trends explained in this section would be observed if the general public were exposed to positive LGBT representations in media. The following section investigates their responses to positive LGBT messages and whether these reactions were carried over to their social realities or not.

III. "The Present:" Reactions to the Positive LGBT Representations in Media

This section determines the general public's reaction to the positive LGBT portrayals in media and the five LGBT-themed advertisements released from 2016 to 2019. This study defines "the present" as the positive Filipino LGBT representation in media from 2016 onwards. Moreover, this section is curious if there are differences in the general public's reactions between "the past" and "the present" LGBT portrayals in Philippine media.

Similar to pinpointing the stereotypes in the previous section, the respondents were also asked to report the positive LGBT characteristics they have seen in the media. The choices given to them were good company (friendship), career-driven or belonging to the middle to high class, empowered or proud of their sexuality, responsible son or daughter, highly educated, and in a healthy relationship. The list was based on the characteristics observed in the five advertisements this study focuses on. But more importantly, as explained in Chapter Three, these characterisations are considered positive because, according to some Philippine advertisers, LGBT members are portrayed "in contexts that could be considered normal and every day" (Marchadesch, 2018, para. 1). In short, the advertisers consider these better representation because it humanises the LGBT members, the depictions tried best to steer clear of stereotyping, and that the stories are represented in a "socially-conscious manner" (ibid., para, 4). For example, portraying same-sex relationships as healthy relationships is considered a positive representation as it debunks the male gay past media stereotypes of being sexual deviants and engaging in relationships for economic purposes. The "others" category was also provided to allow respondents to list additional positive portrayals they might have observed in the media. However, no respondent offered any additional positive characteristics of LGBT people they have observed in the media.

Table 9: Which positive Filipino LGBT portrayal have you observed in media?

POSITIVE	TV Viewers				SM Users			
	Light (n=99)		Heavy (n=40)		Light (n=11)		Heavy (n=127)	
Educated	60	60.6%	24	60%	7	63.6%	81	63.8%
Career driven	77	77.8%	31	77.5%	9	81.8%	102	80.3%
In a healthy relationship	29	29.3%	13	32.5%	1	9.1%	46	36.2%
Empowered	71	71.7%	28	70%	7	63.6%	95	74.8%
Good company	83	83.8%	25	62.5%	9	81.8%	101	79.5%
Responsible	69	69.7%	20	50%	9	81.8%	82	64.6%

Similar to table 6, the results in table 9 show that not a single positive portrayal garnered full recognition from all the respondents. For example, only 46 out of 127 HSMs reported seeing the "in a healthy relationship" representation in media. Despite these numbers, this study recognises they have been exposed to all these positive LGBT depictions in media. The top three representations they have observed are career-driven or belonging to the middle to the high class, good company (friendship), and being empowered or proud of their sexuality.

One observation in this part of the survey is the respondents' tendency to skip the "others" section when asked to indicate a positive representation. At the same time, some willingly answered this section for the stereotypes. Aside from the earlier mentioned possible explanations of possibly getting bored answering the survey or not knowing what to answer, it can also be assumed that no idea came to mind due to the lack of positive representation of the LGBT community in the Philippine media throughout the years. It is possible that the listed characteristics in the survey can be considered the gist of their limited positive representation in the media. Several Philippine advertisers are aware of the lack of positive LGBT representation in Philippine advertisements due to little well-researched data on representing the group in the country's advertising industry (Marchadesch, 2018). Another possible explanation is the other version of the "neutral" attitude in the Philippines. The Filipinos have this habit of saying "*okay na 'yan*" or "*pwede na 'yan*", which translates to substandard work, attitude or perception showing that something is better than nothing. The possibility of skipping the "others" category for the positive representation might stem from the thought that the given list was already good enough. The "*okay na 'yan*" attitude was also expressed by some LGBT partakers in this study's focus group discussion when asked to give some advice to improve their portrayals in media. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Afterwards, the respondents were asked to reflect on whether they had personally seen these characteristics in the LGBT people in their communities or not. As seen in table 10, the respondents' reflections on comparing the positive LGBT media representation with their social realities gave cultivation responses (table 10). All groups, regardless of their TV and SM hours, gave out television answers (SA and A) on five out of six positive roles, which are the good company (friendship), career-driven or belonging to the middle to high class, empowered or proud of their sexua-

Table 10: (Positive) I agree that Filipino LGBT people have these characteristics in my reality/community:

Positive	TV viewers						SM users					
		Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)	
Good company (friendship)	SA	50	50.5%	SA	18	45%	SA	6	54.5%	SA	64	50.4%
Career-driven/Middle to high class	SA	42	42.4%	SA	18	45%	SA	4	36.4%	SA	61	48%
Empowered/Proud of their sexuality	SA	43	43.4%	SA	18	45%	SA, A*	4	36.4%	SA	65	51.7%
Responsible son/daughter	SA	44	44.5%	A	15	37.5%	SA, A*	5	45.5%	SA	54	42.5%
Highly Educated	A	41	41.4%	A	18	45%	A	4	36.4%	SA	54	42.5%
In a healthy relationship	N	38	38.4%	N	18	45%	N	6	54.5%	N	47	37%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

**Same points/percentages for all answers*

lity, responsible son or daughter, and highly educated. In other words, the LTVs, HTVs, LSMs, and HSMs tend to believe that all these observed characteristics in media are similar to what they have observed in the Filipino LGBT people in their social realities. They also gave one mainstream (neutral) answer to the "in a healthy relationship" representation. As reported in table 9, the "in a healthy relationship" depiction garnered the least observed positive LGBT portrayal in media among all the choices given to them. These answers could be influenced if the respondents live, work, or are exposed to an environment where the "in a healthy relationship" characteristic is non-existent. There is a possibility that LGBT people in their social realities are not publicly displaying or disclosing their relationships for fear of criticism from the public. Hence, the respondents were unsure if this media portrayal also exists in their social realities. However, there is also a possibility that they are undecided on whether being "in a healthy relationship" can be considered a positive representation, which can be interpreted as to whether they agree or disagree on same-sex relationships in their social realities. Thus, they are neutral about it.

These results show that regardless of their TV and SM hours, the general public tends to give television answers (agree) to comparing positive LGBT representations in media to their social realities. Meanwhile, the findings in the "the past" section have revealed that they tend to give mainstream answers (neutral) if the negative or stereotypical LGBT roles in media are discussed. Moreover, prevailing stereotypes such as "comedic/hysteries" and "abused/abandoned" garnered television answers (agree), as well. While a positive portrayal such as "in a healthy relationship" got a mainstream answer (neutral). Despite being positive, the latter characteristic can be deemed controversial because of the public's various interpretations of LGBT

relationships. As explained earlier, some may be unaware of its existence in their social realities because LGBT people hide it. Alternatively, it could also be interpreted as disagreement with same-sex relationships. All these results showed cultivation responses wherein the general public's responses can indicate the culture's dominant perspective (mainstream/neutral on stereotypes and some controversial characteristics) and whether media has successfully influenced their beliefs (television answers/believing that they are funny and abused in real life; positive portrayals align with their social realities). Furthermore, it is observable that the positive portrayals garnered positive responses from the general public, which is why the study is curious to know whether the same responses would be accumulated on their reactions to the five LGBT-themed advertisements that this research is focusing on. It is also curious if their ambivalence on "in a healthy relationship" representation would also show up in their reactions.

III.I. LGBT Messages in the Advertisements: Accepted or Rejected?

This section aims to determine the respondents' reactions to the five positive LGBT-themed advertisements from Smart, Uber, Bench, Pantene, and Close Up. At this point, since the ads were released in recent years (2016 to 2019) and could potentially have no cultivation impact based on the Cultivation Theory requirements, this section mainly focuses on determining whether they accept or reject the LGBT messages featured in these ads. Consistent with this assumption, the results in table 11 revealed that the majority of the respondents had not seen all of the ads before the survey, which proves that there will be no cultivation impact on the majority regarding recent positive LGBT portrayals in the ads for the respondents. The top three ads that most respondents reported not having seen prior to answering the survey were Uber, Pantene, and Close Up.

Table 11: Awareness of the Five LGBT-Themed Ads

<i>If you have previously seen this ad, where have you seen it?</i>	TV viewers				SM users			
	Light (n=99)		Heavy (n=40)		Light (n=11)		Heavy (n=127)	
<i>Smart (2016)</i>								
I have not seen it	49	49.5%	15	37.5%	9	81.8%	55	43.3%
Social Media	42	42.4%	14	35%	1	9.1%	52	40.9%
Television	7	7.1%	11	27.5%	1	9.1%	19	15%
<i>Uber (2017)</i>								
I have not seen it	70	70.7%	24	60%	9	81.8%	86	67.7%
Social Media	23	23.2%	12	30%	0	0%	33	26%
Television	2	2%	4	10%	2	18.2%	7	5.5%

		<u>Bench (2018)</u>						
I have not seen it	52	52.5%	24	60%	8	72.7%	70	55.1%
Social Media	32	32.3%	13	32.5%	2	18.2%	39	30.7%
Television	14	14.1%	3	7.5%	1	9.1%	17	13.4%
		<u>Pantene (2018)</u>						
I have not seen it	66	66.7%	29	72.5%	9	81.8%	90	70.9%
Social Media	21	21.2%	8	20%	1	9.1%	25	19.7%
Television	11	11.1%	3	7.5%	1	9.1%	11	8.6%
		<u>Close Up (2019)</u>						
I have not seen it	72	72.7%	21	52.5%	9	81.8%	91	71.7%
Social Media	21	21.2%	10	25%	1	9.1%	30	23.6%
Television	5	5%	2	5%	1	9.1%	5	3.9%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

Moreover, the consistent second and third answers were seeing the ads on social media and television, respectively. The numbers of those who have selected these two mediums are sizeable enough to consider the possibility that some members of the general public have been exposed to these ads before they were surveyed. For example, almost half of the HTVs reported seeing the Smart ad on social media (35%) and television (27.5%) before the survey. Hence, cultivation impact on some of the general public was still expected. In other words, there is a possibility that they already had pre-formed positive opinions of the LGBT people as influenced by media after being exposed to the five ads' positive LGBT message for a few years prior to this study.

The five advertisements showed five different positive or non-stereotypical LGBT characteristics or situations. These are family acceptance, coming out of the closet, LGBT empowerment, same-sex relationship, and same-sex attraction. The respondents were then asked whether showing these characteristics or situations in advertisements could be considered a good thing. The responses threw up two noticeable themes, which were categorised as 'showing support in the abstract' and 'beyond the abstract.'

Theme 1: Showing Support in the Abstract

The Smart and Bench ads showed similar themes of 'family acceptance' and 'coming out of the closet,' while Pantene inspired 'LGBT empowerment' within the community. This study considers these as showing a kind of abstract support to the LGBT community because all of these promote acceptance and encouragement to be true to their authentic selves. Consistent with that, the survey discovered that

regardless of their TV and SM hours, all groups expressed strong support and acceptance of these positive messages.

Table 12: Theme 1: Showing Support

Is it a good thing to show in ads?		Family Acceptance										
		TV Viewers					SM Users					
		Light (n=99)		Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)		Heavy (n=127)			
Smart (2016)	SA	59	59.6%	SA	26	65%	SA	5	45.5%	SA	83	65.4%
Bench (2018)	SA	52	52.5%	SA	20	50%	SA	6	54.6%	SA	70	55.1%

Is it a good thing to show in ads?		Coming out of the Closet										
		TV Viewers					SM Users					
		Light		Heavy			Light		Heavy			
Bench (2018)	SA	43	43.4%	SA, A*	14	35%	A	4	36.4%	SA	58	45.7%

Is it a good thing to show in ads?		LGBT Empowerment										
		TV Viewers					SM Users					
		Light		Heavy			Light		Heavy			
Pantene (2018)	SA	48	48.5%	SA	19	47.5%	SA	4	36.4%	SA	68	53.5%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

*Same points/percentages for all answers

Theme 2: Beyond the Abstract: Facing the Reality of Same-Sex Attraction and Relationships

Smart, Uber, Bench, and Close Up had shown 'same-sex relationships' and 'same-sex attraction,' which is why the second theme is called 'beyond the abstract.' This study defines it as the reality of what it is really like to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual, which is the romantic and sexual relationships towards the same sex. Their romantic and sexual attraction for a person of the same sex (at least as represented in the advertisements chosen for this study) was a subject highlighted in the ads but was presented in a non-stereotypical manner. In other words, contrary to "the past" representation, they were not portrayed as "sexual deviants" or looking for financial gains under the prevailing gay-straight man dynamics notion. They were seen as regular people, whom they can also observe in their social realities, showing partnership and romantic attraction to a same-sex person, similar to the partnership and romantic attraction that heterosexual people show to someone they are interested in. For these reasons, this study deemed this romantic portrayal and the "in a healthy relationship" depiction to be a positive representation. Based on the

two tables below, it is apparent that the respondents expressed different reactions to the 'same-sex relationship' and 'same-sex attraction' messages in the ads.

Table 13: Theme 2.1: Same-Sex Relationship

Is it a good thing to show in ads?		Same-Sex Relationship									
		TV Viewers						SM Users			
		Light (n=99)		Heavy (n=40)		N	Light (n=11)		Heavy (n=127)		
Smart (2016)	SA	37	37.4%	SA	13		32.5%	4	36.4%	SA	51

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

The "same-sex relationship" message, based on the results in table 13, paints a picture that the majority of the general public accepts this message. In other words, the LTVs, HTVs, and HSMs favoured the message that shows this reality of LGB people as a good or a positive thing to show in advertisements. However, the LSMs expressed neutrality on the issue. This same group has already been showing attitudes of not participating in the dominant answers throughout the survey. Following this result, the study dug into the profile of the LSMs who tend to express neutrality on this message. Upon analysis of their demographics, the LSMs who answered "neutral" on this question are 25 to 64 years old, college educated, employed or working, and living in NCR. However, this study is not recommending this as the definitive profile of Filipino LSMs who tends to express neutrality on the question "is showing 'same-sex relationships' on ads a good thing?" because the number of LSM respondents is very low (11 out of 158). The numbers are insufficient to establish a trend that accurately describes Filipino LSMs who tend to express opinions that differ from the dominant perspectives.

Table 14: Theme 2.2: Same-Sex Attraction

Is it a good thing to show in ads?		Same-Sex Attraction											
		TV Viewers						SM Users					
		Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)		
Uber (2017)	SA	30	30.3%	N	14	35%	N, D, SD*	3	27.3%	SA	42	33.1%	
Bench (2018)	SA, A	30	30.3%	A	11	27.5%	N, SD*	4	36.4%	SA	40	31.5%	
Close Up (2019)	SA	33	33.33%	N	13	32.5%	A, SD*	3	27.3%	SA	44	34.7%	

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group answers

**Same points/percentages for all answers*

For the aspect of 'same-sex attraction,' which may be more heavily associated in the minds of the survey respondents with the act of sex and the reality of sexual activity

between two people of the same sex than that of same-sex relationships, the respondents gave different responses. For TV viewers, the LTVs tend to agree that showing 'same-sex attraction' in the ads is a good thing. However, the HTVs only agreed to the Bench ad but have "neutral" answers for Uber and Close Up. As for the SM users, the HSMs agreed with the message for all the ads. However, the LSMs gave different opinions, such as disagreement and neutrality, that showing this message in the ads is good. The only commercial they found the message acceptable is Close Up. But even this ad garnered two responses from the LSMs, the other one as "strongly disagree."

This study also determined the profile of the LSMs who have earlier shown the tendency to withstand the mainstream current, which this study interprets as some who may still hold a different view of the LGBT community that is different from the majority. After analysing their demographic profiles, it was determined that the LSMs who are 25 to 34 years old, college educated, employed or working, and living in the Visayas and NCR tend to think that showing same-sex attraction in ads is not a good thing. Overall, the consistent profile for those who tend to give non-dominant answers in "theme 2: beyond the abstract" is LSMs, 25 to 34 years old, college educated, employed or working, and living in NCR. This information can be deemed important for those who are interested in taking action via advertisements, social media campaigns, and other advocacies promoting the Filipino LGBT people in media to determine which specific demographics they should put more emphasis on to ensure that the messages will reach out all Filipino citizens in all walks of life.

The analysis of "the past" representation showed that the general public tends to be neutral toward LGBT stereotypes. Despite acceptance from the majority of the general public, all the ads in theme 2 expressing 'same-sex relationship' and 'same-sex attraction' messages garnered a neutral response from either the HTVs or the LSMs, or both of them at some point. The study revisits these positive, non-stereotypical-themed ads to determine if portrayals, behaviours, or nuances might be slightly aligned to stereotypical representation in "the past", possibly affecting their belief of being unsure whether showing these messages on ads is a good thing. However, it was observed that the portrayal of their attraction to the same sex was low-key and quiet, as opposed to hysterical and sexually deviant past representation. The Uber ad only showed an inner monologue of a young man's attraction to his

crush via tweets that were not even considered vulgar and deviant and were only expressing giddiness about the situation in a normal manner. The Bench ad has portrayed the main character as closeted, but it was necessary to send the vital message: the father's acceptance of his son's sexuality. Nevertheless, it was still sending a positive LGBT message and not portraying the character excessively and disrespectfully. The Close Up ad leaned towards the comedy genre. However, their portrayals were not similar to some of "the past" LGBT representations regarding same-sex relationships, such as the giver-receiver or gay-straight man dynamics wherein the other person is mainly involved in a relationship for financial gains. In the said ad, the mutual attraction of both characters to each other, which could lead to a relationship, was the main highlight. The Smart advertisement, showing the same-sex relationship, has a serious tone and is more focused on the father-son relationship than the gay one. This study again emphasises the dominant position of "tolerance, not acceptance" in Philippine society, wherein messages about supporting the LGBT community gather positive responses from the general public. But painting a visual picture of the actual reality of being an LGBT person through their relationship and romantic/sexual interests might still be met with either ambivalence or disagreement from the people.

III.II. Are Filipino LGBT people still stereotyped in "the present" or not?

This study takes the position that the five advertisements show positive, non-stereotypical LGBT representation in media. It agrees with the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA) view that they are "being portrayed not as caricatures of stereotypes, but as ordinary people living normal lives" (Marchadesch, 2018, para. 3). Because of the positive reactions garnered by the Bench ad "How long can you keep a secret?" within and outside the Philippines, this study assumes that the same responses would be gathered from this study's respondents. The said ad, about a father who accepts his closeted gay son, garnered millions of views on Facebook and YouTube, translating into increased sales (Spikes Asia, 2018) and recognition from the global LGBT community (Butler, 2019). In the survey, the videos of the five ads were included to give a chance to watch them before continuing the survey. After watching all the videos, the respondents were asked whether they thought LGBT characters were portrayed positively or negatively/stereotyped in the advertisements.

Table 15: LGBT-Themed Ads: Portrayed Negatively/Stereotyped

The LGBT members were portrayed negatively or stereotyped												
TV Viewers							SM Users					
		Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)	
Smart (2016)	N	35	35.4%	N	17	42.5%	N, D*	4	36.4%	N	45	35.4%
Uber (2017)	N	42	42.4%	N	16	40%	N	8	72.7%	N	46	36.2%
Bench (2018)	N	44	44.5%	N	13	32.5%	N	6	54.5%	N	49	38.6%
Pantene (2018)	N	35	35.4%	N	14	35%	N	7	63.6%	N	42	33.1%
Close Up (2019)	N	42	42.4%	N	17	42.5%	N	6	54.5%	N	53	41.7%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

**Same points/percentages for all answers*

Results in table 15 strengthen the findings in the previous section that all groups, regardless of their TV and SM hours, tend to give a mainstream answer (neutral) regarding questions about LGBT stereotypes. This study argues that these ads are not portraying LGBT people negatively or stereotypically. This view is backed by reviews from PANA, saying that the LGBT issues were tackled in a manner considered "normal" (Marchadesch, 2018, para. 1). Featuring Kevin Balot in a commercial is also non-stereotypical because it provides a platform and representation for transwomen in Philippine ads for the first time. However, the general public seems to think differently, for they were consistently ambivalent despite the differences in LGBT portrayals from "the past" to "the present." Moreover, the LSMs again gave non-mainstream answers as almost half of this group (4 out of 11 or 36.4%) took a stand by saying that they disagree that the LGBT characters in Smart advertisement were portrayed negatively or stereotypically.

The earlier findings in this section showed that positive portrayals garnered positive responses from the general public. To corroborate this, they were asked if they thought the LGBT characters in the five advertisements were positively portrayed.

Table 16: LGBT-Themed Ads: Portrayed Positively

The LGBT members were portrayed positively												
TV Viewers							SM Users					
		Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)	
Smart (2016)	A	40	40.4%	A	17	42.5%	A, N*	4	36.4%	A	52	40.9%
Uber (2017)	N	38	38.4%	A	16	40%	N	5	45.5%	A	47	37%
Bench (2018)	A	36	36.4%	A	17	42.5%	N	5	45.5%	A	48	37.8%
Pantene (2018)	A	36	36.4%	SA, A*	13	32.5%	N	6	54.5%	SA	48	37.8%
Close Up (2019)	A, N*	35	35.4%	N	15	37.5%	N	7	63.6%	A	45	35.4%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

**Same points/percentages for all answers*

The results shown in table 16 indicate that the HSMs agree that the LGBT characters were portrayed positively. However, the LSMs consistently gave non-dominant opinions by being ambivalent in expressing their thoughts about LGBT portrayals, whether positive or negative. At the same time, some LSMs agreed that the Smart ad positively portrayed the LGBT characters despite the other half stating neutrality on the issue. As for the TV viewers, the HTVs tend to agree with the statement except for the Close Up ad, wherein they were undecided if the LGBT portrayal was positive. The LTVs have the same ambivalence for the Uber and Close Up ads.

What these findings tell us is that while the majority of the general public has shown positive responses to positive LGBT portrayals, there are still some members who would be reluctant to express their opinions about LGBT stereotypes in "the present" portrayals, hence the overwhelming "neutral" response in table 15. There is a possibility that elements in the storytelling, genre, or behaviours present in these advertisements can still be deemed as stereotypes. For example, Uber showing non-effeminate male characters expressing same-sex attraction might have confused the general public. There is still an assumption from some people in Philippine society that an LGBT member's gender expression fully aligns with their sexual orientation. For example, an effeminate man is assumed to be gay. In the Uber ads, if they were perceived as gay, their masculine appearance and actions in the commercial would contradict this perception. Hence, based on the explanation provided regarding the misconception of one's gender expression and corresponding sexual orientation, this can be deemed a "closeted" representation- one of "the past" stereotypical LGBT depictions in media. As for the Close Up ad, the storytelling had a humorous attempt to show same-sex attraction that, at some point, it showed excessive actions that can be associated with the LGBT stereotype "explicitly sexual." For example, there was a point in the ad wherein the male gay character blatantly took a picture of the man he was interested in, accompanied by lines such as "look at those lips" and "I wish I were that straw."

Because of the mixed responses of the general public on "the present" LGBT representation in media, this study also assumes that these views might be carried over to how they view their social realities. This assumption was based on Gerbner's argument that the findings can provide a basis for the culture's treatment of some groups or societal beliefs (Gerbner et al., 1986). Hence, the general public was asked

if they think the LGBT portrayals in the five advertisements are similar to what they see of LGBT people in their surroundings.

Table 17: The Positive Portrayals vs. Social Reality

Their portrayal is similar to what I observe in my surroundings												
TV Viewers							SM Users					
		Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)	
Smart (2016)	N	36	36.4%	A	15	37.5%	A, N*	4	36.4%	N	46	36.2%
Uber (2017)	N	40	40.4%	A	18	45%	N	5	45.5%	N	48	37.8%
Bench (2018)	A	36	36.4%	A	20	50%	N	5	45.5%	A	53	41.7%
Pantene (2018)	N	33	33.3%	A	17	42.5%	N	7	63.6%	A	45	35.4%
Close Up (2019)	N	42	42.4%	N	20	50%	N	7	63.6%	N	49	38.6%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

**Same points/percentages for all answers*

The results in table 17 corroborate the assumption that the general public has mixed responses regarding the positive LGBT portrayals as applied in their social realities. The HTVs are the only group that showed positive responses on four out of five advertisements. This means that the HTVs tend to believe that the positive LGBT portrayals in the ads align with what they see in the LGBT people in their social realities. The LTVs only agreed on the Bench ad, the LSMs only agreed on the Smart ad, and the LSMs only agreed on the Bench and Pantene ads. But for the rest of the ads, the majority of the respondents gave neutral responses. In other words, most of the general public is undecided if what they see in these five advertisements is the same as what they see in LGBT people in their social realities.

One interesting finding that aligns with Cultivation Theory is the HSM's agreement on the Pantene commercial, which can be interpreted as the LGBT empowerment they see in the ad is similar to what they see in the LGBT people in their communities. This is note-worthy because a huge majority of this group, who are heavy social media users (90 respondents; results in table 11), reported that they had not seen the commercial before the survey. Because they were given a chance to watch this advertisement while answering the survey, they were able to make an informed opinion that the message in the ads also exists in their social realities. Moreover, the LGBT participants in the focus groups also mentioned utilising social media to express their true selves and are thankful that this medium is educating the public about them. This shows the potential cultivation impact of heavy exposure to social media, wherein it is possible to cultivate positive LGBT messages

to Filipino audiences. This discussion from the focus groups will be explained in the next chapter.

This section answers the sub-primary research question, "what does the general public think about the recent positive LGBT portrayals in the Philippine media?" and the findings hint at a change in society. While the general public tends to give positive responses to positive LGBT portrayals in "the present," some of them tend to give neutral responses to positive LGBT portrayals in "the present" if these are perceived as LGBT stereotypes. Their answers also reiterated one of this study's findings about society's "tolerance, not acceptance" attitude towards the LGBT community after accepting the LGBT messages in the ads that are "showing support" but staying neutral, and even some rejected, messages regarding same-sex relationships and attraction. However, this study recognises that there is still no cultivation impact on this study's respondents because of how recent this change in LGBT representation occurred. After all, Gerbner has argued several times that repetitive portrayal in television creates a message system that can potentially become society's dominant perception. In other words, it begs the question of whether this kind of material can positively influence the Filipinos' formation of beliefs towards LGBT people through consistent positive representation in the future.

IV. "The Future:" Cultural Indicators

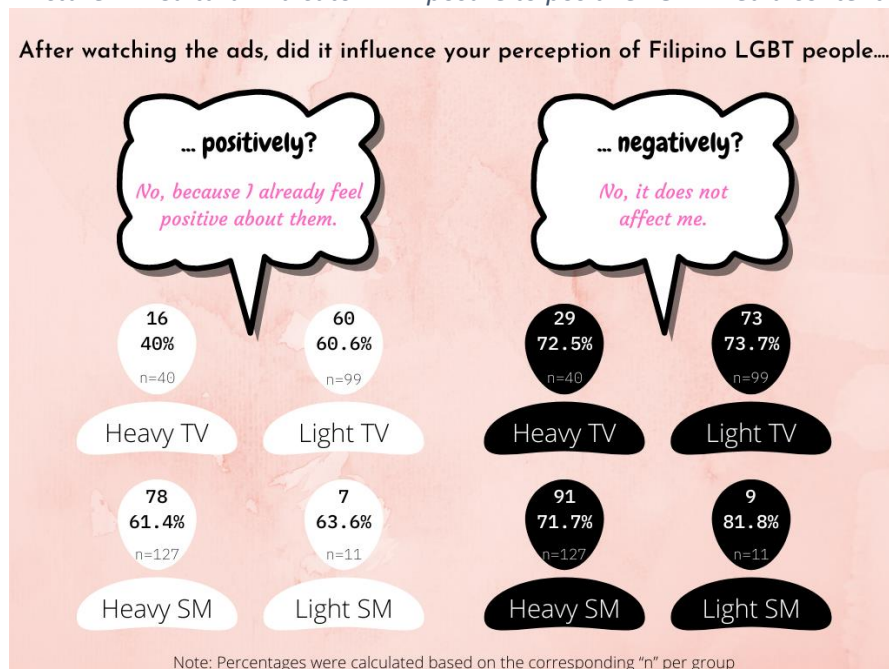
This section aims to determine whether long-term exposure to positive and non-stereotypical LGBT messages in media may cause positive changes in Philippine society, especially in affecting the perceptions and attitudes of the general public towards Filipino LGBT people. To determine this, clues from the respondent's reactions to the five ads and their opinion about future LGBT-themed advertisements were analysed and identified. "The future" in this study is defined as the LGBT representation in Philippine media in the next ten years or so, specifically from 2030 onwards.

The Cultural Indicators Project inspired the analysis of the clues. According to Gerbner (1969), one of the purposes of the Cultural Indicators project is to determine the type of social structure created, through media messages, in a specific community or culture despite impersonal contact or communication with each

other. The message system discovered through such projects can show the culture's fundamental values and the potential path towards societal change (Mosharafa, 2015). The latter purpose is vital to determine whether the cultivation effects of television and media could result in future changes in people's beliefs and attitudes. This is known as 'cultural indicator.' For example, Shanahan's (2004) investigation of portrayals of violence and minority groups on television showed a possible catalyst for societal change towards some groups, like African Americans, gay people, and women, through their media representation and production of important messages about them, which served as the cultural indicators (cited in Mosharafa, 2015).

In line with these, this study's first clue of a cultural indicator is based on the respondents' reported feelings on the five advertisements. After watching them, the respondents were asked whether those ads positively or negatively affected their perceptions of LGBT people. Picture 11 shows that regardless of their TV and SM hours, respondents answered that the ads did not affect them positively as they already felt positive about them before watching the ads. Similarly, they all confirmed that the ads did not give them any triggers that could make them feel negative about LGBT people.

Picture 11: Cultural Indicator 1: Exposure to positive LGBT media content



The answers given by the general public, suggesting that showing positive messages about the LGBT community in the media can only have favourable effects on Filipino audiences, is considered a cultural indicator. This aligns with a study by Calzo and Ward (2009) in the US after discovering that some respondents who had a continuous reading of pop magazines and TV viewing of soap dramas and primetime shows for four years resulted in a more accepting attitude towards homosexuality. Although the general public expressed ambivalence with the LGBT message 'same-sex attraction' in the previous section, the results in picture 11 show that the LGBT portrayal from these ads is generally accepted or received agreeably. The results also suggest that future advertisements with similar themes and portrayals could also expect to be given the same treatment. This trend is a clue to a possible trajectory of Filipino heterosexual audiences' reactions or feelings to "the future" positive, non-stereotypical LGBT portrayals in advertisements or possibly in other media content, such as TV dramas or films.

While the study recognises the potential of showing positive LGBT messages in mainstream media as one cultural indicator of changes in perceptions, this study also considers if this influence could translate into societal actions. This study would like to determine whether cultivating positive LGBT messages could help change the dominant perception of "tolerance, not full acceptance" and inspire people to genuinely support them from words to actions. In table 18, the respondents were asked whether they would buy the products advertised in the five ads, discuss these ads with their peers, or share the video of the ads on their social media pages.

Table 18: Cultural Indicator 2: Societal Actions

<i>After watching these ads, how likely would you...</i>	TV Viewers						SM Users					
	Light (n=99)			Heavy (n=40)			Light (n=11)			Heavy (n=127)		
Buy/support the products advertised	N	44	44.4%	N, A*	17	42.5%	N	5	45.5%	N	50	39.4%
Discuss the advertisements with your peers	A	36	36.4%	N	19	47.5%	A	4	36.4%	N	48	37.8%
Share the advertisements on your social media pages	N	41	41.4%	N	17	42.5%	SD	4	36.4%	N	50	39.4%

Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group

**Same points/percentages for all answers*

Whether the general public would buy or support the advertised products, all of them, regardless of their TV and SM hours, reported indecision on this action. However, the response from 42.5% of HTVs who said they would buy or support the

products is promising. From the advertiser's point of view, it shows a potential for revenue from the general audience that would not discourage them from continuing to invest in LGBT-themed advertisements promoting positive LGBT messages. As a result, if the Philippine media continues with this trend, it is possible to impart positive and non-stereotypical beliefs to Filipino audiences that could translate into actions in their social realities in the long run, such as authentic support to the community. As for the Cultivation Theory's point of view, this result is a significant factor in TV cultivation because it targets heavy TV viewers. They are the ones who have the highest tendency to view their social realities as similar to what they see on television. Hence, if they see positive LGBT treatment on TV, they would also carry the same treatment in their social realities. This study considers these societal actions the second cultural indicator because, according to Gerbner, "indicators in a public-message system give us a basis for judging the role of cultural production in their cultivation" (1970, p. 80). Hence, despite the dominant ambivalence of the general public in this question, some members of the HTVs gave a clue that the advertisements have the potential to be one of the mediums wherein the general public would confidently receive positive LGBT messages.

For the second question in table 18, a contrast between LTVs and LSMs, reporting they would discuss the ads with their peers, and the HTVs and HSMs, stating that they may either do it or not, is observed. The "light" sector groups seem keener to talk about LGBT-themed ads with their friends than those in the "heavy" sector. As for the third question, when asked if they would share the advertisements on their social media pages, their answers still led to ambivalence. The LTVs, HTVs, and HSMs all expressed neutrality on the issue, while the LSMs strongly disagreed with sharing the ads on their social media pages.

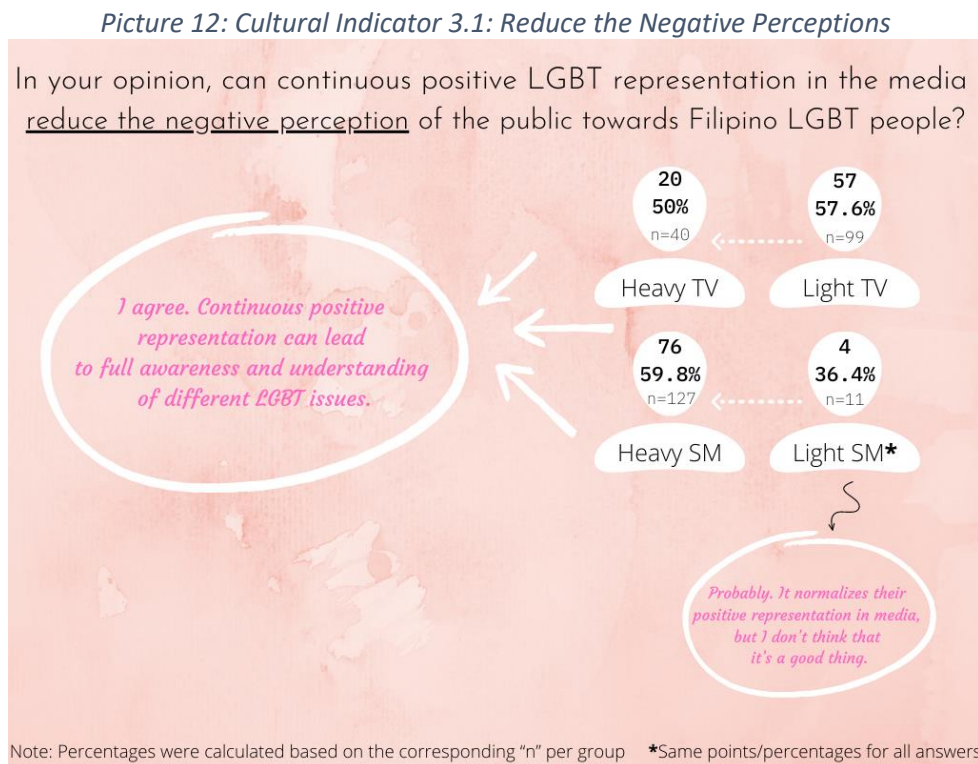
The results in table 18 suggest that the second cultural indicator, which is showing support through actions, is not yet established among the study's respondents. However, it is essential to note the huge possibility of having no cultivation effect at the time of the survey because the ads had only been released a few years ago. Moreover, a vast number of respondents reported not having seen all of the ads before the survey. Some respondents reported seeing these ads on social media and television before the survey, as seen in table 11. However, the dominant "neutral" answer suggests that those who had been pre-exposed and had pre-formed opinions

about the positive LGBT ads still could not decide whether they would support the community through physical actions. Even though the study only focused on three 'societal actions' and recognised that more profound actions could act as cultural indicators, it can also be considered that a widespread positive social change is emerging once the public starts to engage in these actions willingly. The general public had already given a clue, albeit small, which can still be considered noteworthy as it provides a glance at what a Filipino heterosexual audience who is heavily exposed to television might do with the positive LGBT messages they receive via advertisements. This study also suggests that if the advertisers would want to have a significant effect on Filipino heterosexual audiences, they should form contents or strategies that could reach out to the LSMs, as they are the ones who tend to disagree with a few LGBT themes and messages strongly. This idea, together with the LGBT focus group participants' suggestions on how advertisers can effectively reach them, is discussed in Chapters Seven and Nine.

Lastly, the findings of this study suggest that the reactions resulting from a continuous positive representation of members of the LGBT community in mainstream media, not just in advertisements, can act as the third cultural indicator. The respondents were asked if they thought consistent positive LGBT content exposure in "future" media might reduce the negative and increase the positive perception of people towards members of the LGBT community. Pictures 11 and 12 show that all the respondents, regardless of their TV and SM hours, agree that continuous positive representation can lead to full awareness and understanding of different LGBT issues.

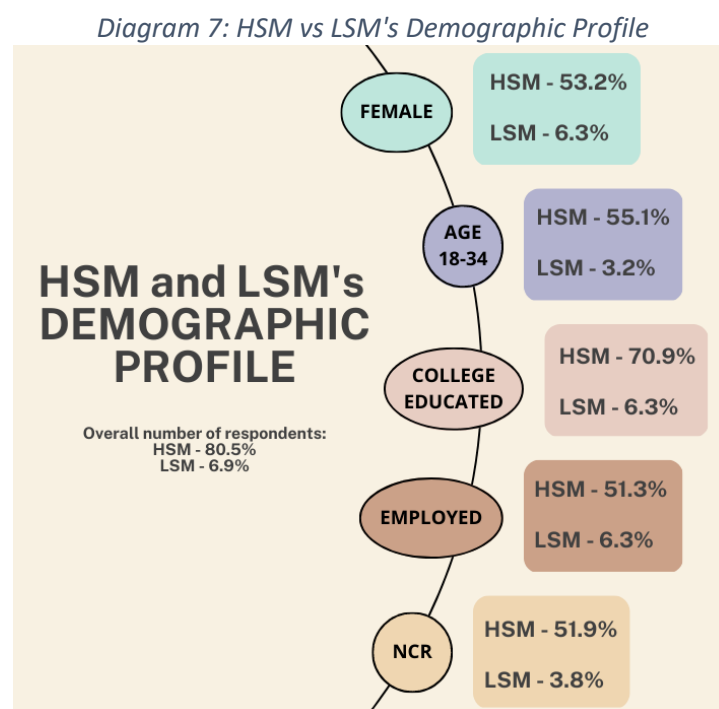
As seen in picture 12, some LSM respondents gave a non-dominant opinion. While 36.4% of them agree that continuous positive LGBT representation in the media can reduce the negative perception of the people, 36.4% of LSMs also report that normalising this representation is not a good thing. Throughout the study, the LSMs consistently gave interesting answers that enabled the study to identify the persistent issues regarding LGBT media treatment and the general public's opinion on it. For example, the LSMs are the ones who tend not to follow the mainstream, give decisive answers or opinions regarding stereotypes, and tend to express strong disagreement on the 'same-sex attraction' message in the featured advertisements. These attitudes suggest that, even though acceptance from the general public can be

expected, continuous positive media representation of LGBT people in the future might still be faced with disapproval from some Filipino heterosexual audiences.



This result again emphasises the need to develop a strategy that can capture the LSMs' attention if the advertisers, or any organisations, want to cause a holistic impact that will benefit the Filipino LGBT community. This also brings up the curiosity of viewing the LGBT issues in the Philippine media through the LSMs' eyes. Cultivation Theory states that light TV viewers tend not to think their social reality is similar to what they see on television. Following this rule, the LSMs should not be seeing their social realities based on what they see on social media because they are less exposed to it. An example is the earlier report that they were not exposed to the "poor" LGBT stereotype in media, leading to different opinions when asked if they observe the same characteristics in their social realities. There could be some possibilities that could explain their answers. For example, they may have accepting or non-accepting attitudes toward LGBT people based on non-media factors, or their social realities have already transcended the old stereotypical LGBT media representation. However, basing it from the Cultivation Theory standpoint, this study claims the possibility that the LSM's different answers are due to their ability to withstand the mainstream or not go with the dominant perception because they are not exposed to the central message system flowing in the world of Philippine

social media. The LSMs' demographic data were rechecked and compared with the HSM group to prove this. Diagram 7 shows no difference in the demographic characteristics of most people from the LSM and HSM groups. The only difference between the two groups is their time spent on social media. Gerbner (1998) states that the internet could also be a place to deeply penetrate and integrate the dominant perception, especially if exposed daily. This study's LSMs, however, reported being less exposed to social media. Hence, the possibility that their personal views and opinions regarding LGBT people might still be intact and uninfluenced by social media due to less or no exposure to the dominant views circulating in social media.



Picture 13 shows that while 40% of HTVs consider that continuous positive LGBT representation in the media can increase people's positive perception of this community, 40% of the HTVs express that media alone might not be enough. According to them, other factors are involved, such as societal and traditional, which can affect a person's positive reception towards Filipino LGBT people. These answers suggest that while Cultivation Theory contends that heavy TV viewers are vulnerable to television influences, it might not be the case for some HTV Filipino heterosexual viewers in this study when cultivating positive LGBT perceptions on the audiences through future media content. Even though the HTVs gave television

Picture 13: Cultural Indicator 3.2: Increase the Positive Perceptions

In your opinion, can continuous positive LGBT representation in the media increase the positive perception of the public towards Filipino LGBT people?



Note: Percentages were calculated based on the corresponding "n" per group *Same points/percentages for all answers

responses in terms of positive portrayals throughout the survey (SA and A answers), they are still aware of the culture's standing in dealing with this situation, which could be potential hindrances in achieving people's total acceptance of the LGBT community. But the answers they gave in pictures 11 and 12, saying that they receive positive LGBT media ads positively, already provide a clue to the general public's opinion if this trend of LGBT representation continues in "the future."

The Cultural Indicators project is composed of three stages, with the first one (institutional process analysis) being concerned with investigating the foundations of policies in the media system, and the second stage (message system analysis) is about examining the messages that the television is trying to cultivate to the audiences through content analysis of TV programs (Gerbner et al., 1986). The third stage is the Cultivation Analysis, which is interested in determining whether the "potential lessons of the television world" is more reflected in heavy TV viewers than the light TV viewers (ibid., p. 23), which this study is currently using. The first two stages were not the focus of this study because it is investigating the real-life statistics from the people, which is lacking in the Philippine academic field studying Filipino LGBT media representation. Most of the studies in this field were either focused on discourse or film and content analysis, which correspond to the first two

stages of the Cultural Indicators project. However, this study emphasises people's opinions by asking them directly. One of the purposes of Cultivation studies is to determine the "direction and thrust of cultural amplification or neglect which provide a clue to the treatment of social types, groups, and values" (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 26). One of the goals of this PhD study is to centre the Filipino LGBT community in research to contribute to the betterment of their status. The point of cultural indicators is to identify particular problems in the foundations and policies of the message system through the three-stage analyses, then put everything into perspective and view the culture in the context of the cultivated messages being inspected. More importantly, the cultural indicators "will tell us what most people think or do something *about* and in *common*, and suggest reasons why" (ibid., p. 81). Following this guidance, this study is offering the following cultural indicators as a result of continuous positive LGBT treatment in Philippine media that could be considered clues on what the general public might collectively do that can be considered as a step towards full acceptance, not just tolerance:

1. If exposure to positive LGBT media content can cause favourable responses from audiences.
2. If the exposure will translate to support through societal actions from the audiences.
3. If continuous positive LGBT representation in mainstream media has been established.

Because the timeline of "the future" media effects of this study is only for the next ten years or so, the given cultural indicators are considered only a step and not full acceptance. It would be impossible to catalyse a cultural reset based only on the influence of media within this timeline because the dominant thinking "tolerated, not accepted" is deeply rooted in Philippine society, which is affected by profound factors such as religion. In other words, the attitudes of the wider public towards people who are LGBT are likely to be slow to change. Moreover, the media company and advertisers' priorities in producing content are to gain revenue and audience attention. It would be beneficial if their produced content could serve as a catalyst for fostering an improved and innovative societal perspective within the country. But that is not always the case. Hence, at least in the advertising field, the ads being released are not inclusive. Particularly, less to no representation of other LGBT

persons, such as disabled and poverty-stricken, might be deemed unappealing to consumers or not appealing to the consumer group who tend to spend more.

However, the point of analysing people's reactions through the Cultivation lens is to pinpoint "the direction and thrust of cultural amplification or neglect" of groups (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 26). The Cultural Indicator project analysed 19 years' worth of US TV shows from the 1970s to 1980s and discovered that 70% of programs contained violent content, with a significant increase of 79% to 80% in 1984 and 1985 (Gerbner et al., 1986a). According to the study, this consistent and increasing violence on television had desensitised the viewers regarding violence and had imparted lessons of fear, victimisation, and vulnerability. As a result, the heavy viewers took action to secure their safety or demonstrate their power, including buying new house locks, watchdogs, and even guns. This study is the perfect example of how the media can provide clues on what a group of people in society might do after consistent exposure to certain content. The clues in the television message system regarding increased violence triggering distrust within the TV viewer's social realities via the analysis in Gerbner's project was laid out, corroborating the emergence of one societal issue in the US, such as the ease of accessibility to guns and weapons. Because of this, the term "mean world syndrome" was coined (ibid., p. 12). This was accompanied by three indicators to determine if an audience was affected by the violent contents on TV: if they "(1) agree that most people are just looking out for themselves, (2) that you can't be too careful in dealing with people, and (3) that most people would take advantage of you if they got a chance" (ibid., p. 12).

This doctoral study suggests that the cultural indicators to look out for, or clues from the relationship between Philippine media and the general public, Filipino heterosexual audiences as triggered by "the future" positive and non-stereotypical LGBT representation, themes, messages, and stories, suggesting the possibility of the society taking a step toward full acceptance are: if future contents will be met with favourable responses from the audiences, will cause authentic support through tangible actions, and will be a regular occurrence in the mainstream media.

V. Conclusion

By surveying the general public, light has been shed on one of the questions in this study: did the prolonged old, negative, stereotypical LGBT representation in media affect the Filipino people's perceptions of them? The answer is yes on some occasions. For example, they confirmed that the TV portrayals of "comedic/hysterics" and "abused/abandoned" definitely exist in their social realities. The Cultivation Theory states that television content provides an overview of how a particular society treats a certain societal issue. This doctoral study argues that the findings gathered from the general public reflect the underlying dominant perception of the Filipino public towards the LGBT community: tolerated, not fully accepted. The tolerance comes from their positive reactions and feelings toward the positive portrayal and messages showing support and encouragement to the community. However, the non-acceptance and ambivalence are visible when an LGBT issue, which is stereotyping in media, and the reality of their romantic and sexual interests are discussed, which shows that there might still be some who do not feel positively about them. If they feel positive about them, the ideal responses would be taking a stand or agreeing that they are being stereotyped in media and disagreeing that the media's stereotyped and negative representation is not similar to what they see in their social realities.

However, there is a possibility that the existing media portrayal no longer corresponds to the general public's social realities as progress to the LGBT status and treatment may have possibly occurred. These findings open the discussion on whether the media and the advertisements mirror what they see in society or if they are shaping and molding society's opinions. Along with the responses from the Filipino LGBT participants in this study, which will be discussed in the next chapter, this study will tackle the "mirror vs. mold" debate in the field of advertising as applied in the Philippine context and the way it represents the LGBT community in media. These are elaborated on in Chapter Eight.

This study is also determined to know if the current trend in LGBT portrayal can positively impact the general public's attitudes. Three cultural indicators were laid out to help pinpoint this in the future. A prediction of how these indicators will affect Philippine society and Filipino LGBT people is a different discussion. However, these indicators can be considered one of the guides to give a picture of which

direction the ongoing change of LGBT media representation might go. Whether the positive LGBT representation would continue in the next few decades and positively change people's perceptions of them or not, the television message system in the Philippines would give clues of how the Filipino general public treats the LGBT community at a certain point in time. It would be helpful to inspect the message system and find clues that answer:

1. What do they feel about LGBT content,
2. What do they do with the LGBT messages they receive or do not receive, and
3. Their opinion regarding its presence or lack of presence in the Philippine media.

Moreover, the focus might shift from television exposure to social media because the population tends to consume heavy social media hours, as proven by this study's findings and recent studies about their consumption (Kemp, 2022; The Trade Desk, 2021). But more importantly, even the LGBT community strategically utilises social media more to ensure information dissemination and promotion of their rights and inclusivity in all aspects of society. This study's LGBT participants in the focus group discussions have revealed that social media had become a huge influence as to why they felt the treatment shift from the public and the media. According to them, they felt seen more than ever as they can now find representation in media in a more local context to help understand the struggles and challenges they go through upon discovering themselves and their sexualities. While this chapter was focused on determining the general public's reactions to the LGBT representation in the Philippine media, the next chapter will answer the question, "What do the Filipino LGBT community think about how they are being represented in media?"

7

Chapter

The Filipino LGBT People's Reaction to LGBT Representation in Philippine Media

I. Introduction

In this chapter, the answer to the question, "What do the Filipino LGBT people think about the recent positive LGBT portrayals in the Philippine media?" is explored. The previous chapter, under the principles of Cultivation Theory, explained that long-term exposure to negative portrayals of LGBT people in media could result in the audiences' negative attitudes toward the community. The analysis in the previous chapter showed that this type of exposure resulted in the general public's ambivalence toward LGBT issues. The general public's consistent ambivalence reiterated the unspoken culture in the Philippine society towards LGBT people: tolerated but not accepted. In this chapter, the LGBT participants were also asked about their experiences on whether "the past" media depictions affected their lives. Their reactions, opinions, and feelings were gathered through in-person focus group discussions. This study conducted six interviews, two per region (Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao), and garnered 25 participants.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the participants' reactions to "the past" and "the present" LGBT media representation. The second section concerns the participants' opinions on how they want to see themselves depicted in "the future" media. The last section explores the principles of Relevance Theory as observed during the participants' discussions. Relevance Theory states that audiences place meaning on texts based on shared experiences with people in the same socio-economical situations (Morley, 1980). Fiske (1988) adds that social allegiance would be activated within the group having similar

experiences, resulting in discourses and collective media interpretations to which they could all relate. Hence, several dialogues are included between the participants throughout the chapter, as the flow of their discussions is essential in pinpointing the moment of social allegiance. Relevance Theory is discussed in the last section; hence each dialogue and quotes found within the chapter are labelled to inform the reader if a particular discussion is part of the theoretical analysis. As explained in the Methodology chapter, applying the theory aims to determine two things. Firstly, if the LGBT audiences can transcend the discussion from media content to real-life situations based on their shared experiences, and hereby provide a bigger context of their social realities. Secondly, if the LGBT audiences can give different readings, meanings, and interpretations of some of the elements of the five chosen ads, that may have been overlooked by audiences who do not belong to the same group. This study discovered that its LGBT participants demonstrate both and have contributed valuable insights beyond the initial scope of the study.

II. The Filipino LGBT People's Reaction to "The Past" and "The Present" Media Representation

This section explores the participants' responses regarding LGBT representations in the Philippine media before and today. The participants' accounts reveal that their lives had been affected by how the Philippine media treated them. In the "the past" era, their experiences were primarily challenging because of the wider public's negative attitudes toward them. Similarly, the more recent positive changes in "the present" have been found to have resulted in some positive changes in their lives. According to them, the media greatly influenced the situations in both eras.

II.I. "The Past:" A Challenging Time to be an LGBT Person

This study defines "the past" as the LGBT media representation before releasing the five positive LGBT-themed ads (2016 to 2019). However, for the LGBT participants, "the past" is explained as any LGBT-themed media content from the 1980s to 2010s. These include TV shows, movies, newspapers, and so on. This definition was applied when asked how they felt about "the past" LGBT representation in the Philippine media. The studies in the literature review state that media depictions of the Filipino LGBT people in the past years mostly contained offensive words against them, limited to stereotypical and negative portrayals such as comic relief, sexual deviants,

parlour gay, and abused by their relatives, partners, and the society (Tolentino, 2000; Tan, 2001; Diaz, 2012; Payuyo, 2012). When the LGBT participants of the focus groups were asked what kind of representations of their communities they have observed in the media in "the past," they provided the following insights:

- ✚ Bullied, getting insulted, discriminated against, made fun of, laughed at
- ✚ Comic relief, perceived as clowns, entertainment in fiesta, celebrations, and beauty pageants
- ✚ Generalised or limited representation: always hypermasculine or hyperfeminine, transgender women and bisexual men were portrayed as gay men, lesbian females were always dressed up as a man
- ✚ Gay men were more visible than others, meaning there was little to no representation for other sexual orientations; LGBT representation in the media was not prioritised; and straight actors were often cast to play an LGBT character
- ✚ Lack of variety in portrayal, no depth, no social issues, not allowed to be a protagonist, stuck in a specific character such as a best friend or the sidekick of the lead character, stuck as a showbiz reporter in terms of the media profession
- ✚ Not much representation in mainstream media, and only visible in independent films
- ✚ Sexual stereotypes such as sex slave, gay men will pay for sex, gay men are rapists and paedophiles, porn-like treatment and sexualising lesbian females
- ✚ The same storyline in terms of romantic relationships: one should take a masculine role, and one should be feminine, abused and taken advantage of financially by lovers (for gay men), a bad relationship experience with a man to discover an attraction to girls (for bisexual females), and a tragic love story (for lesbian females)
- ✚ Violence against an LGBT member, corporal punishment or getting beaten up by relatives upon discovering the sexual orientation
- ✚ For gay men: soft, only wants to be a woman, parlour gays, usage of derogatory words on the news such as "*baklang* rapist" (a gay rapist)

It can be observed that almost all of their answers described negative representations that had become LGBT stereotypes in the Philippine media.

According to one of the principles of Cultivation Theory, one of the ways to cultivate negative perceptions of LGBT people is through continuous and consistent negative portrayals of them in media (Gerbner, 1984). The participants were asked how these portrayals affected their lives.

Theme 1: Negative portrayal = Negative perception= Negative effects

According to the participants, the negative portrayals commonly seen in the media have affected the general public's perception of them. Most of the time, they were based on something other than ideal or favourable circumstances. Based on Blue's⁴ impression, a 19-year-old bisexual cisman from Luzon, the mainstream media can be a dangerous platform to inculcate negative LGBT ideas because the masses predominantly use it. He adds that it is more likely that the general public would pick up these ideas, especially when big TV networks in the country are showing them. Despite the differences in sexual orientation, two other participants, Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SO) and Vinny (25, Visayas, lesbian), echo Blue's idea, showing that this situation is prevailing and can be observed by anyone regardless of sexuality.

Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOI): In an episode in "*Ipaglaban mo**," paedophile portrayal. Although it happens in real life, if this is constantly shown in one channel, it gives a wrong impression to people, especially youths. Because the kids are gathering information. As much as possible, they should lessen this kind of portrayal to prevent it from giving a wrong impression to the people.

Vinny (25, Visayas, lesbian): I think there was some media content that would low-key undermine gay men - especially. They would give a bad light to gay men or something like "*bayot ka*" or something like that.

**Ipaglaban mo!* is a crime-drama TV show, featuring real-life cases, aired in ABS-CBN. The specific episode was not clarified.

"*Bayot*" is a Visayan term for gay men. Sometimes, people would use the phrase "*bakla ka!*" or "*bayot ka!*" in a derogatory manner. Both phrases translate to "you're gay." Throughout the country's history, the terms were usually associated with negative connotations such as being effeminate, belonging to the lower class, and being exaggerated or too loud (Diaz, 2015). Hence, due to the words' historical aspect, they can be deemed offensive if used with harmful intent. Echoing what

⁴ The names of the participants are pseudonymised. A list of their complete profile information is available in Appendix A.

Vinny said, some participants share that some media platforms tend to perpetuate negative narratives of the LGBT community. More specifically, they suggest that news and radio had normalised name-calling and the usage of derogatory words, specifically targeting gay men.

Dialogue 1: Relevance on Observations

Janna (31, Mindanao, transwoman): The worst for me is the radio. On the radio, you don't see their appearance. For example, if someone mentions *bakla*...

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): In the news, *bayot*.

Janna: ... in general, you can't answer the radio. You cannot interact with it.

Rhandy (37, Mindanao, transwoman): I agree with Janna. The worst is the radio.

John (25, Mindanao, gay man): Worst is the radio.

Maddy, a transwoman (did not disclose age, Mindanao), suggests that instead of saying "*bakla* rapist" on the radio, they can say "an LGBT member" instead. Maddy's sentiments are understandable because using the term "*bakla*" to a gay man, or even transwoman, in a derogatory or hurtful way is offensive and wrong. As explained in Chapter Three, Filipinos tend to think that transwomen and gay men are the same. Hence, Maddy's suggestion can be derived from this false social notion, and instead of trivialising the community and describing them as *bakla*, Maddy would appreciate it if the news would use the term "an LGBT member" or "*isang miyembro ng LGBT community*." Not only does it remove the ridicule that comes with the word "*bakla*," but it can also normalise a respectable way of how the community should be addressed on the news. It could also help the audiences be informed that there is a massive difference between *bakla* and transgender people.

Bert, (22, Mindanao) also a transwoman, agrees with Maddy and expresses hurt by the said treatment of them on the radio. She felt that this is one of the reasons why many LGBT people are still afraid to come out. The stated observations come from participants in the Mindanao region. Radio is still considered one of the most used mediums in the region because it can reach everyone, even remote areas, at a very low cost despite the geographical challenges that TV broadcast towers face (Walker, 2022). Moreover, some companies created community radio to reach out to the smaller municipalities in the region (WACC Global, 2019). However, the danger of community radio is that some radio personalities tend not to keep the separation

between facts and opinions (Lasco, 2021). This potentially poses a risk to the LGBT community, especially if the announcer has prejudiced opinions against the community. In Morley's (1986) 'Family Television' study, the housewives were observed to pay more attention to crime news that happened near or within their area than the national crime news as there was a perceived higher possibility they might be affected by it than the crime news that happened in a place that was not close in proximity.

Following this finding, in some cases, community radio can be more dangerous to LGBT people than national radio because the community is much closer to the issues presented by community radio. According to AlterMidya Network, one of the community radios in the Philippines, the news they produce is much different than what the national and corporate radio stations produce because these are "deeply rooted in the daily struggles of communities of workers, farmers, indigenous peoples, migrants, urban poor, women and youth" (WACC Global, 2019: para. 5). In other words, the contents, issues, and problems presented by community radio are more personalised to the area. People from local communities are also given a platform to voice problems which affect their areas. Through this medium, solutions to local issues are sometimes found by involving the community or different localities. Hence, every issue presented on community radio becomes, in a sense, a community's concern. Following this logic, if homophobic ideas are expressed and articulated on community radio, it could severely threaten LGBT people. This is especially risky in smaller communities with lesser populations since it is often easier to single out LGBT people. The tendency to be influenced by a prejudiced radio newscaster in community radio is higher because community listeners pay more attention and importance to community content than national content. Hence, a small platform such as community radio can be dangerous if not used properly.

Blue, Lavender (27, bisexual woman), Purple (21, pansexual ciswoman), and Pink (23, bisexual ciswoman), all from the Luzon region, express a similar worry saying that even music can be a platform to contribute stigma to the LGBT community. The group identified two Filipino songs that are, according to them, damaging to the community. Released in 2018, *Titibo-tibo* (boyish or a girl who acts like a lesbian) is a Filipino pop song with lyrics implying that a tomboyish girl who had lesbian

tendencies in her younger years grows up to be a typically feminine woman who reveals herself to be heterosexual after falling in love with a man.

Dialogue 2: Relevancy of Self-Knowledge and Relevance on Observations

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): Once you're out, they think it's attractive that you grew up boyish. But in the end, you're really straight.... *Titibo-tibo* fetishized this.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): It's like saying that it's okay to be *titibo-tibo*, but once a man comes along your way, you'll change.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): Like he will save you.

Another song, *Gayuma* (love potion), is a rap song about how an LGBT member uses a love potion to attract a man. The song, which was released in 2012, contains damaging lyrics to the community, such as "*kahit parang in between ka ng babae at bakulaw*" (your face looks like an in-between of a woman and a gorilla or beast) and "*kung 'di dahil sa gayuma ay pinaliguan ko ng bala*" (if it were not for the love potion, I would have showered her with bullets).

Dialogue 3: Relevancy on Self-Knowledge

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): *Gayuma* is transphobic. It said that he loves her even though she's ugly. The music video portrays a transwoman or gay man.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): There's another song saying that the guy is already done with girls, so he'll just go to the gay men instead. I forgot the lyrics but the kids sang this as a joke because they rhymed. It is a dangerous platform because its target audience is kids. They grow up listening to it.

Blue is concerned that the LGBT stigma from a person can start at a young age. Since the song is catchy, kids sing along with it, which has a probability for the damaging lyrics against the community retained in their minds growing up. Jovina earlier raised the same concern saying that if kids were exposed to paedophilic portrayals of gay men, it could lead to an idea that what they see on television could be similar to their social realities. What Blue and Jovina say echoes Gross' (1984) argument in Cultivation Theory that television is powerful enough to inculcate homophobic attitudes in audiences through the media's consistent stereotyped LGBT portrayal with demeaning words. Following this argument, Blue and Jovina have a point in deducing that if kids are exposed to harmful lyrics and portrayals targeting the LGBT community, it could possibly lead to negative attitudes to LGBT people as they grow

up. Other participants' testimonies corroborated how misleading and harmful media content about the LGBT community affects how the general public perceives them. Their media portrayal affected even some of their family members and relatives.

JC (18, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): The media affected my parents, family and relatives. For example, if they see videos or movies wherein they'd insult gay men, they'd say, "you're the same as him." They said I should stop being gay because I'd end up like the gay men they see in the media. I felt hurt because those words came from my family.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): The influence of the media in my family is traditional. We shouldn't have boyfriends because they'd only take advantage of us financially. We're soft. The stereotypes. And then we should act masculine. They also think that gay men only want to be a woman. "Don't dress like them." In terms of media, they think that that's the ultimate limitation of gay men.

“The past” portrayal of acceptance and non-acceptance of the general public also affected some participants growing up. What the media usually showed when dealing with an LGBT character's sexuality was extremely dramatic, and violence and hostility from the non-LGBT community. The representation is mostly targeting male gay characters. Blue explains that the media validated what he observed in his culture growing up. Most specifically about micro-aggressions he received, such as being called "gay" whenever he was about to cry. The LGBT portrayal in "the past" media somehow persuaded him to "act a certain way" to fit in. “The past” portrayal also greatly affected some participants growing up, especially about coming out.

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): I was afraid to come out because of how I saw what a gay man in the movies was, especially in the past. Dolphy's movie, *Markova**, portrayed him as a sex slave. So I thought it's not good... I was afraid to come out because people would automatically judge me. Basically, gay men are whores, gay men will pay for sex, things like that... That's how we were represented in the past. If a son is gay, he will automatically get beaten by their dad. It was really hard for me that's why coming out was too late for me. I was already in my 20s.

Vinny (25, Visayas, lesbian): Growing up, I wasn't really comfortable being called tomboy or lesbian because I thought it was a bad thing. Then they would usually say, "you're a lesbian same like on TV", or "you're like the ones on the TV or radio." It kinda affected how they treated me, my friend, and my family. Because of that, I was very low on self-esteem, I wasn't really confident. I wasn't living my truth.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): Somehow, the media had an influence because that's what they portray in the movies. Once the parents found out their son was gay, they'd punish him. Of course, you'd get scared. If I came out, they'd hurt me too. Those were the things that affected me in terms of coming out because that's what you see in the movies and *teleseryes*.

*2000 film *Markova* is about the life of a comfort gay or male sex slave of the Japanese soldiers in the Philippines during World War II.

Because of the influence of "the past" on the general public, most participants developed fear and anxiety because some got bullied and discriminated against. Ryl (21, gay man) and Vanx (18, transwoman) from the Visayas region report having no choice but to endure the negative attitudes they get from the general public. Smith (24, Visayas, bisexual man) developed anxiety and depression at the same time. Their experiences suggest that the negative portrayals in media had become normalised, that they became vulnerable to violence or other harmful acts by the general public, including outing them without their consent or in a degrading manner masked as jokes.

Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man): During my first year in high school, my class adviser made fun of the gay men in the classroom. At the time, I wasn't out yet. I was questioning what I was, but in my mind, I knew I was different. Then the teacher identified me as gay. That experience made me feel like I was bullied in high school. So I thought that the media representation at the time had an influence. Because it was during the early 2000s. Maybe we were still hooked in the 90s or 80s mindset that gay men were only for fun. So the entire class was happy whenever the teacher pulled jokes. I was laughing outside but deep inside...

JC, 18, and Jung, 24, (Mindanao, both did not disclose SOGI) developed fears that non-LGBT people might bully them too because this type of treatment of LGBT people got normalised in "the past" media. Jung even shares how people would make fun of him on the streets for no reason. Maddy adds that the paedophile representation in '*Ipaglaban Mo*' was hurtful and expected the community to be laughed at again. The said portrayal is mostly associated to gay men. However, as a transwoman, Maddy still feels affected by the effects of such negative representation. It could be due to the conflating SOGIE perception in the Philippine society, wherein transwomen are still perceived as *bakla*. Same as for transmen, wherein they are still seen as lesbians. Such reasons could explain why Maddy and Bert earlier stated that they also feel hurt whenever the *bakla* is being treated negatively by a media platform such as the radio. This is because, due to society's misunderstanding of SOGIE, a transwoman, such as Maddy and Bert, is still under the umbrella of *bakla* category.

For some participants, the lack of media representation added to their struggles in discovering their sexualities. According to the participants, this is mostly felt by members of the community who are not as dominantly seen in the media, such as lesbians, bisexual women, and transmen.

Pink (23, Luzon, bisexual ciswoman): I remember I really had to look for representation growing up. It was late for me to realise I was part of the community. I really had to look. There was almost nothing in the Philippine media. So it's really not affirming. I would have to look more at the western representation.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): Growing up, I was watching *Skins*.^{*} That's where I found a representation. Can you imagine I was in elementary, and I was watching *Skins*? You really have to scour the internet before finding representation and someone to identify with.

^{*}*Skins* is a comedic British TV series featuring LGBTQ teens.

Some participants try to rationalise why the media portrayals in "the past" had a massive impact on LGBT members' families and friends.

Bona (29, Luzon, gay man): In general, media shapes the culture and congregates to the people's consciousness. They absorb what they see in the media because we (the LGBT community) can't explain it. It would have been nice if we could explain it to them. But that's not what was happening. For them to know us better, they'd watch. Whatever they see in media, the realisation that we are exactly what they have seen in media got inflicted on their minds. They don't ask their children or other people, "are you all loud?"

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): Once you're exposed to a certain media, you socialise into it. So growing up, you'd think that's the norm. Before, the media was super homophobic. Their audience, more or less, would grow up thinking it's bad if you're an LGBT member.

Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): Because we lack education and proper knowledge. That's the problem, and that's what we need to address and instil in the people's minds.

Theme 2: "It depends." Some people are not affected by the media.

Even though most participants report that "the past" LGBT media portrayal affected them growing up, a small number of them said that the media did not affect their families and people in their surroundings when they were young. For Ryl and Vanx, their families already knew about their sexual orientations early on. They both did not even have to come out because their families accepted them for who they were. It is the same situation for Bert. Bert's parents supported and encouraged her to show her authentic self through her clothing style. Jovina's parents were also supportive in terms of clothing style. However, Jovina had some thoughts about the clothing situation.

Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): I always hear this growing up. I don't like hearing that it is more respectful if a gay person dresses a certain way than crossdressing. I've always thought I would portray myself the way I feel inside. Thankfully, I have very supportive parents. Your authenticity will be compromised if you portray a character that is not you.

Bert and Jovina's statements resonate with Jung. Jung's family advised him to prioritise his happiness without minding what other people would say and not to pretend to be someone else to get other people's attention. Meanwhile, Ba (21, Mindanao, bisexual male) also shares that there was no hardship on his part and that the media did not affect him growing up. For Klint (18, Mindanao, gay man) and Lavender, their family's religious beliefs had a huge impact when dealing with their sexualities growing up.

Klint (18, Mindanao, gay man): I was a late bloomer because my parents were homophobic. They're Catholics that's why I grew up believing I should only be straight because there are only two sexes, male and female. It's not easy for me growing up because I couldn't express what I wanted. So back then, I was trying to become straight, but I didn't belong there. I wanted to have a free space.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): When you come from a family that's practising Catholic, growing up Catholic, it's always "you have to wear nice clothes," "you have to be presentable," "you have to learn how to do this, do that." "You need to find yourself a suitable husband." Those expectations grinded into you growing up that once you got the freedom to look for your identity by yourself without the restrictions of the school, the church, your parents.... you're so lost. That was what my life was like in college. I compartmentalized myself into identities: this is me at school, this is me at home, this is me with my friends, and this is me with certain people. It's like there was no one specific person. It took a really long time.

As for Pinky (41, Luzon), who identifies as the femme in a lesbian relationship, the most significant influence for her was her environment. She shares that it was not hard for her to express herself because she was studying in an all-girls school wherein it was customary to see two girls holding hands and going on dates. She adds that she was boyish and participated in many extra-curricular activities and sports. Her father supported her interests that were deemed masculine hobbies by society, such as riding a motorbike. Her mother only observed her actions but never showed any negative attitudes.

Pinky (41, Luzon, identifies as femme in a lesbian relationship): I was a late bloomer. I was already working when I had my first relationship. My mother asked me, "why is this person always here? What is your relationship to her?" I answered I was dating her. I explained that she was my girlfriend. Eventually, my mother accepted it. There was no confrontation on my father's part. It's more on my mom, who observed and asked questions. So I told her the truth.

Researcher: Did the media affect your parents?

Pinky: No, because they already anticipated it, especially I came from an all-girls school. I was already boyish. I was always out in the streets, and most of my friends were men. So they already thought that there was a possibility.

While Pinky discovered her sexuality through non-media factors, some participants reported that their discovery process was through self-actualisation. The media helped them by corroborating what they were already thinking or feeling. Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man) shares that he knew he was gay but was aware that he was not

like the gay men portrayed in "the past" media. As for Bona (29, Luzon, identifies as both gay man and non-binary), she knew that her journey was a personal process not dictated by the media. Fortunately, for other participants, their family's influences in their environment were the most significant contributor to why they felt accepted by people.

Rhandy (37, Mindanao, transwoman): My mother was a regional budget officer. I gained respect because my mother has a rank and position in the government. So the people around us are professionals and treated me with respect.

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): My mom is a focal person of the LGBT people in our community. So she has a broad understanding of things like this and never gave me the feeling that I am not accepted.

Not everyone was as lucky as Rhandy (37, Mindanao, transwoman) and Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man who also identifies as bisexual). Octus (22, Visayas, gay man) had a different experience despite having an influential father in his community.

Octus (22, Visayas, gay man): Because my dad is well-known here, the neighbours would gossip that my dad's son is gay... that I wouldn't gain anything in life... I wouldn't be a productive member of society.

For Smith, both his family and surroundings were not accepting of him. His main obstacle was his parent's inability to take care of him because of destructive habits, vices, and addictions.

Smith (24, Visayas, bisexual man): I was not accepted by my parents. The people in my surroundings were the same. My parents weren't doing a good job as parents because they had their vices. The people around me, especially my relatives, were also affected.

Researcher: Was your experience more affected by people's personalities than media?

Smith: Yes.

According to the participants, a family's acceptance can go a long way. Their support gives them strength and inspiration to accept their authentic selves and survive their discriminating environment. Unfortunately, the situation is not the same for some. Their parents and the people in their surroundings had shown them they were not accepted in their worlds. Some were based on non-media factors, but most were

affected by "the past" LGBT representations in media. During the discussion about "the past," many participants stated that they were slowly experiencing changes in society because of the positive trends in the current media environment. One of these changes is the emergence of positive LGBT portrayals in advertisements. The following section explores their opinions and feelings about these advertisements.

II.II. "The Present:" The Filipino LGBT People's Reactions to the LGBT-themed Advertisements

"The present" is defined in this study as the positive Filipino LGBT representation in media from 2016 onwards. As discussed in the previous chapter, the five LGBT-themed advertisements gave us five messages: same-sex attraction, same-sex relationships, family acceptance, coming out of the closet, and LGBT empowerment. The participants also observed these five messages. Before discussing their reactions to the advertisements, the participants were given opportunities to watch them. Their reactions and dialogues set forth responses and examples of similar experiences unique to the LGBT community.

Theme 1: "I am the same!" The advertisements are relatable.

The Uber, Bench, and Close Up ads have storylines of same-sex attraction shown in a light and heart-warming manner. Most participants reported that the ads were relatable. For the Uber ad, most of the participants had felt what the lead character felt at some point in their lives, especially feeling giddy, uneasy, anxious, or shy when they share a ride with their crushes or someone good-looking. Some also shared that they would text their friends or post something on social media whenever the same things happened to them as the character did in the ad. However, Bona and Scotch give thought-provoking responses saying these experiences and feelings are universal and the person's gender or sexuality does not matter.

Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man): (The portrayal is) Accurate because it's like any other person who feels giddy whenever they see their crush. That's how an ordinary person reacts.

Bona (29, Luzon, gay man): Everyone, regardless of gender, would be giddy. When you see your crush or someone who is attractive looking, and you can't express your feelings, you'd tweet or chat with your friends. In gender, it didn't represent us. It represents the feeling we all have whenever we see our crush or someone attractive.

Furthermore, some of them consider that the LGBT characters were presented in a respectful and wholesome manner. According to Janna (31, Mindanao, transwoman), Rhandy, Klint, John (25, Mindanao, gay man) and Jagger, the ad focuses more on the young man's feelings. There was no harassment or touching involved, as opposed to “the past” representation of sexual deviance, which made them feel that the ad was not disrespecting the community. Other participants think it contributes to debunking LGBT stereotypes in mainstream media.

Dialogue 4: Relevance on Observations

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): It's wholesome. It doesn't portray the LGBT person as someone aggressive like the other media. It's a feel-good one.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): It debunks the usual stereotype that when you're a gay man, you're overtly sexual towards men.

Some participants also express the same observations concerning the Close Up advertisement. According to them, it is satisfying that the LGBT media portrayal in romantic situations is slowly starting to look more realistic, which is not according to the prevailing hegemonic notion such as the gay-straight man and *mars/pars* dynamics.

Dialogue 5: Relevance on Observations

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): It represents more. Usually, when they think of a gay man, he should have long hair. The boyfriend should be the straight one. But nowadays, it's different. We can be both straight acting and both bisexual or even gay and straight acting. It's now really open.

Klint (18, Mindanao, gay man): I like how they portrayed the femme boy. It's not the typical one, right? The diversity within us LGBT was showcased.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): In media, I think it's kind of a refreshing sight because what we usually see in media are two masculine or two feminine.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): Before, they'd ask you who is the man and who is the woman in a gay relationship

Blue: In reality, yes, they'd ask that. But in media, you'd usually see either feminine or super masculine. There's no in-between. So I feel that this ad is refreshing because the dynamics between the two characters are different.

Some participants can also relate to the thought process the characters go through when one person likes another. According to Bona, this usually happens when she

is alone. She talks to herself when she sees a good-looking person. Pinky and Bunny are guilty of taking stolen pictures, but discreetly, unlike in the ad wherein one of the characters took a stolen picture of the other character with the flash on. But Bunny's opinion echoes Bona and Scotch's earlier statements that admiration and giddiness happen to everyone regardless of gender and sexuality. According to Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man who also identifies as non-binary), the character's thoughts in the Close Up ad, such as "he's so handsome", are not exclusively practised by gay men. Bunny says everyone does it when expressing feelings and admiration to their crushes, regardless of sexual orientation. However, for Octus and Smith, expressing romantic feelings can be challenging for those who are not out yet because of fear of people's judgement. In the ad, the character who is not out yet is seen avoiding his love interest when his co-workers are around. Lavender and Jagger have an explanation for this.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): I guess it's a thing in the office culture, especially in the corporate world. If you're a senior, you should be authoritative. You should be straight. It's implied. There's also schoolism wherein it's okay to live your truth if you're from (a certain university). But when it comes to going outside the university, the realisations would creep back in, like what kind of image I should show the public so they'd respect me.

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): It represents the call centre people, mostly in Manila. Gay men will act straight, straight acting. This is because we were afraid of systemic homophobia, and we don't want to be judged, especially if we have a position in the office. That's why we need to be discreet.

Similar to Uber and Close Up, the Bench ad also shows the message of same-sex attraction. But Bench's ad highlights the message of family acceptance more. The participants' opinions about the ad can be summed up to one word: hiding. The lead character hides his feelings for someone and his sexuality from their parents. Some participants think the portrayal is accurate based on their observations of the LGBT community members in their environment. Vanx and Vinny recognise the father's knowledge of his son's sexuality in the ad despite the lack of coming out. Bona also recognises the lead character's traits similar to those she knows who are already out to their friends but not their families. Klint and Jagger can relate to the story because they hid their authentic selves when they were young. Klint had to act straight at the house but was open in school. Jagger still had to act straight in his school because he was studying in a Catholic school. John and Scorpion (21, Visayas, gay man) also

hid their sexualities, and their intentions to hide were significantly affected by their families' opinions.

John (25, Mindanao, gay man): My father always tells me, "I don't want you to be gay. I don't want you to be like this. I want you to be this and this and this." And for me, it's hard to tell him, "hey, dad, this is me. This is the real me. Would you like me or not? This is the real me inside, the genuine me."

Scorpion (21, Visayas, gay man): I have a different character when I'm with friends, different when I'm with my family. I couldn't express the real me to my family because I tend to get very flirty. I can also show that when I'm around friends. With my family, my actions are limited. I can relate because my parents discovered my sexuality. I didn't have to express or explain why I am like this or why I become like this.

Scorpion's statement mirrors one of the ideas that some participants point out, wherein 'coming out' culture is not practised in the Philippines. Some participants have also articulated this idea after watching the Bench ad. Purple and Lavender explain that the 'coming out' culture is almost non-existent in the country. Based on his experience and perspective, Blue describes 'coming out' as when the elephant in the room is finally addressed. However, before addressing it, the people in their surroundings already know about it or have already sensed it at one point before the confirmation. However, there would be no need to come out in some cases, especially when their families show a discreet signal of acceptance. This is apparent in Pinky's story, wherein her mother observed her actions for a long time before finally asking about her female partners. Vinny has the same experience saying she never came out to her mother. However, her mom's actions, such as gifting her non-stereotypical female shirts, signalled her mother's acceptance of her sexuality. Despite the differences in the participants' SOGIE, their experiences and notions regarding the country's 'coming out' culture are comparable. One possible reason for such agreement is not because of their sexualities but due to society's negative attitude regarding acceptance of every LGBT member's sexual orientation.

The coming out culture in the Philippines was deemed an unnecessary act and a Western notion (Mohideen, 1996). Moreover, it was considered a "daunting process," especially in a Catholic country such as the Philippines (ibid., para. 6). For example, when singer Jake Zyrus came out as a lesbian in 2013 and as a transman in 2017, both scenarios garnered discriminatory opinions from Filipinos. When Jake was still known as Charice Pempengco, he was celebrated for his Hollywood fame

after getting featured in US TV shows Oprah and Glee and performing alongside Celine Dion and David Foster. However, some Filipino people's opinions changed after he came out, receiving negative words, especially from his relatives, as his grandmother and mother were the first ones to express their animosity toward Jake's coming out and sexual orientation. Some of the public's harmful comments include how Charice had become a waste because of Jake's transition, significantly affecting his singing voice (Mallorca, 2021). Thus, coming out culture is a lack and considered a daunting process in a conservative, Catholic, patriarchal country such as the Philippines because coming out would mean exposing one's self to judgment from the people. According to Lavender, the coming out culture in the Philippines can also be described as either a person getting caught or the family and people in their surroundings will figure out one's sexuality little by little. Hence, for Purple, Bench's ad is appealing because the character's compartmentalisation of himself at school and home is realistic. Purple articulates that because the country has no coming out culture, Filipino people tend to guess and sense someone's sexuality.

The discussion around Smart's ad also focused on hiding their sexualities from their parents. The lead character in the ad showed hesitancy on whether he would accept his father's Facebook friend request for fear of exposing his same-sex relationship, as seen in his posts on social media. The participants explain that having two or more social media accounts is normal to keep their families from knowing the truth. Klint explains he has two accounts: his main account and one for family purposes. He created a second account to have a personal space to post things freely. Jovina is fearless when it comes to what he posts on social media. Hence, he does not accept friend requests from his relatives because he thinks they are close-minded and would judge him. Jagger thinks this happens because the LGBT people did not want to disappoint their parents and did not want to be judged. Jagger adds that opening up to friends and strangers is easier than to their families. Bert and Scotch similarly articulate that it is harder to communicate these things face-to-face. Hence, Bert feels the Smart ad is a way to tell people to break the barrier and communicate with their families. Scotch recognises that acceptance and coming out take time, even if it is finally communicated. Scotch adds that it could take years and build up pressure and negative emotions on a person. The participants also relate to the character's negative emotions, such as anxiety and overthinking, that come with hiding and coming out. Bona explains that almost all of them went through this phase

regardless of their SOGIE because, similar to the lead character, they did not know if their families would accept them.

Jung (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): It has an impact on reality because those things happen. Especially the LGBT members, we tend to overthink. In that situation, we would overthink because the dad might get angry, and he might not accept my sexuality. Not all dads' mindsets are the same.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): The 'somehow' realistic situation was the son's worry about whether he'd be accepted. The parents do watch your social media all the time, don't they? That's why he was scared to accept the friend request because of the pictures. That is realistic.

Due to the messages the participants perceived from the Smart ad, they find the message of acceptance in the Pantene ad a breath of fresh air. Most think the Pantene ad is more of an advocacy than an advertisement. Bona states that this one has a heart out of all the advertisements discussed. Transwomen Janna and Rhandy, from the Mindanao region, welcome the ad positively because they perceive it as a representation of all Filipina transwomen and what they are fighting for - to stay true to themselves. Janna shares that it inspires LGBT members to feel confident in being themselves. For Rhandy, she believes that hair is a crowning glory. She relates to the ad because she was not as confident when she had shorter hair. Rhandy adds that when her hair got longer, she felt happier. Janna further adds that the advertisement inspires strength to face discrimination and other unaccepting attitudes from people. Scotch agrees, saying that the ad does not promote a product but promotes gender equality. Some participants appreciate that the ad shows the journey of self-discovery, from a young age, both from the perspective of transwomen and gay men.

Bona (29, Luzon, gay man): There's a variety of characters. They showed not only a transgender who looks like a woman but also gay people who were inspired to become themselves at such a young age. I couldn't call it an advertisement... It's advocacy saying that we at Pantene, celebrate or accept different kinds of gender and then equality... What they showed was real: real names with real ages. They were open about their sexuality. The execution was beautiful. Even though you're not Pantene's target market or you're not interested in the LGBT narrative, you'd still find the ad engaging. Once you watch it, it'll move you.

Pinky (41, Luzon, identifies as femme in a lesbian relationship): It doesn't look like they're selling shampoo. It promotes acceptance in society despite gender. And the good thing about the ad is they showed a kid. I thought he would transition into adulthood, but no. He remained a gay child. Maybe he is already at a stage of transition and confused about his sexuality. The ad promotes something beautiful.

The ad promotes the "Stronger Now" campaign that sends a message that "transwomen are women." This is welcomed and admired by some of the participants. Purple and Lavender appreciate the progressive statement that a big-name product, such as Pantene, delivered at the time when "transwomen are women" was not yet part of the bigger discussion in the country. Jovina agrees with the message while also advocating for the message that "transmen are men." Some participants also appreciate that the ad features transwoman Kevin Balot, as she inspires some of them. The effects of which are beneficial for some participants. Ryl believes that if he wants to be successful in life and career like Kevin Balot someday, he should study hard to achieve his dreams. Vanx is inspired to accept that what is important is what she feels inside. She feels she is a woman, and that is all that matters. Coming from the perspective of a transwoman, Janna is grateful for the ad, and she perceives it as visibility for transwomen in Philippine mainstream media.

Janna (31, Mindanao, transwoman): When this ad came out, I heard things from my surroundings like, "Look, Kevin Balot has an advertisement now." It's like there's a showcase of LGBT people that has already happened. Because we don't usually see LGBT people in advertisements, even our allies... It had become a way to show people that, yes, we were born male, but we are in transition. We are women. By heart, by moves, by looks. We have to prove that transwomen are women.

Despite the positive messages and LGBT representation in media, the participants are able to pinpoint some criticisms of the five LGBT-themed ads. While most participants' observations are positive, some perceived inaccuracies or faults are

also observed. Some participants also think some storylines could be unrealistic, a fairy tale or just a marketing ploy to attract viewer attention.

Theme 2: The Criticisms: “We don’t look like that.” and “It’s just a marketing strategy!”

Dialogue 6: Relevancy of Self-Knowledge

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): Kevin is problematic. She said that transwomen shouldn't be included in Miss Universe because Transworld, the pageant for transwomen, exists. Her statement felt like a few steps backwards.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): Because it's like you're already twice marginalised as a minority, then the one representing you is problematic.

Purple: Also part of the community.

Lavender: It defeats the purpose of the message. Her statements invalidate the ad's message "transwomen are women." It's hard, given that it's going to take years for that to be established in mainstream beliefs.

Pink (23, Luzon, bisexual ciswoman): The message is conflicting.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): There are many similar instances, especially the people within the community when discussing transcommunity. Beauty queens, like Kevin, saying the opposite things from what the progressives are saying; it's a step back. Because people from outside the circle would think that they are affirming our beliefs because it came from a transwoman. If someone would rebut that, it would be hard to reason out.

Purple: They would say, "Kevin Balot said it."

While the participants generally receive the Pantene ad positively, some are able to pinpoint a few problems in it in terms of representation and the endorser. What Purple’s group is discussing is an event in 2020 wherein Kevin Balot became controversial after expressing on a podcast interview that transwomen should be content in joining a transgender-based beauty pageant such as the Miss International Queen pageant because joining Miss Universe is considered asking for too much (San Juan, 2020). Hence, this controversy affected Purple’s group’s reactions to the Pantene ad. Another criticism identified by other participants in the Pantene ad is the representation of how a transwoman should look like. For some, it seems like it sends the wrong message that a transwoman should look a certain way to be accepted.

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): I have mixed feelings because if I would see it as a gay man, how it shows is like you're being small. Like you're not physically well-presented. Eventually, should you be transitioned to that beautiful woman? For me, somehow, it doesn't matter. If you have money, you can become pretty. If you're rich or well-off, you can afford hormonal treatment. But what about the others? Sometimes we would feel discriminated against. How about us who don't have the means or resources to buy those things? To be that person: moving from transwoman to woman. So sometimes, I have mixed feelings. Though in general, the story is good because it urges us to come out and feel like a girl... But how it was presented doesn't really apply to everybody.

Vinny (25, Visayas, lesbian): It paints something like, "hey, you need to look this way so you'll have someone."

Researcher: Do you think that's okay?

Vinny: No, of course not. Because it's shedding the wrong light like it's a standard, and you need to look a certain way so that people will accept you. I don't think it's a good message to be sent to people, especially to kids.

While Janna considers that showcasing a transwoman in a mainstream advertisement is a good sign as it promotes representation and acceptance, Jagger thinks that the current visibility, in general, is still an underrepresentation. Jagger's argument in the discussion above articulately explains the socio-economic problem that this study perceives as a distinct characteristic when describing the Filipino LGBT culture and media representation: it will always be affected by social and economic status. The reality for most Filipino LGBT people in the Philippines is poverty, lack of education, mostly belonging to lower social classes, and unrefined social mannerisms, clothing, or lack of affluence for some due to lack of resources and job opportunities. Hence, showing only one side of the community, in this case, Kevin Balot's physical attractiveness who has the means to undergo transition, is deemed problematic by several participants as it is widely known that this is not the reality of most of the Filipino LGBT people.

Moreover, Jagger points out some inconsistencies in how LGBT people are presently portrayed in media. For example, heterosexual actors are still cast to play LGBT characters. According to him, to consider something as representation, the actors should be part of the LGBT community too. Jagger adds that some LGBT people are still depicted in a certain way, sometimes stereotypically, making him feel that the community is still underrepresented. Some participants, like Blue and Lavender,

also noticed that most of the ads discussed in this study are only featuring gay men, leaving no representation for the other members of the community. This is an existing problem because this doctoral study found no video advertisements from 2016 to 2019 that include different sexual orientation representations other than transwomen and gay men. The researcher also asked for information from the participants about any existing commercials featuring other sexual orientations, such as bisexual people and lesbians. However, even they could not think of any. Despite this, Jagger still sees things positively as he considers the current LGBT visibility in media a window for LGBT members to open up about their sexualities to live happy life. Misrepresentation can also add to Jagger's points, considering he has reservations about how a transwoman should look in media. Similarly, some participants think that if the current portrayal of the physical appearance of LGBT characters continues, it could present problems in the future if the characterisations are not close to reality.

Dialogue 8: Relevance on Observations

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): I notice in the (Uber) ad that the gay characters should be good-looking. There's this discreet factor that the character should be good-looking.

Pinky (41, Luzon, identifies as femme in a lesbian relationship): Not the typical looks.

Bunny: Not who looks like a commoner. You won't find them in most of the ads. Especially in a TV series, they are usually beautiful, handsome, and rich.

Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man): And using an Uber.

Bunny: Yes, using an Uber.

Bona (29, Luzon, gay man): (For Close Up) I noticed that taking pictures is like saying that LGBT people are predators.

Bunny: The two guys looked professional. But the typical loud reaction of those in the lower class, I am not discriminating against them, but I don't think that would be the characters' reactions. Mostly the ones portrayed in media are professionals, good looking...

Scotch: ... rich.

Bunny: But the typical ones, they don't usually portray them—for example, me. I am not that good-looking. In the ads, they are both good-looking.

This problem is further examined in the next chapter, under the discussion of a term coined by this study to refer to an emerging problem in LGBT media representation in the Philippines: an *idealised Filipino gay*.

The portrayal of coming out and family acceptance on Bench and Smart ads, such as having unrealistic storylines, is also criticised. According to some participants, their experiences differed from what was shown in the ads. According to Bunny, it is unrealistic for an elderly Filipino father to send a Facebook friend request. Bunny adds that it is usually the female family member who would do such actions. Bona also agrees on the unrealistic aspect reiterating that coming out is not a cultural norm in the country. Bona adds that LGBT people will only identify themselves once they have already accepted their identity. But Blue's group has an in-depth analysis of what it is like to be an LGBT person with a family member who is in the military.

Dialogue 9: Relevancy of Self-Knowledge

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): Given that the dad has a military or police background, they are the very definition of masculinity macho. I doubt that this is something that is a norm for them.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): I feel that it's a reality for other families. Especially in that portrayal of a very well-off or stable family. If the father is a decorated military, I feel it's accurate. However, the story is no longer common. Usually, if there's a media portrayal of LGBT people, it's in that trope like *Praybeyt Benjamin**. But I feel that it is much executed in this ad because there are people like that who, especially if they are family-oriented, just have to wait and wait... I also kept my boyfriend a secret. So I would say that it's accurate, but it's not the reality of most people.

Lavender: I think it's rare because my brother is part of the military. So I thought he would be more progressive in terms of (sexual orientation). But he still uses homophobic slurs at times. And whenever he saw me, he always said, "introduce your boyfriend to us." There's this connotation that it should be a "boyfriend." It can't be the other.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): Inaccurate because the portrayal was super macho. I don't know what my dad would do if my brother were gay. I think dads are more accepting if it's a girl. Or I'm not sure if he's progressive, but he doesn't look like one. When he caught me and told him what I was, he was accepting. I'm not sure if it's because I'm a woman. There's this possibility of being straight later on. But as of this moment, they have already accepted me.

**Praybeyt Benjamin is a 2011 comedy film featuring Vice Ganda, about a gay man who was forced to join the military to replace his sick father.*

Other issues the participants notice in the ads are the mismatch of the messages to the products. The Close Up advert confused all participants because the story revolves around a milk tea shop and only shows the toothpaste product once, making them think the ad promotes milk tea.

Rhandy (37, Mindanao, transwoman): The milk tea was emphasised more than Close Up.

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): If there was no branding, it's more like...

ALL: ... milk tea!

Janna (31, Mindanao, transwoman): Milk tea has a higher rate of exposure. It's like it's telling us to buy milk tea.

Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): I disagree with the milk tea because the message it portrays is they met because of it.

Maddy (did not disclose age, Mindanao, transwoman): They can use other products. They shouldn't have used milk tea.

Bert (22, Mindanao, transwoman): It looked like a double promotion of the products.

Maddy: Fried chicken would've been better.

Jovina: I think nothing would change, even if it's fried chicken.

The misunderstanding affects some participants' reception of the Close up ad. Jung and Lavender think that the romantic story was exaggerated or not even close to reality, and it looked more like a fairy tale than something that would happen in real life. Jung adds that LGBT love stories, like in the ad, rarely happen in a milk tea shop. Similarly, Maddy also got confused by the Pantene ad, thinking it was a soap commercial because of the predominant white theme colour as seen in the ad. She also expects the model's hair to be emphasised for a product advertisement like Pantene. Smith has the same opinion saying that he did not understand what the advertisement was for because the ad did not show the product. Scotch prefers if the ad showed product-related facts, such as explaining that it has Pro-Vitamin B5 as an ingredient. Also, some participants report that they are aware that stories are portrayed a certain way for marketing purposes. For example, while most participants felt positive about the Uber driver and called him an ally, some knew it could be too good to be true.

Vinny (25, Visayas, lesbian): The (Uber) driver? He's an ally... Of course, I would want to ride in Uber. It's also a marketing tactic. But it's also good. It sheds a good light both ways.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): (For Uber) Marketing-wise, as a traditional or conservative country, it wouldn't play well if they put ads (that aren't like this).

Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man): I think Uber wanted to portray that all their drivers are friendly and open-minded and that they promote a safe space. Typical ad or promotion... But the reality is different when it comes to the drivers. Of course, it's an advertisement that's why they portrayed him like that. It might not be accurate because we all know that this is an ad.

For the Bench ad, Lavender thinks that showing an attractive man is similar to queerbaiting. Studies state that an LGBT consumer can halt supporting brands if these brands exhibit inappropriate attitudes toward the LGBT community (Sison, 2014). Despite their take on Kevin Balot's controversy, Blue, Purple, Lavender, and Pink perceive the Pantene ad positively in terms of marketing strategy. They think that the ad and the message were ahead of their time. The ad was released in 2018, and according to them, pride was not yet capitalised on in the country. They also add that, although the message "transwomen are women" was already being discussed then, it was not yet part of the bigger discourse within the community and the country. Hence, they are impressed that Pantene launched the campaign at a time they considered as early to hold progressive ideas in a conservative country like the Philippines. For these reasons, these participants express they will support Pantene as they also support the community. However, Jung has a different opinion. He thinks that the message was all about the product.

Jung (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): They are presenting the messages "show the truth in you" and "be confident of who you are." You don't have to pretend to be someone else. Because she looks confident, she was confident to come out as a transgender woman. Maybe Pantene used that concept in this advertisement. Be confident in yourself because they want to show that they are also confident about their product and that it is of good quality.

Some participants discern that the product placement and messages fit perfectly for the Bench ad.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): (For Bench) The product placement in the advertisement was good. It is connected. It doesn't seem forced. It also fits the storyboard that his perfume got finished.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): The tagline brings happiness "*amoy kita*" (I can smell you) because it says I really know you. Like I can sense you.

However, for the Smart ad, garnering the same reactions from the 'milk tea' theme in Close Up, some participants think some elements are forced in the storyline. Jagger feels that the story has to have a happy ending to impact the viewers positively. Jagger adds that sad endings are not the norm in Philippine media. Hence, Jagger thinks that giving the ad a positive 'acceptance' ending is a win-win situation for both the brands and the characters. But Scotch and Bunny have a different take on it. According to them, Smart literally took the "accept" word from accepting or rejecting the Facebook friend request, which did not sit well with them.

Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man): The word 'accept' had a literal meaning in the end. So after that, what happened?

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): Is that it? If it were me, I'd be like, "He knows? How?" I'd go blank. It's not that easy, especially if the father is involved. That part isn't that realistic. You'd think that maybe the dad knew for a while now. You'd ask yourself too. But that part wasn't included in the ad. So for me, it is only somehow realistic.

As for the non-LGBT character in the Pantene ad, it garnered different opinions. Bona and Scotch think the message would remain intact even without the mother's presence because she only looks like an extra who is shown for a few seconds. But Bunny thinks that showing the mother is better than Smart and Bench ads showing the father accepting their sons because, according to him, the mothers are predominantly more accepting than the father.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): One realistic element is the presence of the mother. This is more realistic than those ads with the fathers. Usually, the first person who would accept us is the mother. That's typical. So that's realistic.

Vinny and Vanx have similar opinions about the Smart ad wishing that a father like the one in the ad exists in their realities, too: a father who will not be too strict and accepts their children for who they are. Some participants appreciate the mother's

presence in the Pantene ad because it strongly conveys that a family's acceptance is vital for a child's journey of self-discovery regarding their sexuality. According to John, Kevin Balot is glowing because she had her family's acceptance from the beginning. For Vinny, it is the realisation that a person can go far if their family supports them: "Hey, my mom supports me. I can conquer anything in this world!" While the differences in SOGIE among participants exist, their experiences, hopes, and aspirations are similar: acceptance from their parents and families. It indicates that, in some way, shape, or form, family acceptance is an experience that is primarily familiar or similar among each other despite distinctions in age, sexual orientation, region of residence, employment and education status.

The difference in the participants' opinions between "the past" and "the present" LGBT media representation is apparent. While "the past" generally garners negative feedback, "the present" accumulates positive responses despite a few observed criticisms. Nevertheless, the participants report that they currently feel changes in media representation and, as an effect, how the general public treats them in their surroundings. The subsequent subchapter explores their feelings about it and provides clues on the possible effects of an improved continuous representation in the next few years.

III. "The Future:" Representation, Representation, Representation.

This study defines "the future" as the LGBT media representation in the next few years. After discussing the participants' feelings and reactions about the effects of "the past" and "the present" LGBT media representation, their suggestions and advice to the Philippine media players on how they can improve the representation were sought. This section also explores the changes they have felt due to the improved media environment. According to them, these changes are positive. Moreover, they also express their sentiments as consumers on whether they will buy the products in the advertisements or not.

Theme 1: Positive portrayal = Positive effects: Things are changing, plus the impact of social media on the community

Most participants share their observations regarding the changes in the LGBT representation in media. The majority express that progressive LGBT media

representation has already started and feel optimistic about it. For example, Bona and Pinky notice that the portrayal of a gay man in media is no longer stuck in a one-dimensional representation such as being loud, skinny, a crossdresser, and soft, according to Jagger. Some of the other things they have observed are the following:

- ✚ No longer stuck in one trope, character portrayal and storylines now have depth
- ✚ Depiction of physical characteristics and mannerisms is getting accurate and realistic
- ✚ Getting acknowledged in media, given a platform to express and be listened to
- ✚ The number of LGBT members appearing in media is increasing
- ✚ LGBT icons have emerged, such as Vice Ganda, Kevin Balot, and Sassa Gurl
- ✚ Presence in advertisements means companies are no longer afraid to invest in LGBT endorsers

Payuyo (2012) presents an event of how advertisers allegedly pulled out their investments in an LGBT-themed show on GMA Network in 2004 after the Catholic Church disagreed with featuring it in mainstream media. For a long time, advertisers in the Philippines were not keen on investing in any LGBT-related endorsement because of fear of backlash from the conservatives that might compromise their sales and revenues (Marchadesch, 2018; Cigaral, 2019). As explained in Chapter Three, the Catholic Church had a long history of persuasive influence in almost all societal fields in the Philippines, particularly in the government. Based on Payuyo's claims, it could influence the mainstream media and advertisers, too. Hence, Bert, Jung, and Maddy think showcasing LGBT characters as brand endorsers is a huge deal because it means that companies now have confidence that their products will still sell to the masses even if an LGBT model represents these. Furthermore, they view this move as inclusion, acceptance, and a demonstration of equality. One milestone in the advertising field that was celebrated was gay Tiktok influencer Sassa Gurl's endorsement as a 2022 calendar model of a local liquor brand, White Castle. This is a first because White Castle typically features heterosexual female endorsers as their calendar models for years.

Maddy (did not disclose age, Mindanao, transwoman): The companies are spending money on gender sensitivity. They are now open-minded. They are no longer scared to take risks that their products might not get support from the consumer.

JC (18, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): The owners are no longer scared to produce LGBT content. They are more open.

Researcher: Does that make you happy?

JC: Yes

Bert (22, Mindanao, transwoman): I agree. The companies are already aware, and they encourage acceptance and equality for everyone. The companies won't spend millions of pesos if they aren't sure about their product or if it would sell in the market. So now, they are already aware. They already know how to present their ad to the market or the public. For me, there's already acceptance, equality and awareness.

Jung (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): It's really flattering... The fact that the advertising industry is using the voice of the LGBT people indicates a really good thing... Some members are still not vocal. It means the public still lacks awareness. It's good that the advertisers use this platform for everyone to be aware of. It's really a stepping stone for acknowledging the liberty of the LGBT community. I guess it's also the time to hear our voices because we're not just a joke. We're not just a figure that was dictated by the past media representation. We are capable of doing things. There's more to LGBT people than the usual representation.

Along with these changes in media portrayal, the participants also feel differences in how they are treated in their surroundings. For Janna and John, the working environment during "the past" was harsh. According to them, they were discriminated against at work, not allowed in government offices, and for some, it was hard to get a job. But now, they feel that people are more accepting of them. John discerns that the community is now being given fair and just treatment. Janna attributes the changes to the current LGBT representation in mainstream media, especially to Kevin Balot and the Pantene ad. Ryl and Vanx also feel freer to show who they are because of their perceived gradual acceptance of LGBT people by their surroundings.

Vanx (18, Visayas, transwoman): Before my current appearance, I got bullied, or people said ugly stuff to me. But I feel more confident now. I'm looking like a girl now. I'm not getting shy in front of people anymore.

Ryl (21, Visayas, gay man): It feels like the murmuring has stopped. No one's saying anything anymore... It's like they have accepted that gay men and lesbian women exist.

Another apparent theme observed in all the interviews is the gratitude and appreciation of all the participants for social media. Smith and Klint feel that the current generation is very much different from the previous ones because of social media. According to them, Filipino LGBT people are represented well via this platform. Social media gives the participants an outlet to show their talents and who they are and to pursue their passions. According to the participants, they feel a sense of inclusivity because everyone has a place on social media. Janna considers that social media do not prioritise specific people because it provides exposure for all. Similarly, Scotch thinks that even those who are not conventionally good-looking, unlike the characters in the five advertisements, are also given a spot on the platform. Social media has enabled a realisation that they no longer have to hide because their voices and opinions will be heard on the platform.

Rhandy (37, Mindanao, transwoman): The LGBT community can now express their feelings freely. They can also express their goals in life freely. Social media is our platform to express all of these.

Klint (18, Mindanao, gay man): I like how social media includes us. There's no more awkwardness in social media. If you're a gay man or part of the LGBT, there's no more separation between guys and not straight or the LGBTs. I like how social media broadens all our minds and makes us more open-minded about what's going on.

John (25, Mindanao, gay man): I also have this feeling that it's unexplainable because society now is gradually accepting and embracing the LGBT family. And that's a perfect, good impact of social media that benefits us as part of the LGBT community.

Social media allows them to learn and discover more about their sexualities, which helps them throughout their journey of self-discovery. Social media influencers such as famous transwomen in Thailand encourage transwoman Vanx to persevere in life to have the same future achievements. When it comes to learning important things about being an LGBT person, Scorpion sees that social media positively impacts the LGBT community because, according to him, people have become more open-minded and educated about different sexual orientations and gender identities through this platform. Similarly, Klint shares a learning experience from social media that, for him, was notable.

Klint (18, Mindanao, gay man): Rica Solomon. She's a content creator in Tiktok. She said you don't need to be like Kevin Balot to be a trans(woman). It's all about how you express yourself. It's situational. You can be a transwoman even if you are not taking hormones. That's what Rica Solomon said. It just opened my mind to the fact that it's not just about hormones. It's how you express yourself.

Klint's statement comes after Jagger expresses that the Pantene ad might be normalising the idea that Kevin Balot's physical appearance should be the standard if one wants to transition to a woman in Philippine society. Klint's experience echoes what Bert and Jung earlier state regarding LGBT awareness that it is time to spread and accept informative knowledge about the community; hence they are grateful that the advertisers are already taking initiatives. Jung is not blaming his fellow LGBT members for not contributing to the awareness because some are still afraid to come out. But Janna observes that most members of the LGBT community are now taking part in delivering important messages to the public via social media to remind them that they exist.

Klint got the earlier mentioned life-changing information about being a transwoman through social media. Hence, he considers social media the most powerful instrument in the current generation in terms of helping people open up their minds about the LGBT community. Klint, at age 18, is from the 'Gen Z' generation, and based on the statements of other Gen Z participants, they feel the positive impact of social media more as opposed to the negative impacts they felt during "the past." Gen Z or Generation Z are the people born in 1995 onwards with formative experiences that are not similar to the other generations (Rue, 2018). According to Scotch, who is from the millennial generation, he never receives any awkwardness and hostility whenever he discloses that he is a gay man to any Gen Z people. Scotch thinks Gen Zs are more accepting than the generations before them.

As for Smith and Octus, their lives significantly changed thanks to their engagement on social media. Octus is currently joining online modelling contests and has won a few awards. His success got recognised by the people in his community. This resulted in giving support from online votes to sponsorship when he needed a costume, equipment, or any material help. As for Smith, after recovering from a traumatic experience, he decided to turn his life around and contribute to society.

Along with his organisation, Smith would execute social and environmental events such as solid waste management programs and clean-up drives in his area. He and his team would later post updates of the programs on the organisation's social media pages. But according to Smith, the program and advocacy come first before posting it on social media. He explains that they do not hold programs like these for fame but to be helpful members of society. With the help of exposure from social media, the people in his community gained awareness of what he was doing. As a result, he gained the respect of the people in his area.

Smith (24, Visayas, bisexual man): Before, I observed that as you pass them by, you would hear, "he's *bakla*." But now they say, "they were the ones cleaning the beach." "They were the ones who facilitated a feeding program." So it has a big impact on the people around us that even though we are like this, we could do something good or achieve something great in life.

While Vinny affirms that she already sees societal changes, she does not attribute it entirely to the media's influence. Although she thinks that LGBT representation has improved, it is still subject to the public's decision of whether they will change their views and attitudes toward LGBT people for the better. Vinny's statement can be applied to Smith and Octus' experiences. Social media indeed helped them improve their status and gain respect from the people in their surroundings. However, their motivation to do something good for society was the main reason they are now getting the respect they never got from the people in the past. It is unfortunate that some of the participants, like Smith and Octus, have to prove themselves to the people to be continuously treated fairly. Smith and Octus' environment growing up was so unaccepting that they had to do something drastic to end the discrimination and be finally recognised and accepted. Octus also expresses, "As long as you're not doing anything wrong, they will treat you good as a payback." This kind of mindset, which seems to say they have to overcompensate for who they are, has been ingrained in some Filipino LGBT people to help cope with the discriminating environment. Similar statements like this and the possible reasons why this has happened and continues to happen are explored in the next chapter.

Similar to the discussion surrounding advertisers' investment in LGBT endorsers, some participants recognise some media players' interest in investing in LGBT content in mainstream media, not just advertisements. Even though the Filipino

LGBT community is given a cinematic platform through independent films, some participants think it is not enough because independent films are known to be unable to reach the mainstream. Hence, some participants consider that the popularity of the Filipino BL series, which gained momentum during the pandemic, paved the way for more mainstream exposure and representation. The BL series (Boys' Love) are TV shows or tales in Japanese manga that feature romantic stories between gay men.

Dialogue 13: Relevancy of Self-Knowledge

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): The people's interest boomed, as well as the number of platforms where you can watch them.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): There are more representations but more on indie films. There's a main genre for that, like *Die Beautiful*, *Baka Bukas*...

Blue: Panti Sisters.

Purple: Eddie Garcia's movie named (Rainbow's) sunset.

Blue: I agree. It's nice, though. Especially during the pandemic, the mainstream saw that there was potential.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): That there's a market.

Blue: Because it bloomed online

Lavender: They finally gave a platform for them.

Purple: Yes, true, because some indie films are already on Netflix.

Blue: And ABS-CBN is sponsoring them.

According to some participants, the effects of gaining exposure in mainstream media, such as in ABS-CBN, as Blue explains, are positive. According to Bunny, it helps his parents understand LGBT people better.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): There's an impact, especially with my parents, because they are more open now to watching LGBT-related shows. I always kid them, "you should watch so you'll understand," "watch this, so you'll understand where I'm coming from." They were able to understand me little by little. They become okay with it. In GMA, Paolo Ballesteros has a kid, right? They realised and said, "it's possible to be gay and have a kid too." Their knowledge is expanding, and they were able to apply these to me, "you can have a child one day." They can see that we are diverse... The usual thought wherein gay men were usually for comedy, or will be taken advantage of financially, or will be cheated on are no longer their perception. The respect was also strengthened.

Bunny cites GMA Network--- one of the leading players in the Philippine mainstream media. Bunny's statement corroborates the idea that the general public can achieve understanding and acceptance via positive and non-stereotypical LGBT representation in the mainstream. Bunny's group is happy with the recent efforts made by the mainstream media in contributing positive representation for the community, such as the gay-themed TV drama 'My Husband Lover' and lesbian representation in GMA's soap dramas. According to them, the achievements and positive influence of famous LGBT celebrities in mainstream media, such as Paolo Ballesteros, Vice Ganda, and Boy Abunda, contribute to increasing respect for LGBT people in the country. The societal changes that the participants articulate include less violence against LGBT members and legal and political representations. According to Janna, the local anti-discrimination ordinances and the presence of transwoman Congresswoman Geraldine Roman in the government added to creating a safe space for the community. Regarding media representation on TV, even though an episode of the drama TV show '*Magpakailanman*' in 2020 featuring transwoman local beauty queen Francine Garcia showed that she was getting beat up by her partner, Bert appreciates the show's focus on how the character overcame it. Bert sees it as a positive representation because it shows that LGBT people know how to handle this situation.

While a majority of the participants generally notice an improvement in LGBT representation in traditional and social media, some of them are still aware that the current efforts still need more work. Moreover, they also know that, despite being the ultimate game-changer for the LGBT community, social media also adversely affects them.

Theme 2: Not all glitters are gold: the other side of “the present” media environment

Klint uses social media to spread helpful information about the LGBT community. As a social media influencer in his area, he also uses it to promote love, acceptance, and respect for LGBT people. He views the platform positively because he thinks it is a big help to the community in coming out and expressing support to those still reluctant to come out. Octus and Smith are excited about the social media fame that LGBT people currently enjoy. Smith even describes the current changes as

"#upgraded." However, Jagger views it differently because he thinks "social media can make or break us."

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): There's this mindset that we can go out in public and be confident, and we exist, and we can do things without being judged. Some people who are conservative and would judge you because you're gay still exist. We can't deny that. We can't avoid that... If they would give a chance to watch it (LGBT content on social media), look at it, and see it differently, I think they would make the world a better place to live in. Not question myself: why am I gay?

Echoing what Jagger explains, some participants share some unfortunate experiences they have in the current media environment, which shows that social media can still be a harmful place if used with the intent to hurt people. Scorpion and Octus would always encounter comments on their social media posts about how their good looks and height were considered waste because of their sexual orientations. Scorpion shares some comments that hurt him, such as how his handsomeness is considered a waste because he is gay. People would tell Octus he could become a basketball player if he were not gay. Scorpion is hurt because he thinks people judge LGBT people without knowing their experiences and situations. Jagger also shares that he has to watch what he posts on social media because he fears that some people might perceive his expressions or actions as unprofessionalism that might cost him his job or reputation. Scorpion has a similar concern about how one harmful action of an LGBT person can negatively affect everyone in the community.

Scorpion (21, Visayas, gay man): It annoys me that there is one part of the gay community that is ugly, and some influencers are showing it on social media. It reflects on all LGBT people too. If there's one kid with a rude attitude, one would say, "maybe the other gay men are like him." It saddens me... It reflects on the LGBT community.

Scorpion is talking about male gay vlogger Buknoy Glamurrr who got involved in a few controversies, including his insensitive remark about how being a tricycle driver would not be able to succeed in life. Buknoy's statement had a subtle message that such labour jobs will remain at the bottom of social class. Buknoy got his fame through his YouTube channel. According to Lavender, online platforms such as YouTube help the community spread positive LGBT content to promote tolerance

and reduce violence and discrimination against the community. However, such a platform can also be damaging if not used properly. In Chapter Three, the characteristic of the burden of representation in the Philippines is explained, wherein it is not considered a burden but an opportunity to represent the underrepresented LGBT community in media. However, as pointed out by this study's participants, one problem that this voluntary representation or tacit responsibility accompanies is that the whole community suffers as a result of the tacit representative's involvement in any controversies deemed negative by society. Because of Buknoy's action, many members of the public expressed their derision against him on social media platforms. Controversies like this involving an LGBT person, including the misuse of social media and the ease of sending negative comments, make the community, as a whole, a vulnerable target. While some people were only calling out Buknoy's actions, Scorpion thinks it could present an opportunity to degrade all LGBT people thinking that every member of the community exhibits Buknoy's attitudes. Maddy has the same worry as she expresses distress about how easy it is for people to post or comment negative things about them online. She calls out the absence of a national anti-discrimination law that would safeguard the LGBT community legally against discrimination, online and offline. Hence, they still currently remain unprotected.

For these reasons, some participants feel that the current representation and platforms, despite being generally positive, still have a long way to go. Maddy is grateful for Vice Ganda but still feels that some portrayals are still stuck. Bona and Bunny explain that the progress in the representation is slow due to limited spaces provided for them in the mainstream and the non-inclusion of other members of the community, such as bisexuals, lesbians, and transmen. Even though there were attempts to feature them, the portrayals felt inaccurate. For example, Bunny explains that lesbians were portrayed as boyish. Jagger also expresses that heterosexual actors are still being cast to play LGBT characters. Blue thinks that although the representations have diversified and a few more platforms are available for the community, it is not enough because people's interest in LGBT stories might also be limited.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): Even though there are many representations now, it's just in the echo chamber because it's the same people consuming these.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): It's just within the community.

Blue: Either you enjoy the storyline or are part of the community. There should be distribution. Although I feel that there's an economic side to it moneywise, it isn't economical because it might not sell to the masses. But maybe it's a step-by-step process. I feel that in anything and in everything, there's a progression. I hope more LGBT materials will be produced. Not all at once. More materials until we transition from tolerance to acceptance.

Pink (23, Luzon, bisexual ciswoman): I agree. There are more representations now, but it's still not enough. We're still not well represented. Especially mostly BL... There really is more BL representation, but it's not enough, as it doesn't show other parts of the community.

Blue's opinion about the economic side of producing LGBT materials is corroborated by Bona, stating that despite the representation, advertisers and media players are still playing safe. The companies have to guarantee that their investment would ensure returns, ergo why some LGBT portrayals are still stuck. Scotch finds it refreshing that good looks are no longer the foremost requirement to become an endorser. Scotch is talking about the likes of Sassa Gurl, who represents the reality of most LGBT people in the Philippines in terms of looks or social mannerisms, yet still given an opportunity to be a White Castle model. However, Bona points out that advertisers would invest in non-conventional models only if they are already famous or "bankable," as she calls it. Moreover, Blue states a critical thought regarding the effects of changes in the LGBT media representation: the transition from tolerance to acceptance. The previous chapter extensively explored the unspoken dominating belief of the Philippine society about how the LGBT community are not totally accepted but only tolerated. Throughout the discussion, most participants expressed how the media representation changes affected their lives. Most of them feel a positive transition in their surroundings, making them feel accepted by society. However, some feel that society is still only tolerating the LGBT community.

Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): For me, we are still not yet fully accepted because violence, hate crime, and discrimination still exist in our society. I am thankful for the companies giving a platform to the LGBT community. However, we can only say that we are already accepted in society if we no longer experience hate crimes and discrimination.

Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man): For millennials like us, we are still transitioning from conventional to modern. It's still 50-50 with the millennials. But I can say that it's already 70% in terms of acceptance. The generation before us, maybe they are the ones who are super conventional. Maybe as the generation proceeds, the acceptance that we exist will be more widespread.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): Other platforms, such as YouTube, is a big help, especially the famous YouTubers who are part of the community. It creates tolerance, not acceptance, for us not to be discriminated against like before... violence. Because their contents are positive, only delivering good vibes to the audiences.

Vinny and Vanx have the same sentiment but express it differently. They both think that the country is accepting of the LGBT community but not tolerating. According to Vinny, some people are still homophobic despite pay lip service to their acceptance of members of the LGBT community. For example, people would say they accept gay people but only if they dress in a way deemed acceptable. Vanx agrees, saying that a nun told her to stop wearing something provocative and start wearing deemed proper attire while dismissing Vanx's gender expression as a transwoman. The participants may have different interpretations of "tolerance, not acceptance." Some have also acknowledged the start of positive changes in LGBT treatment with the help of the media. However, some participants still recognise that full acceptance of LGBT people is still not achieved in Philippine society. Octus and Smith's experiences and Bona's analysis about being bankable before companies start investing in the LGBT community show that an LGBT person still faces non-inclusivity in other parts of society and would still have to work harder to be treated fairly and gain recognition. The participants' experiences also show that much more is needed on the public's part to provide a safe and accepting environment to the LGBT community. Vinny recognises that things are going in a positive direction, especially with LGBT inclusion in politics. Bona also shared a good experience when her preferred pronouns were recognised in her workplace and in a store in a shopping mall, which made her happy. Considering all of the above, changes are being felt. However, according to the participants, the LGBT media portrayal still needs much work before it can be considered as promoting full acceptance of the community in Philippine society.

Theme 3: Cultural Indicators: Improvements in representation and purchasing decision

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Cultural Indicator calls for determining possible cultivation effects of media on the people through clues from the audiences. These clues can be through changes in the audiences' attitudes to a particular topic as a response to exposure to new content about that specific issue. The previous chapter presented one of the crucial findings in this study: one clue that the transition from tolerance to acceptance has already happened in the Philippine society, as influenced by media, is if future LGBT media content will be met with favourable responses from the audiences. The findings in the previous chapter showed that the general public might positively respond to the continuous positive LGBT portrayal in Philippine media, which is a good insight into what the cultivation effect will look like in the future. This chapter is not applying the theoretical principles of Cultivation Theory. However, it offers advice on what "the future" LGBT media portrayal should look like, according to the participants, to help encourage acceptance from the public. All participants were asked to give suggestions and advice on what the advertisers or media players can do to improve the LGBT representation in Philippine media. Their answers revolve around one word: representation.

First, they call for representation for all LGBT people. All participants are aware that the mainstream media, from "the past" to "the present," was dominated by gay men. For "the future," they want to see everyone in the media. Rhandy even explains she wants representation for all the letters, "I suggest from the word itself: L-G-B-T-Q." Klint feels that gay men overshadowed lesbians in media; hence he wants them to be included in "the future." Klint also calls for transmen representation, while Purple calls for the representation of non-binary, gender fluid people, or other sexual orientations and gender identities such as asexual. Pink sees the community as diverse; hence, she hopes that the media will cater to the LGBT community as a whole and steer the focus away from only gay men. Bona agrees and is interested to see the real-life stories of lesbians in mainstream media. Pink's group also feels that there should be a GL (Girls' Love), the counterpart of BL, so that the lesbian community will also have a representation in the media.

Bona's group references lesbian-themed TV shows on GMA Network wherein straight actors were cast to play the lesbian characters. Hence, the participants' second main suggestion to improve the LGBT portrayal in media for the future is to give an accurate representation. Accurate representation for them means casting an LGBT actor to play an LGBT character. The call for accuracy also extends to the production side, as they trust that LGBT members should also write, produce, or even be crewmembers of a show or LGBT-based advertisement. Bona states that in this way, an LGBT story will be accurate because an LGBT person will tell it. For example, she wants to hear a lesbian narrative from the lesbian people's point of view as they have first-hand experience of being a lesbian. According to the participants, an LGBT media production involving LGBT staffers will ensure the accuracy of their representation.

Dialogue 15: Relevancy of Self-Knowledge

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): If the people behind it weren't Queer, they should consult the community itself.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): Better research.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): At the very least.

Purple: Because for the show 'Pearl Next Door,' they consulted UP Babaylan.

Researcher: Was the representation good after the consultation?

Purple: Yes. It's really accurate that there are lesbian women who don't like bisexual people.

Lavender: Yes, because of trust issues.

Purple: It's also true that there's a bisexual erasure within the community. So, 'Pearl Next Door' is very accurate. But that's the only GL in the Philippines. So sad.

The above discussion introduces the third suggestion of the participants, which is the realistic representation of LGBT people. This means that, according to them, not all members of the community are similar to what the five advertisements have portrayed. According to Bona and Pinky, there should be a variety of physical appearances in mainstream media-- for example, butch lesbian and femme lesbian. Purple believes that aside from gender and sexuality, the struggles of Filipino LGBT people can also be explained by their social classes. According to the participants, the five advertisements only show one level of the social hierarchy. Lavender adds that not all belong to the middle or upper class and are always in a coffee shop or indie bar, so this should not be the norm regarding media representation. Purple

says that adding the economic aspect can help explain the struggles of an LGBT member, as well as the intersectionality within the community. Purple said that doing this will allow the Philippine media to encapsulate and describe well to the masses the differences and diversity within the LGBT community. The realistic representation that the participants want to see in media is not just in terms of physical appearance but also presenting economic or social circumstances, as well as various real-life situations of different members of the community.

Most of them call for an improved storyline. For example, Pink and Lavender think that an LGBT character's personality should not only revolve around coming out. Especially since coming out is not a habit nor a culture in the Philippines, according to them. Hence, Pink and Lavender call for a more creative way of representing the community. Blue expresses a similar sentiment.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): For me, the storyline itself. I hope they don't portray it as a personality because their lifestyles always revolve around the character being gay. No. People are diverse. Complex. That's not the defining factor. Not because you're gay, you're better in life. Other people have many accomplishments, too. My suggestion would be, but maybe it would work on a progressing community, in penetrating the masses, I think it is good to use love life as the front story. It should be well exposed. But in the future, I hope sexuality is not one's defining feature.

Corresponding to Pink and Lavender's call for creative portrayal, Pinky suggests that LGBT actors should act the sexual scenes. According to Pinky, the scene is not effective and realistic if done by heterosexual straight actors because it is obvious that they are only acting. Pinky adds that if she knows that straight female actors perform female-to-female sexual scenes, the sexual appeal is not the same as the appeal she gets from personal experience or scenes done by real-life lesbian people. Similarly, Bona calls for a realistic and good narrative that does not mean portraying them as perfect, well-mannered, or educated as she sees in the five advertisements. She wants the narrative to humanise the community because, as an LGBT member, Bona prefers to see herself as the male gay character she is watching. In the earlier discussion about the participants' reactions to the five advertisements, many have expressed relatability on the storyline regarding hiding and harbouring secret feelings for someone. This is the kind of storyline they desire to see more in media but an improved version. Something that no longer revolves around their sexuality.

For example, Bunny sees the Close Up ad as "advertising for sympathy." It might have impacted him differently if it had been portrayed realistically.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): Advertising for sympathy. It's like, "I'm touched. I will buy your product." That's the impact on me from all the ads we've seen. I hope it's not just for sympathy but the reality that "this is how a gay man brushes his teeth" or "we didn't know that gay men brush their teeth gracefully." So, what people would say or get from what they've seen is more realistic.

Bunny also thinks it can mean that advertisers only use such stories to sell and not represent the community. Blue echoes Bunny's point, saying that there might be a lack of confidence from the companies that LGBT-themed media content might be successful, ergo the absence of GL and other sexual orientation representation in Philippine media. Purple adds that the companies lack the initiative to launch something original in the country. For example, the BL series is largely popular in Thailand and Japan, which gained local and international support. According to Purple, the Philippines only started investing in the BL series because of its success in other countries and saw the potential for a similar outcome in the Philippines. Purple adds that even though additional LGBT-media content is appreciated, the focus is still on selling. Hence, the stories became Westernised or stuck in one or two tropes because this formula guaranteed returns. Purple expresses that it will be helpful if future initiatives come from the Philippine media players, then show different LGBT experiences and not get stuck in one trope, as experiences are different for all of them. Hence, some participants think it will be conducive to the community if educational content, documentaries, or advocacies are continuously released in media, as it will help the general public understand the community and their diversity and enhance the LGBT media representation.

The fourth representation that the participants want to see in "the future" is the representation of non-LGBT acceptance, more specifically, family acceptance. Jovina, Jung and Bert believe that showing how a parent should handle their children's sexuality in media should be more prevalent because, according to Jung, not everyone is given an opportunity to attend a parenting seminar. As for Bert, the representation should extend to public acceptance to inform the general public how to show acceptance to LGBT people. Such portrayal can also prepare an LGBT person once they are out in the real world.

Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): It should be more on the family. More on how to portray acceptance and non-acceptance.... It could have an impact on people, especially non-accepting parents who have LGBT children. It would somehow give them an idea that it's okay to be like this. Acceptance really is a matter of time. It's not rushed. You won't be fully accepted if it's rushed. It takes time.

Jung (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): In our area, not all parents are given the opportunity to attend parenting seminars or given help on how they should handle it. The advertisement industry should show family acceptance... of how the parents will handle the acceptance of LGBT children.

Bert (22, Mindanao, transwoman): I agree because it starts in the family. But I think we should focus on the public. If there were an advertisement in the future, I would focus on public awareness and check the information given to the public. All of those acceptance starts within the family. After family, it should be applied in public.

Jung: What happens when you're outside your family? Can you handle yourself? You got used to your family, which you know will always take care of you and accept you no matter what. But what about if you go outside your home? People's opinions still matter.

Bunny also suggests showcasing different dynamics in a Filipino family setting.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): They should show that a family with both females exists. Because this type of family isn't being shown on TV or in movies. There should be societal issues. This type of family is part of society. There are two males with a kid whom they adopted... It is barely shown in ads or books. Because when you read books, you will see that a family is composed of a mother, a father, and a child. Where will you categorise same-sex partners with children? People don't see this, so we should show it more often. If they really want to broaden the LGBT visibility, not just an individual, not just a role. We can also nurture a child, educate them, and support them.

Vinny thinks that the coming out stories in the discussed advertisements are good because it normalises acceptance of a young LGBT person coming out to their parents. Vinny adds that it inspires the youth to overcome the fears that prevent them from showing who they are. However, along with the other participants, she also thinks that other types of stories different from the five advertisements' themes should be added. Vinny says that changes will only be gradual, not instant, because of generational trauma deeply rooted in society. Concerning that idea, some participants, especially Gen Z people, think that social media should be fully utilised to promote acceptance and representation. For every program Smith and his organisations hold, they document it, turn it into Vlogs (video blogs), and later post it on their social media pages. According to Smith, this move positively impacted

him because not only did people become aware of the good things they were doing, but they also gained support or sponsorship from strangers interested in helping them with their upcoming projects. The same thing happened to Octus when he became a youth leader in their area. Because of social media, they gained funding that helped in continuing their programs. Moreover, Pinky thinks that the internet should also be a safe place for sexual education for all that should be readily available to the people. Pinky argues that sex education should be normalised so that people will not be embarrassed to engage in such discussion. She adds that this information should be circulated in mainstream media too. Through this, it might help in lessening the HIV-AIDS stigma against the LGBT community.

However, despite the potential for improvement in "the future" LGBT media representation, some participants think that what they have in traditional media at "the present" is already enough. Gen Z participants, such as Smith, Octus, and Scorpion, express that the focus now should be more on social media. The world is quickly transitioning from traditional to online media; hence they think the current mainstream media is already enough. However, things are different for Maddy.

Maddy (*did not disclose age, Mindanao, transwoman*): For me, what we have is okay. Let's not demand for more. "These gay people. At first, they wanted same-sex marriage. Now they want advertisement!" For me, I already agree with this. I am fine that they spent money. Millions. We're thankful that there's an ad with a gay main character.

Maddy's attitude reflects the other Filipino habit, "*okay na 'yan*" or "*pwede na 'yan*", explained in the previous chapter. This attitude means being satisfied with substandard work or attitude because it is still better to have something than nothing. From the LGBT community's point of view, Maddy's complacency can be understood because, like her, many LGBT people have endured long years of discrimination. They probably have heard the phrase "don't ask for too much" several times. This explains why Kevin Balot got the ire of the community when she expressed a similar opinion saying that joining Miss Universe is asking for too much. Pink, Purple, Blue, and Lavender's earlier conversation illustrate that this mindset damages the community because it marginalises them further based on their opinion. According to them, the LGBT community is a minority group in the country. As such, the community is already marginalised. An example is the lack of

representation in the Philippine legal system. The case is the same regarding representing the community in media, Kevin Balot specifically. This group deem Kevin Balot a problematic ambassador of the community. According to Blue, any representative of the LGBT community represents, in a sense, the entire community and, therefore, their words, actions, and how they portray themselves have the potential to affect every member of the community. While the LGBT community in the Philippines is diverse, due to a lack of media exposure opportunities for other members, the very few people who have the means to represent the community in any way also include the other LGBT members who have different sexual orientations and gender identities. Like what Blue's group said, Kevin Balot, a transwoman, automatically becomes a representative of all Filipino LGBTQ+ members.

There are very few LGBT celebrities who are given the spotlight and popularity in Philippine show business; hence, the community's media representative is lacking. Due to her status, Kevin Balot has been given the tacit responsibility of uplifting the community and representing it well to the masses. The said idea is one form of the burden of representation. Kevin symbolises the LGBTQ+ communities' chance to be heard by the public. Because of her success, she also becomes an inspiration to several LGBT members, regardless of SOGIE, just like Janna, Ryl, and Vanx. It is known in the country that Kevin is proud to represent the Philippines and her community. However, the complication of this burden is that it becomes complicated to separate one's personal opinion, whether with good intent or not, from what should be better for the common good.

Because of the controversy involving Kevin, Blue's group feel disappointed. They also think Kevin's popularity could worsen the situation because her controversial opinions have a better chance of reaching the mainstream than the LGBT members' standpoints, which the public often ignores. According to this group, explaining progressive views to the public would be more challenging if the public could gather a counter-argument regarding invalidating the community that came from someone who is both famous and part of the community, such as Kevin Balot. For example, the public could argue that the community is "asking for too much" when calling for the passage of the national anti-discrimination bill because Kevin Balot has

expressed the same statement. As Purple states, the public could say, "Kevin Balot said it."

Jagger believes that their media representation should still be continuously improved despite some improvements, such as their portrayals in the five ads. Jagger has been very vocal from the very beginning that the current LGBT visibility is still an underrepresentation because of some of its inaccuracies, such as straight actors playing an LGBT role. According to Bona, this move hurts the community because LGBT roles are not clothes that the actors can wear while shooting the program and then take it off after: "We are not roles. We are living human beings. If you are going to portray a role, you should give it justice and believe what they are fighting for." However, for Jagger, improving LGBT media representation is one helpful means to end systemic homophobia in the country. He thinks that if the media continues with this kind of representation, LGBT people will go back to only being visible, and stereotypes might continue to proliferate, resulting in not genuinely being represented in the Philippine media again.

Another cultural indicator discovered in the previous chapter is the general public's response to the advertised products on whether they would buy or support them. The study discovered that the general public is undecided on the said action. Similarly, when the LGBT participants were asked if they would buy the products from the five advertisements, they gave mixed responses. The participants' decisions on whether to purchase the products are affected by four reasons: the effect of the advertisement on them, brand loyalty, personal reasons, and failure to connect with the advertisement.

A 2019 survey in America discovered that LGBTQ+ consumers are more likely to reward the brands that support, recognise, and include them by purchasing their products and remaining loyal to them (Petrock, 2021). Jovina expresses the same information that he got from his previous work in a call centre company. Whenever customers were asked what made them purchase the products of the accounts Jovina handled, they would say that the advertisement greatly impacted their decision. Jovina adds that if the presentations were good, it would encourage customers to support the products more. This study's participants who express the possibility of purchasing the products also state this reasoning, saying that the

advertisements' stories moved them. This is more apparent in Uber and Pantene ads. Jagger, Rhandy, Janna, and Klint say they will use Uber because of the LGBT representation in the ad, as well as the Uber driver's portrayal as an ally. Scorpion says he will use Uber because he sees no violations in the ad. Scorpion refers to how LGBT people are portrayed in the ad as having an innocent crush on someone as opposed to "the past" stereotypical depictions of hungry for male flesh, thus making him feel not violated. Purple has a similar opinion, saying she will go for a company that respects her as a person. However, it is worth noting that Uber is no longer available in the Philippines since 2018, so their purchasing responses are only conceptual. For Pantene, Scorpion is inspired by the ad's portrayal of shiny and beautiful hair hence the decision to purchase it. John likes the product because of the quality and the endorser. However, Jung says he will switch to Pantene because of the advertisement. These statements define the first reason for purchasing the products: LGBT consumers are likelier to buy a product if an advertisement impacts them.

Klint says he felt compelled to purchase Smart services because the ad is relatable to him. Meanwhile, Smith shares that the endorsers' perfect white teeth convince him to buy Close Up. The Smart and Close Up ads have an impact on the participants. However, it is important to note that only very few of them have reported that they will be purchasing these products explicitly because the ads persuaded them. The LGBT participants' second reason for supporting the products is brand loyalty--- the predominant answer. While many of them are touched by the message in the Pantene ad, they state that they will still purchase it because they were already using it prior to the release of the ad. Bert, Rhandy, Lavender, and Blue are frequent users of Pantene. Janna likes the product because of the quality and the scent. For Bench, most respondents have reported using the product advertised before and have loved the scent. Hence, they will repurchase it. Blue also likes the fact that it is a local product. This factor, the price, and the quality are the main reasons the participants will support Bench perfume. However, the commercial only made the brand's case stronger. Similarly, previous good experience using Uber and its affordability are the main reasons the participants would continue using the service. Scotch shares that his experience with Uber drivers is similar to what was seen in the ad. Pinky says Uber cars look clean and fragrant; hence she would use

them even without the advertisement. Lavender and Blue like that Uber is cheaper and can be afforded by students.

The brand loyalty and personal reasons started to get mixed up when asked if the participants would switch to Smart after watching the ad. Some groups are already Smart subscribers and will remain as such because of the price and the signal coverage. The participants in Visayas and Mindanao will stay in Smart (and the sister company Talk 'N Text) because it has a stronger and better signal than the competitor. Moreover, the brand can reach even the unreachable areas in the said regions. However, the participants in the Luzon region, where the competitor's reach is broader and stronger, will not switch to Smart due to price and coverage. Blue says that, despite appreciating the ad, it is not convincing enough to make him switch mobile network providers.

Personal reason, such as economic or health, is the third reason the participants would purchase the advertised products. For example, Jovina will not buy Bench perfume because he has a sinus infection. Same for Jagger because he gets nauseous when he smells perfume. Maddy, Vinny, Ryl, and Pink will not switch to Pantene because their scalps' condition needs an anti-dandruff shampoo. Janna has sensitive gums, and only Close Up helps her in this aspect. As for Uber, Jovina had a bad experience when he previously used a cab, which is why he will not be using any Uber services. Other participants have used their marketing and professional knowledge in purchasing decisions. Bert and Jung are aware that the Uber ad represents a marketing strategy and that the events that unfold in the advert may or may not happen in real life. Scotch is also aware that Bench's ad is a marketing strategy; hence he reports that the ad did not persuade him. While Blue appreciates that the company values align with his, he thinks the price is a determining factor when purchasing a service-oriented business such as Uber. Similarly, some participants say that they will purchase some of the products if they can afford them, like Bench perfumes, and some will continue using other brands because it is cheaper than the products advertised, such as Close Up.

The fourth factor that affects the participants purchasing decision is the failure to connect with the advertisements. For Close Up, most participants are not convinced of the ad's persuading power because of its failed delivery. The two groups in the

Luzon region thinks the ad's effect only made them crave and buy milk tea. The misunderstanding due to the ads delivery is also a hindrance as to why some participants say they will not support the products advertised. For Smith, he is dissatisfied with the lack of product exposure in the Pantene ad; hence he will not buy the product. Bunny and Scotch have the same reason; hence, they think the ad does not impact their purchasing decision. Similarly, the Smart advert does not affect either Bona or Scotch. Bona says it is not an advertisement because it is not offering any product. Bona adds that it might be helpful if the ad includes services for the LGBT community if that is why the company released such ads. Scotch asks, "If I switch to Smart, will I get accepted?" Pinky thinks Smart cynically used the LGBT storyline to attract viewership. Reasons like these send a message to the advertisers that they should not risk the danger of using LGBT stories in their ads for the sole purpose of attracting viewership and customers. Bunny is calling for an ad that shows something realistic.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): I hope that when they use an LGBT story, they make sure it is connected to the product. For example, with Close Up, how does a gay man use Close Up? How does a transwoman use Close Up? So that it would be realistic... So what people would get from the ads they've seen are more realistic. That's why our answers earlier, we aren't going to buy. We were touched, but it doesn't mean we will buy. I am hoping for something realistic.

What Bunny has emphasised is, again, representation. According to the participants, representation is the key to feeling that they are truly accepted in the media and making them want to buy products advertised by an LGBT-themed ad. Marketing strategists say LGBTQ+ consumers notice if a brand only includes them for marketing strategy, such as during Pride month, then be inconsistent afterwards (Petrock, 2021). International LGBTQ+ organisation GLAAD argues, "It is not enough to put a rainbow on a product and call it a marketing strategy" (ibid., para. 4). While LGBT consumers have a reputation for being brand loyalists, they also have the highest tendency to boycott a product if the companies exhibit harmful actions towards the community. The situation seems similar with Filipino LGBT consumers based on the responses of the participants. These studies apply to US consumers. However, based on the answers of a few participants, the case could be the same for some Filipino LGBT members. Blue says that he will not support a company with an anti-LGBT ad. Similarly, Bona argues that if Bench stores' staff

discriminates against the community, she will not support it with or without the ad. Hence, representation should be enforced and consistent.

The participants call for an improved representation in the Philippine media, such as representation for all members of the community, accurate and realistic representation of LGBT characteristics and stories, and improved representation of non-LGBT acceptance to cultivate acceptance among the general public. These actions may be one of the keys to starting the transition from tolerating to accepting Philippine society. Echoing what Vinny said, the media might not be the only factor in transitioning the mindset of the people. However, she also states that media effects in "the past," at the time when she was growing up, significantly impacted people expressing discriminatory attitudes against the community. She grew up in an area wherein radio was predominantly used. Her extensive exposure to radio personalities discriminating against gay men profoundly impacted her: "It sticks in mind. That's what really stood out." Suppose media players can continuously produce the kind of representation that the participants want. In that case, the positive messages about the LGBT community may have the possibility to stick to the audience's minds, too, especially the youths who are still developing attitudes on opinions on this matter. The advice and insights that the participants offer are also helpful for advertisers because, according to the participants, they will support the product if the LGBT stories are used favourably and realistically. If done this way, advertisers will solve two problems in one single action: contributing to LGBT acceptance in society while getting their investments back from LGBT consumers.

Several group dialogues and exchanges between participants are highlighted throughout this chapter to inform the readers which statements are included in the theoretical analysis using Relevance Theory. The Relevance Theory provides an opportunity for the groups to form innovative collective ideas regarding LGBT-themed ads. The following section explains how the participants' similarity in status and experiences have affected how they read media content as an audience, which would incur different results if done alone or with other audiences who belong to a different social group.

IV. Relevance and Meaningful Moments

The purpose of conducting focus groups discussion among the participants is to apply the ideas of David Morley's Relevance Theory. The theory states that audiences place meaning on texts based on shared experiences with people in the same socio-economical situations (Morley, 1980). Moreover, John Fiske (1988) enhances the theory by articulating that each person in a group has their own set of influences and experiences that will affect how they interpret media content. However, when discussing with people from a similar socio-economic or other background, a 'social allegiance' will often be activated. This results in the group producing combined interpretations of the text or texts under review with a type of reading of a certain media content related to them. This study is curious about how Filipino LGBT people interpret LGBT-themed advertisements. It is curious to know if they appreciate the advertisers' effort to represent them in mainstream media or if they also recognise the possibility of other agendas at play in producing such LGBT content. Moreover, the study aims to determine if the participants transcend the discussion from the media content to real-life situations and struggles based on their shared experiences and give different readings, meanings, and interpretations of the advertisements.

IV.I. Relevance Moments: Moments of Semiosis and Social Allegiances

In this section, the moments wherein participants formed social allegiances amid discussion are laid out. The first process of social allegiance is a viewer's "moment of semiosis", which is when a "viewer makes meanings and pleasures from television that are relevant to his or her social allegiances at the moment of viewing" (Fiske, 1988, p. 247). When people in the same group form the exact "moment," social allegiance will be activated. Cooper (1999) explains that this transpires when the groups' discussion or dialogue intersects with the messages in the media. Fiske (1988) adds that the discussion becomes personalised, and the signifier is no longer exclusive to the media text or content in question. The flow of the discussion from some groups displays parallel moments of semiosis, especially when most of the participants in the group have similar personal knowledge on a specific topic. Contrarily, when only one experiences a moment and other participants fail to relate, social allegiance is not activated.

Relevance 1: Relevancy of Self-Knowledge

The first relevance observed during the interviews was when participants' knowledge of the topic greatly influenced moments of semiosis, including personal information gathered from their profession or education and empirical observation of their surroundings. For example, Blue, Lavender, Pink, and Purple's awareness and ability to critically analyse recent LGBT issues affect how they view the commercials. First, their reactions to the Pantene ad are focused on the endorser: Kevin Balot's recent controversy saying transwomen wanting to join the Miss Universe pageant is considered asking for too much (dialogue 6, page 204). According to the group, they recognise the promotion of the message "transwomen are women" to the mainstream and the company's initiative to do this at a time when the LGBT community was not yet considered marketable. However, the ad has a lesser impact on them because of the endorser. To them, the message is conflicting because the person endorsing it risked progressing the idea to mainstream belief by stating the controversial statement about asking for too much. This group thinks that the public will not understand LGBT people further if a person who belongs to the community also does not believe in the message "transwomen are women."

Second, the said group exhibit awareness of the reality of current LGBT representation, especially how people consume and produce LGBT media content. For example, this is the only group that raises the point that music and pop songs can also be damaging platforms to the community (dialogue 2 and 3, page 190). They are also aware that LGBT media content is mostly consumed by LGBT members (dialogue 13 and 14, pages 217 and 221). Hence, according to them, even though there is more LGBT representation in media now, it is still insufficient. Their awareness of the precedent of how effective it was when a media player consulted an LGBT organisation on how to portray certain LGBT characters is also revealed (dialogue 15, page 224). These moments and social allegiances gave meaningful readings and transcended the discussion. For example, a simple discussion of the GL show 'Pearl Next Door' lead to explanations of an existing problem of trust issues between lesbian and bisexual people in the Philippines of which most people are unaware. Lastly, the group feel that the Smart ad's depiction of a military father who has an LGBT child is not realistic because of personal experiences. Their discussion reveals that experiences differ from the ad (dialogue 9, page 207). Lavender's brother is in the military. Blue has observed an LGBT person who has military

relatives. According to Purple, her father has the same macho attitude as in the ad. All of them have mentioned that masculinity is deeply rooted in the male members of the family who is in the military and that they still have tendencies to be homophobic or unaccepting of an LGBT family member. According to them, the Smart ad's situation might be accurate for some families, but it is likely to be very rare.

The participants' professional backgrounds have also affected their moments of semiosis. For example, Bert has a marketing background. Hence, she always needs to consider and check the quality and price of the products whenever asked if she would purchase the products in the LGBT-themed ads. Sometimes, the other participants in Bert's group agree or disagree with her. However, the social allegiance with the entire group was never activated when discussing purchasing decisions because the other participants would derive their decisions based on their preferences and experiences. Alternatively, only one or two would agree with Bert. For example, Jovina will not use Uber because of a past traumatic experience using a taxi. The other participants will buy some of the products because of brand loyalty. Similarly, Scotch applies his experiences as a media practitioner when analysing the ads. When asked if he would buy a Bench perfume because of the ad, Scotch explains that he knows it was only a marketing strategy. Hence he is not persuaded to buy it. Scotch adds that the advertisement might persuade those with different media literacy than his. Social allegiance was not activated during this moment because the other participants had a different analysis of the ad and different considerations for buying or not buying the product, such as the scent and the price.

Relevance 2: Relevance on Observations

When asked about LGBT representation in media, the participants exhibited similar moments of semiosis on various topics that lead to social allegiance. These dialogues gave out essential information, especially on how they are treated and should be treated in media from now on moving forward.

First, certain portrayal inaccuracies are pointed out due to these discussions. For example, Bunny, Pinky, Scotch, and Bona's conversations on Uber and Close Up ads reveal the danger of inaccurately portraying them in mainstream media (dialogue 8, page 206). For Uber, they point out that not all LGBT people are physically similar

to the characters in the ad, as well as the disparity between the economic situations of all the LGBT members saying not all can afford to use Uber. A similar observation is discussed in the Close Up ad flagging depictions of gay men being predators and the exclusion of what is deemed to be typical reactions of a gay man who belongs to a low social class. Second, this group's discussion about "the past" media depiction produces notable observations. First, all of them observed that gay men dominated the exposure. As a result, the public's idea of the difference between other sexual orientations got blurred.

Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man): All characters visible in media were gay men.

Bunny (33, Luzon, gay man): Or the transgender people were also gay men. That's what they know. The term "transgender" was unknown.

Pinky (41, Luzon, identifies as femme in a lesbian relationship): Same with non-binary. Lesbian women and gay men also evolved into being transgender.

Bona (29, Luzon, gay man): In the old media, just look at Roderick Paulate. Nothing more, nothing less.

Bunny: Being bisexual was also not recognised. If you're a bisexual man, you're deemed as a gay man. They only call you *silahis* (bisexual) when you are the lighter version of being gay.

Pinky: There was a notion that if you're *silahis*, there is a possibility that a person would be straight in the future. Because being *silahis* is considered a phase of exploring your sexuality.

Bunny: They'd say, "he's only *silahis*. He's not gay." It's like there's a certain degree to his sexuality.

Pinky: The *silahis* term only applies to gay men. It's like this person is still in denial.

Bunny: Like "I am not gay. I am only *silahis*."

Pinky: "I am only soft and effeminate because my siblings are all women."

Bona mentions male gay actor and comedian Roderick Paulate, who dominated mainstream films in the 1990s. Bona and Bunny describe Roderick's characters as having one-dimensional attributes such as being soft, wearing excessive make-up, parlour gay, crossdresser, and loud. The public got used to this certain male gay stereotype which affected the way Bona and Bunny grew up as their parents or the people around them had misconceptions that they would end up copying the actions of Roderick's characters. This group's social allegiance provides helpful information in which consistent stereotypic portrayals like Roderick Paulate's are one of the reasons why the public, especially those who grew up watching these movies, still misunderstand LGBT people's gender identity and sexual orientations.

Many participants have also stated that the Philippines has no coming out culture. According to them, either their family already felt it and just waited for confirmation, or people just guessed their sexuality until they confirmed it. However, the discussion between Blue, Lavender, Pink, and Purple on their opinions on the Bench ad stood out. Based on their experience and observation, this group's social allegiance provides this study empirical proof that the members of the LGBT community in the Philippines generally do not have a coming out culture.

Purple (21, Luzon, pansexual ciswoman): (Bench ad) It mirrors yourself when you're compartmentalising who you are at home and who you are at school with your friends. It's appealing because, based on studies, we're not really coming out. We observe and sense first, although it's not really appropriate. But because of the Filipino culture, we tend to hold back. That's why the tagline "*amoy kita*" gives good vibes because it's like saying people already know who you are.

Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman): It's double-meaning and product related.

Lavender (27, Luzon, bisexual woman): I agree with what they said. In the Philippines, there's no such thing as coming out. It's either they will catch you, or they will know who you really are little by little.

Blue: I think it's a taboo topic. You do not necessarily have to address the elephant in the room. But you can sense that other people and your family knows about it. I feel like, but not all the time, there are instances I would say this scenario is the same. Personally, in our home, I didn't have to come out.

Purple: Is it like you didn't have to confirm with them?

Blue: It's a topic that I didn't want to bring up. But I think they already knew about it. Then I joined an LGBT organisation, so I think they'd already assumed it. But it's a topic that they wouldn't want to start. I think they would prefer to wait for me to say something.

Another critical moment of semiosis happened during the discussion of the Pantene ad with Jagger's group. While Rhandy, Janna, Klint, and John have similar moments of semiosis and find the ad inspiring, Jagger expresses a different one, especially concerning Kevin Balot's appearance. According to Jagger, it somehow normalises the idea that a transwoman should look a certain way to be considered a woman (dialogue 7, page 205). However, even though Jagger has a different interpretation of the Pantene ad, his observation launches a different moment of semiosis with the other participants: the discussion of being a transwoman. This has led to social allegiance. This discussion includes topics such as two types of transition (pre and post-operation transition), procedures a person needs to undertake before the operation, and other ways a transwoman can do if they want to transition, such as hormonal treatment. This is where Klint shares his

breakthrough knowledge of the real meaning of being a transgender person, as influenced by a social media influencer, which is not solely defined by surgical transitions (dialogue 12, page 215).

There are other instances of the relevance of observation that was previously cited in the previous subchapters. These dialogues show the social allegiances that transpire within groups on particular topics:

- Dialogue 1 (page 188) – The radio and news are the worst platforms because the personalities talk about LGBT people in a derogatory manner.
- Dialogue 11 (page 213) – Some participants recognise the advertiser's initiative to invest in LGBT endorsers, which they deem LGBT inclusion and acceptance.
- Dialogue 2 (page 190) – *Titibo-tibo* is a song that appears to express the problematic idea that lesbians will be saved and converted to heterosexuality by falling in love with a heterosexual straight man
- Dialogues 4 and 5 (page 198) – The ads are breaking stereotypes. For Close Up, it shows that no one assumes the feminine or masculine role in a same-sex relationship. For Uber, being gay does not mean being overtly sexual towards men.

Relevance 3: Relevancy of Relatability to the Advertisements

In the previous sections, the participants revealed how relatable the ads were. Some personal experiences they have, similar to the narratives in the ads, are hiding their authentic selves and feeling giddy whenever they see their love interests or someone attractive. The Smart ad causes Jagger, John, Rhandy, Janna, and Klint to relieve past similar experiences, which activated social allegiance and was able to transcend the discussion into current societal problems that Filipino LGBT people face. Similarly, Jagger's group illustrates the same scenario of transcending the messages from the Smart advertisement to a recent event in the Philippines.

John (25, Mindanao, gay man): (Smart ad) He didn't accept that friend request in the first place because he's afraid his dad would get angry. He was not really comfortable sharing that he has a boyfriend.

Rhandy (37, Mindanao, transwoman): Because he is hiding something.

Klint (18, Mindanao, gay man): Again, it's my personal experience. I have two social media accounts: my main account and one for family purposes... My mother sent a friend request to my personal account. I panicked, so I blocked her... After winning a make-up competition, my mother told me, "I'm proud of you." That statement really touched my heart.

Jagger (33, Mindanao, gay man): It erased your pain.

Janna (31, Mindanao, transwoman): It's very hard to hide. Because we also get affected by our surroundings.

Jagger: It's a good ad because we're really like that sometimes. We hide from our parents, but we share with our friends. Even to strangers... But we can't share with our parents because we're afraid of judgement, and we don't want our parents to get disappointed because, at the end of the day, we always look up to our parents as our number one supporters.

John: We get our confidence from our parents, and if we break that circle, it could break everything. Like what happened with the Dacera case. He was forced to leave the house. He ended up homeless, and his dad died after a few months. He never asked for an apology just because he's gay. That's unfair. It's really unfair. That's why I love that ad. In a way, compared to the other two, with one being about a teenager, it's more about...

Janna: Struggles.

Jagger: The past struggles you have until you say this is the right time to say it.

Rhandy: This is more mature compared to the Bench ad.

As seen in dialogue 17, John relates the Smart ad to a controversial case in the country called the "Dacera case". Twenty-three-year-old heterosexual female flight attendant Christine Dacera was found dead in a hotel room on January 01, 2021. The medico-legal report indicated that she might have been raped and murdered. Dacera was partying the previous night in the same hotel room with her 12 male friends, who became the immediate suspects. However, one of the suspects expressed in a TV interview that all males in the party were gay (BBC News, 2021). The case became a high-profile national issue because of former President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs campaign. The police allegedly forced two suspects to declare that drugs were used at the party (ibid.). The whole case was found to be an exhibition of mishandled pieces of evidence and pointing at the wrong people, which resulted in the removal of the city's police chief from office and the dismissal of the case against the suspects. One of the suspects, and Dacera's close friend, Valentine Rosales, had been hiding his sexuality from his father. Because of the case, Rosales was forced to tell his father the truth. As a result, his father disowned him, and they

became estranged. Four months after Dacera's death, Valentine's father suddenly died of a heart attack. His father died before they could reconcile (Siazon, 2021). Similar to the story portrayed in the Smart ad, Janna asks, "Until when is someone going to hide?" Jagger replies with an analysis saying, do not wait for the moment wherein the parents are old and sickly before they come out. These reasons are why this group find the Smart ad better than the other ads because they can relate to the struggles of hiding and coming out to their parents for fear of disappointment.

When the other group suggest the portrayal of family acceptance to improve future advertisements and media content, Jovina, Jung, Bert, and JC have also exhibited social allegiance (dialogue 16, page 227). Jovina, Jung, and JC's points of view are from personal experience with the intention to help educate parents on how to handle having an LGBT child. Bert has a different moment of semiosis wherein she wants a better portrayal of social acceptance as she believes that acceptance automatically starts at home for some, whereas societal acceptance is still a challenge. Jovina, Jung, and JC also recognise Bert's moment upon agreeing with her statement that LGBT children should prepare themselves outside of the family. Hence, this discussion from the said group provides one helpful tip on what should be improved in future LGBT media content: the portrayal of family and non-LGBT acceptance in media.

Moreover, non-relatability on some ads still paves the way for social allegiance in all groups. First, Smith, Scorpion, and Octus live in a geographical area wherein taxis are not allowed to operate hence their unfamiliarity towards Uber services. Due to this, their moment of semiosis is only limited to what they have seen in the ads. Vinny, Vanx, and Ryl are in the same situation. However, Vinny has experienced using Uber once. Due to a different experience, Vanx and Ryl cannot relate to Vinny; ergo, social allegiance has not been formed. Similarly, Bona and Pinky cannot relate to the Bench ad, especially the part wherein the main character hides his sexual orientation whenever he comes home. According to Bona, she never has that problem, and Pinky thinks, "it's a gay thing" --- pertaining to gay men. Hence, social allegiance is not formed in this discussion.

For Close Up, the confusion on milk tea, which all participants express in all groups, gives the study the idea that not all LGBT-themed advertisements will speak to

LGBT viewers. The participants have humorous discussions about the mismatch of products. However, the dialogue between Jovina, Maddy, and Bert stands out, saying that even if fried chicken replaces milk tea, the message will still not be delivered well to the audience (dialogue 10, page 208). The Close Up storyline seems forced and, as such, has not impacted them. Some consumer analysts know this problem exists. Some brands "missed the mark" on ads by failing to build a bridge between the product and the LGBTQ+ community (Petrock, 2021, para. 3). The same report also states that some companies jeopardised millions of dollars because of advertisements that have made half-hearted attempts to reach out to the community. The Close Up ad seemingly has the same impact on the participants. Moreover, most of them say they will not buy or switch to Close Up and that the ad does not convince them. Those who are willing to buy are because of health reasons. Philippine advertisers should recognise that poor enforcement of the LGBT narrative in ads can create misconnection with LGBT consumers. The advertisers should also recognise that the effective way to attract Filipino LGBT consumers is to create advertisements that matter to them, speak to them, that they can relate to, are realistic, and can promote LGBT acceptance or inclusivity. Advertisers should ensure that, when releasing LGBT-themed ads, they genuinely cater to LGBT consumers because Filipino LGBT people can also withhold support for brands if they find that they are only given substandard treatment or used as a marketing strategy.

Some participants' moments of semiosis can indicate whether they know if a certain advertisement is authentically speaking to the LGBT community or is just formed for marketing purposes. Relevance Theory positions the viewer as an active audience member, allowing them to derive their media interpretations from personal experiences. Hence, this study has observed that the participants can critically analyse the media content shown to them by placing meanings on stories, mannerisms, or elements in the advertisements that may go unnoticed by a non-LGBT audience.

IV.II. Meaningful Moments

Jodi Cohen is also inspired to determine the audience's reaction to a media text that goes beyond Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding analysis. Applying the Relevance Theory, Cohen (1991) defines meaningful moments as "polysemy encompasses

sociocultural, personal, textual, and conversational resources" (p. 445). In her study, meaningful moments were formed when her participants applied a 'gay discourse' in analysing the media text. This means her participants who related to gay oppression in the media text were able to meet the "viewer's experiences and knowledge of real-life gay oppression" (ibid.). As a result, the participants had placed meanings and gave interpretations on media texts that were not bound by simple encoding and decoding analysis, wherein audiences were expected to give out only three responses: dominant/preferred, negotiated, and oppositional.

One meaningful moment is observed during the participants' analysis of the Pantene and Close Up ad. First, some participants find the white theme in the Pantene ad symbolic. Jovina interprets it as representing peace, purity and acceptance, whereas Jung perceives it as messages of "show the truth in you" and "be confident of who you are." Bunny has the same interpretation. Bunny adds that showing mirrors in the ad is symbolical for him as it symbolises authenticity and being genuine. Rhandy and Janna interpret the endorser's hair as representing their crowning years. Both can relate, sharing that they felt more confident about who they were when their hair got longer. Some audiences can easily dismiss these elements in the advertisement. But because some participants can relate to and are inspired by the ad, they can place meaning symbolically, synonymous with their struggles and hopes as LGBT people. Bona interprets the Pantene ad not only specific to transwomen but also as a journey of someone transitioning or discovering their sexualities. Bona also likes that the ad shows real people of different ages. Bunny, similarly, interprets the ad as showcasing that not all transgender people's journeys are identical. Moreover, the ad also shows that not all LGBT people's journeys are the same. Despite that, Bona and Bunny conclude that every LGBT person can still relate to the ad because the challenges represented by the ad, especially the part wherein they are questioning themselves, is relatable to every Filipino LGBT person.

The mother's presence in the Pantene ad provides an opening for the participants to interpret it differently. The presence of the mother in the ad is realistic because, according to Bunny, the mother often accepts their LGBT children first than the other members of the family. Vinny raises a similar question "Does it mean that dads are more unaccepting of transgender people?" Purple shares a similar theory that fathers are more accepting if it is the female kid who is an LGBT member. Purple

shares that her dad's strict and *macho* attitude made her think that if it were her male sibling in her situation, her father would probably not accept them. Purple adds the probability that her dad might have easily accepted her sexual orientation because he might still think there is a chance for her to procreate. Vinny has a similar analysis after Vanx expresses her observation, as a transwoman, that lesbians are less discriminated against than gay men and transwomen like her in Philippine society. Vinny, from a lesbian's point of view, blames the porn industry because it sexualised lesbians through depictions of femme lesbians as the exclusive physical characteristics of all lesbians, the possibility of threesome got somehow normalised, and the female same-sex sexual acts got fetishised. These interpretations tell us that even the LGBT community is aware that women give different treatments to an LGBT person, which is more accepting, and get a lighter treatment from the public but still discriminating. Hence, Bunny's reading of the Close Up ad is interesting as it corresponds to both ideas. First, Bunny recognises that women are more accepting of male same-sex relationships; hence it makes sense to him why the ad placed a female cashier in the milk tea shop. Bunny adds that women are most likely to be giddy when they see a male couple, especially if they are handsome. Moreover, Bunny also states that it is hard for him to accept and see female same-sex couples in public. Unfortunately, he does not elaborate as to why he feels this way. Reasons as to why lesbians, in particular, may be less accepted and celebrated when compared with the other sexual orientations and gender identities of the LGBT community are further discussed in the next chapter.

However, Blue and Lavender think that showing accepting fathers in ads is significant because it represents a changing society wherein the traditional *padre de familia* (head of the family) is now more involved in getting to know their kids. Similarly, many participants view the placement of male heterosexual people in the advertisements as a sign of acceptance. Most participants describe the Uber driver as an ally. Jagger and Vinny see it as the company's way of saying that their values align with the values of the LGBT community, and those values will also be observed by their drivers. Bert reads the ad as a representation of the 21st century, wherein everyone is getting more educated and accepting towards the LGBT community.

Some participants have formed meaningful moments individually. While some lead to moments of semiosis and social allegiances, like Jagger's take on the Pantene ad

normalising a specific physical appearance of a transwoman, some have not. Nevertheless, the moments that failed to launch a discussion are worthy of note in this study because these meaningful moments are still personalised, subjective interpretations based on the individual's experience and perception as an LGBT person. These insights are still beneficial in answering the research question, "What are the Filipino LGBT people's reactions to the advertisements?" Here are the following examples:

- Lavender thinks the inclusion of male interest in Bench's ad is queerbaiting.
- Bona perceives that the dad on the Bench ad outed his son prematurely. Similarly, Bunny thinks it is a rare narrative in Philippine society for a father to leave a note to their sons with messages like "I love you." He says it might happen to families in the higher class but not in the middle to lower-class families.
- Some participants think the advertisements' stories are like fairy tales and do not really happen in their realities. For example, Blue thinks the love story in Uber rarely happens in an Uber or cab ride. Vinny, Vanx, and Ryl have a theory that the romantic moments in Close Up only happen in the mind of one of the characters. Vinny has a similar experience wherein moments are intimate in her head, but the reality is far from it. Vanx thinks that since the character who got his picture taken without permission is not offended, the romantic scenarios are probably only played out in the imagination of the other character. Ryl says he has been using Close Up, and no such thing has happened to him. Similarly, Bona thinks the ad's narrative confuses the flirting phase with a strong romantic connection. She is unsatisfied with the ad because, according to the, it is unrealistic to form a solid romantic connection by only bumping with someone a few times in a milk tea shop.
- Bona, Scotch, and Bunny are not satisfied with the ending of the Smart ad. They express that the father's acceptance of his son's sexuality is not as easy as accepting the Facebook friend request. They add that the realistic part is the anxiety and overthinking that the son went through when the friend request came in. However, they all recognise that it is just a one-minute commercial, so seeing what happens after accepting the friend request is impossible.

- Vanx and Ryl are inspired by how the LGBT characters are presented physically. They say that they looked like professionals and smelled clean and fresh. They express the desire to copy such a style to improve their looks. Vanx and Ryl grew up in an environment with a perception that being gay is associated with poor hygiene, being uneducated, and having a cheap clothing style. According to Vanx, she will feel more confident once she looks professional. Vinny perceives these statements as a successful influence of media that Vanx and Ryl would want to do or be something because the media tells them what an ideal gay person should look like. Alternatively, Vinny can not relate to Vanx and Ryl's situation because of the possibility of having a different experience as a lesbian.

V. Conclusion

The discussions surrounding the effect of "the past" media representation on the LGBT participants reveal that the media greatly influenced why they experienced negative attitudes from the wider public. According to them, the negative and stereotypical portrayal of gay men and lesbians, the exclusion of other LGBT members, and the inaccurate representation of LGBT people in "the past" media cultivated negative opinions among the public. Only some participants have reported that the media did not impact how wider society treated them in the past. Some are fortunate to grow up in an accepting and non-discriminating environment. Unfortunately, the case is not the same for most of the participants. However, when the positive changes in "the present" media representation started, the participants also felt substantial improvements in how the Philippine society treats them. However, some feel that the current situation still shows tolerance from the general public, not acceptance. Helpful tips from the participants on how they want to be represented in "the future" have been laid out. Some participants think that if these tips are utilised, they might help transition the tolerating society into an accepting one. Their main concern is representation: representation for all LGBT members, accurate and realistic representation, and representation of non-LGBT acceptance. The latter is deemed important because it helps parents and the public get helpful information on handling LGBT acceptance, especially if educational resources are unavailable. Moreover, the participants reiterated the importance of utilising social media to improve the LGBT people's status in media further. The Gen Z participants

have also stated how the platform significantly impacted their lives because it provided them with a safe space to show who they truly are and what they can do.

Regarding purchasing decisions, the participants are aware if brands and companies are authentically building bridges with the community or just using them for marketing purposes. It is also discovered that similar to studies regarding LGBT consumers, this study's participants can withdraw their support of brands they have been supporting if they think these companies discriminate against the community. Conversely, the participants will support brands authentically representing the community through their advertisements. Moreover, the participants who can relate to the stories in the ads tend to support the product. However, if a misunderstanding between the product and the story occurs, it is more likely that the participants will not support the product. It also means that this type of advertisement does not impact them. However, even though the advertisement appeals to them, if there are non-negotiable reasons, such as the product's affordability and the participants' health, their purchasing decision might be mixed. They may either take time to decide, considering all the details, such as quality, or may ultimately choose to continue using the product they are already using.

The Relevance Theory's concepts of moments of semiosis, social allegiance, and meaningful moments are successfully observed in participants' discussions. Their free-flowing conversation, added with personal knowledge, experience, and expertise, has provided this study with critical ideas from the Filipino LGBT people's points of view of how they perceive the past, present, and future LGBT media representation in the country. This study has discovered that the Filipino LGBT community will most likely be active receivers of LGBT media content. This is evident in their rich interpretations of some elements of the ads and criticism even of the tiniest details presented in the commercials. But more importantly, their readings are based on their experience as LGBT people. The participants' interpretations are more meaningful because of these experiences as their analysis exceeded the encoding/decoding phase and provided alternative concepts that possibly only they can provide. Fiske (1988) states that at this point, the dominant ideologies surrounding the media content would dissolve, and the ideas formed during social allegiance would take over and recreate pleasurable ideas for the audiences. Hence, the ability of Filipino LGBT audiences to transcend the messages

of media content into significant societal matters can help set a tone in guiding the media players towards normalising positive LGBT representation in the Philippine mainstream media.

8

Chapter

The Filipino People's Overall Reaction: Only a Surface Level to Much Bigger Societal Problems

I. Introduction

This chapter addresses the primary question of this doctoral project: "What are the reactions of Filipino people to LGBT-themed advertisements that portray LGBT people positively?" As such, this chapter offers a critical reflection and discussion of the combined analyses from Chapters Six and Seven. The term "Filipino people" corresponds to all Filipinos, regardless of their sexual orientation. The previous two chapters provide this study on the general public and the LGBT community's responses to the five advertisements, the said community's media representation in "the past," and how they would respond to "the future" content. However, upon further investigation and deeper analysis of the findings, this study discovers that the problems in LGBT media representation are only a small part of much larger and more complex societal problems involving the Filipino LGBT community currently existing in Philippine society. Through the lens of this study's respondents and participants, the study identifies four key themes that answer the primary question:

1. Double standards on women and the absence of other sexual orientations in Philippine media,
2. Filipino gay men have to compensate for their sexuality,
3. The perceived pros and cons of "the future" and
4. Other LGBT issues, other than media representation, needs immediate attention.

This study considers these four central answers as significant societal problems concerning the LGBT community that must be addressed. This chapter offers explanations of how these ideas originated and why they continue to persist. The discussion involves illustrations and reports from related literature and challenging some of the ideas the focus group participants presented. By challenging these ideas, this study is able to coin a term called *idealised Filipino gay people*.

The idea of tolerance but non-acceptance is also highlighted by some of the LGBT participants of this study. Adihartono and Jocson (2020) echo similar findings in their study, stating that "the Philippines is only LGBT friendly on paper" (p. 277). The authors also argue that society tolerates LGBT people if they are funny or comical. However, if they decide to pursue or strive for something bigger and more serious, such as the passage of LGBT rights, they are not taken seriously. According to the LGBT participants in this doctoral project, the LGBT representation of comic relief and being treated as entertainment that proliferated in the Philippine media for years may have contributed to this attitude of the public. Most significantly, this doctoral study further discovers several additional societal insights and perceptions that have the same gravitas as the ambivalent attitude of "tolerated and not accepted" that is carried over in the current society.

II. Double Standards on Women and Absence of Other Sexual Orientations in Media

There are four main ideas that the focus group participants have stated, suggesting that women's issues are one of the many LGBT problems in the current society. All four ideas suggest that they are deep-rooted problems; thus still currently manifesting. Hence, this section gives an overview of how these existed and became a character of contemporary women and LGBT issues in the country. Moreover, this part of the study defines "women" as anyone biologically or identifying as a woman.

Some participants in the focus groups have noticed how there appears to be a different and less discriminated treatment of lesbian and bisexual women in the Philippines as opposed to gay men, bisexual men, and transgender people. One lesbian participant, Vinny (25, Visayas), speculates that it is because of the 'porn-like' treatment that got normalised in media that fetishises lesbian and bisexual women. Vinny adds that threesomes also got normalised as fantasies. Such

observations provide this study with the knowledge that Filipino lesbians and bisexual women's presence in media is leaning more on sexual content. Thus, this study identifies the issue as the first women's issue in contemporary Philippine media, as identified by its LGBT participants. Vinny's insights suggest that such women's treatment is entrenched in society. This doctoral study argues a similar idea which gives LGBT women a distorted advantage in societal treatment but a disadvantage in media representation. Before discussing this issue further, background information is offered to demonstrate that poor treatment of women in Philippine media has existed for decades.

The idea of presenting women in media for sexual purposes reflects the findings of some Filipino scholars who studied women's representation in the early period of Philippine media. According to some scholars, a sexualised representation of women and the limited roles being given to them were observed as early as the 1960s. Journalistic outputs most frequently represented women in terms of lipstick issues (Fernandez, 1987). Lipstick issues are stories about home, fashion, and other interests deemed feminine but do not go deep to the point of addressing societal issues concerning women. Hence, women's issues were rarely seen on the front page of newspapers giving the impression that these were unimportant. A study in 1986 shows that women are also treated as sex symbols and promiscuously indulging in sins and temptations in the Philippine radio, television, and print industry during the late 1980s (*ibid.*). Additionally, most films in this era contain rape and prostitution scenes while portraying women as easily tricked, weak, naïve, and vulnerable victims (*ibid.*). David and Dela Cruz (1985) argue that tabloids have solidified this sexual treatment of women in society to the point of desensitising the public towards rape issues. Due to the media landscape at that time, wherein newspapers were expensive and primarily written in English, most people made tabloids their primary source of information for print because it was much cheaper and written in the local language. In these tabloids, especially from the 1970s to 1980s, women's issues centred on rape cases. Reports were chiefly focusing on the female victim's attractive physical attributes such as age (mostly teenagers) and described as a "good looking" (p. 23). David and Dela Cruz argue that the tabloids, giving the public daily intake of rape stories with sexist journalistic writing, have desensitised the public to rape and violence against women. Lastly, tabloid journalists' failure to follow up on the cases trivialises these issues, whether the

accused faced punishments or not, giving the impression that abuse of women is tolerated in society, not severe, and should not be constantly addressed (ibid.).

This treatment of rape issues can still be observed in the current society. The most famous one is Vice Ganda's rape and fat jokes to journalist Jessica Soho in 2013. Soho responded to the issue via a public statement about how rape should not be treated as a joke. Soho also acknowledged the terrors and trauma it gave to rape victims. Vice Ganda likewise issued an apology to Soho and all rape victims. However, it was also observed that the comedian's apology and Vice Ganda's home network's (ABS-CBN) statement again trivialised rape issues and downplayed it into a sensationalised issue due to network wars (Diaz, 2015). Soho's home network is the competitor, GMA. Diaz argues that this spectacle brought up a deeper problem in the country that exists but is often dismissed. Diaz adds that rape issues have become normalised; hence some media players use the narrative poorly and for profit. On the other hand, Nestor Torre gave a thought-provoking statement as to why women will constantly be sexualised in the Philippine media:

“Audiences... know most women would be hardly careless about sex nudity in real life... It may be unrealistic but it fulfils the male moviegoer's fantasy about meeting a woman who is not just extremely undesirable but also very available. In real life, you can't even hold a strange girl's waist without getting slapped. In the movies, the girl doesn't just resent it, but it even says pretty please. What a fantasy!” (1894 cited in David and Dela Cruz, 1985, p. 24).

David and Dela Cruz articulate Torre's statement as the spectators sharing the same fantasy of the male directors who have "distorted notions of womanhood" (ibid). Following up on this discourse, Purple (21, Luzon), a participant in this doctoral study who identifies herself as a pansexual ciswoman, has a theory as to why her father accepted her sexuality very easily despite exhibiting *machismo*⁵ traits. Purple shares that her father might have an assumption that, because she is a woman, there is still a possibility of procreating or being converted to heterosexuality in the future. While it is not clear as to the real reason why Purple's father easily accepted her, because there is a possibility that her father is genuinely supportive of her, Purple's

⁵ Zimmerman (2000) defines *machismo* as "an exaggerated belief that men are physically and intellectually superior to women" (p. 147)

assumption is one narrative corroborating the idea that Filipinas have been restricted in a sex, gender, and social role dictated by patriarchy. Purple's theory highlights women's expected social role as nurturers and child bearers in the Philippines. The Filipinas' imposed social roles is the second women's issue introduced by the participants.

Throughout the country's history, patriarchal rules have been in place to control Filipino women, while Catholic religious beliefs have been misused to control women's sexuality (Rodriguez, 1990; Marin, 1996). For example, patriarchy and religion have made Filipino women subordinate to male figures their entire lives through their fathers and husbands (Rodriguez, 1990). They are consistently reminded of their roles as the nurturer of the family and bearers of their husband's offspring (*ibid.*). Women's sexual practices and explorations are considered taboo because they are frequently reminded that they are "innate danger to men as the seductive Eve" but should be as clean and pure as the Virgin Mother and can only perform sexual acts if married (p. 20). Regarding the religious belief's effect on media representation, the "patriarchal and capitalist control over women's sexuality also means treating women as sex objects in mass media" and commodities in advertisements (p. 22).

The double standards that Filipino women experience is a combination of a spectacle of the male gaze and voyeuristic treatment in mass media. This normalises an overview that women are sex symbols but are constrained to patriarchal and religious beliefs that women should remain pure and submissive to men. Albeit contradicting notions, these statements still place women as subordinate to men. This also reinforces hetero-patriarchal standards that women's sexuality should conform to hetero-normal standards. Any non-conforming practices will be considered deviant and subjected to prejudice. The intersectionality women face in this country, partnered with persisting patriarchal notions continuously imposing heteronormative societal patterns, keeps women in the margins. The situation is complicated for lesbian, bisexual women, and transmen due to these rigid rules, as they must conform to protect themselves against violence, sexism, misogyny, lesbophobia, double standards, and toxic masculinity. They tend to have the higher burden of fitting into the social role and keeping themselves under the radar not to disturb the harmony and risk being perceived as an outcast or a deviant. This self-

policing among lesbian and bisexual women also manifests in their romantic relationships. This leads us to the third women's issue: men tend to be less accepting of female same-sex couples.

When it comes to who is more accepting of a same-sex relationship, focus group participant Bunny (33, Luzon), a gay man who also identifies as non-binary, considers that women are more accepting than men. This assumption reflects some studies reporting that Filipino women and female family members are more accepting of LGBT people and same-sex relationships than Filipino men (Manalastas and colleagues, 2017; Acaba, 2018). Bunny's assumption affects his media reading of the Close Up commercial, saying that they might have cast a female cashier because women are deemed more accepting towards male-to-male relationships. However, Bunny also states that he feels uncomfortable seeing female-to-female couples in public, and it might be harder for him to accept such a dynamic than male same-sex relationships. Bunny's statement corroborates Manalastas et al.'s (2017) study, which finds that Filipino men are less accepting of LGBT people than women. Another participant, Jagger (33, Mindanao), a gay man who also identifies as bisexual, also articulates the same viewpoint after reporting that he feels his behaviours toward his fellow LGBT members were discriminating against them during the time when he was still coming to terms with his sexuality. Another participant who is a 23-year-old bisexual ciswoman from Luzon, Pink, clarifies, based on her personal experience, why this is happening. Pink states that, growing up, she thought prejudice against LGBT members was normal because it was the norm in her environment.

The power struggle between genders within marginalised communities in Philippine society has existed for a while (Tan, 2001; Marin, 1996). According to Marin (1996), some gay men display indifference towards women's issues and are homophobic toward lesbians. In forwarding female issues during political or social debates, putting forward feminist notions is unavoidable. In such a situation, the divide between male gays and lesbians comes in, and, as a result, most gay men will "often resort to their age-old male privilege" (p. 50). This male privilege conditioned in the Philippine patriarchal society may include male dominance over women and the distorted ideas of womanhood. Hence, some gay men resort to this privilege in the power struggle among the genders. Such notions can unfortunately still be observed

in the current society. One example is Vice Ganda's rape jokes and the attempts to trivialise them by downplaying the narrative.

The fourth and final women's issue discussed by the participants is the exclusion of lesbian, bisexual women, and transmen in the Philippine media. Most LGBT participants in this study argue that gay men dominate the Philippine media. For example, Pinky (41, Luzon), who identifies as femme in lesbian relationships, articulates that this happens because lesbians are generally silent and keep things among themselves and within their circles. Pinky argues that some gay men's loud personalities may have contributed to male gay dominance in the media and society. First, in a relationship dynamic, Pinky reasons that some gay men want to be publicly acknowledged, whereas some lesbians prefer the opposite. Second, some lesbian couples do not dress up based on heterosexual expectations. Pinky says some lesbian couples have long hair and wear female dresses. According to Pinky, this is dissimilar with some gay men, wherein it is sometimes apparent who is more feminine in a relationship based on clothing and physical appearance. Another participant, Scotch (33, Luzon), a gay man, agrees with Pinky's points, adding his opinion that the Philippines is still in a paternal society, wherein men are still considered the superior gender. Scotch adds that because of this, society is still giving more emphasis and opportunities to gay men than lesbians, as women are still deemed secondary to men.

This doctoral project offers two reasons why excluding lesbian, bisexual women, and transmen is a persisting problem in the Philippines. First, throughout history, Filipina lesbians have been excluded from history books. Some historians state that the Spaniards had to destroy evidence of lesbian activities in the pre-colonisation era because it did not conform to the patriarchal standards they brought into the country (Marin, 1996). Meanwhile, some argue that existing literature is based on hearsay and has never been proven (Villar, 2000). It can be argued that the result of this historical absence is the public's lack of knowledge of lesbians, ultimately resulting in their exclusion from Philippine society.

However, it can also be argued that Filipina lesbians exclude themselves because of fear of backlash from the patriarchal society. For example, Marin argues that some lesbians exclude themselves and remain hidden because coming out would mean

exposing themselves as "outcasts and deviants" (p. 38). Some lesbians are already confused about their sexuality and do not want the added prejudice from society. Hence they fulfil the assigned societal role not to upset the harmony in the community and remain under the radar. Another reason is that some lesbians believe that if they remain in the closet, they will keep on enjoying heterosexual privileges (ibid.). The struggle to fit in a patriarchal society and fight against lesbophobia made the Filipino lesbians overwhelmed enough to keep to themselves. Thus, their absence extended to social and political representation, such as promoting lesbian rights. Due to this, lesbians' participation was late in all gay rights movements. This has led to struggles in affirming the lesbian identity in society because gay men overshadowed them due to their flamboyancy and got treated as their "female counterparts" (Pineda, 2001, p. 142). According to Diaz (2015), Filipino lesbians are often seen in Philippine society as poor and working in low-paying jobs implying that being a lesbian equates to belonging to a low social class. Hence, this idea has been carried over to their media portrayal. This results in several lesbians not being comfortable enough to come out. Marin (1996) asks, "lesbians had been visible without exerting much effort, why should they expose themselves to the dangers of being regarded as an outcast or deviant?" (p. 38). The backlash that Jake Zyrus' received upon coming out as a lesbian and then as a transman, as explained in the previous chapter, illustrates that a Filipino lesbian may be faced with a higher possibility of being perceived as an outcast or a deviant when they come out in the Philippine society. These arguments resonate with Pinky's opinion of the lesbians' preference to keep to themselves, which contradicts the flamboyant attitudes of gay men.

The second possible reason this group has been excluded from society is because of 'symbolic annihilation' – introduced in Chapter Three. Symbolic annihilation is the dominant culture's attempt to keep the marginalised groups marginalised (Tsai, 2010). This can be applied to transmen as symbolic annihilation aims to erase a non-conforming group from the dominant culture, making them invisible and further undervalued. While this strategy is used to gain ad profits, Tsai also claims that symbolic annihilation is applied in a patriarchal culture to eliminate things threatening masculinity. For example, butch lesbians are excluded from advertisements in the US because they do not appeal to men's lesbian fantasies. Meanwhile, transwomen are limited to entertainment representation (i.e. drag

queens), and transmen are generally excluded. Transgender people blur gender roles, while transmen can assume masculine roles. Both threaten the traditional norms in a patriarchal society; hence the application of symbolic annihilation offers an explanation as to why they are generally excluded in the media. As mentioned in the same chapter, symbolic annihilation was recently evident in China when the government censored and banned Korean and Japanese pop culture to preserve the traditional concept of masculinity. Korean and Japanese pop idols are known to be androgynous in appearance, which can be deemed threatening and deviant to heterosexuality in a traditional country such as China. Hence, the censorship.

In the Philippines, censorship is also evident on ideas deemed 'uncomfortable.' One example is the events that occurred around Bench's billboard 'love all kinds of love' controversy. The reason given by the Philippine advertising governing body Ads Standards Council, for doing such is to implement moral and ethical codes in the country. However, according to Devilles (2013), the dictator of the Philippines' moral and ethical standards appear to be in the hands of very few powerful people and institutions. In such a case, the religious and government bodies, who believe they are the upholder of moral codes in the country, will resort to censorship. Devilles bases this idea on precedents regarding the takedown of some billboards showcasing male bodies in underwear in 2013. Devilles adds that while the censorship occurred because the exhibition of half-naked male models was deemed immoral by a city mayor, the censorship, in this case, is an exhibition of the power of someone who can dictate which one is appropriate or inappropriate based on their opinion.

The exhibition of power by very few people, combined with religious, traditional and patriarchal concepts, will always interfere when dealing with sex and gender issues in the Philippines. The application of symbolic annihilation to maintain the traditional concept of masculinity, together with the exhibition of power by a few people, can be one of the reasons why females in Philippine media, regardless of sexual orientation, remain invisible, ignored, overlooked, and portrayed sexually. In a patriarchal society with *machismo* traits, wherein men continuously claim power over women, fighting misogyny, sexism, and lesbophobia against women is challenging. The distorted image of womanhood has been established long enough that it remains a challenge to break free from it. Patriarchy succeeded in establishing

this type of Filipina fantasy because the leadership dynamics in the Philippine media industry from the 1960s were limited to male executives (Fernandez, 1987). Hence, the power to dictate women's media representation is limited to men's perception founded by traditional views and privileges set by the patriarchal and heteronormative society. The country's media representation of lesbians is "a resounding proof of society's resistance to confront lesbian existence" (Marin, 1996, p. 48). Based on that argument, it makes sense why bisexual women and transmen are also absent in the media. Lesbian representation upsets male spectators because it cannot fulfil the fantasy of gaining access to women's bodies. Lesbians, bisexual women, and transmen do not conform to the male fantasy; hence lesbian and bisexual females are limited to a sex-symbol representation that addresses male fantasy. Transmen experience more resistance from the public because their sexuality and gender expression blur the heteronormative perceptions and confuse society's view of masculinity. Hence, they are generally excluded from the media and society, and in order to survive, they will always have to fit into their societal roles to keep harmony and not be labelled as an abnormality in Philippine society.

III. "As long as we are not hurting anybody..." Gay Men Have to Compensate for Their Sexuality

Filipino gay men also have to play different assigned social roles to avoid upsetting the harmony in Philippine society. In the previous chapter, some statements from the LGBT participants giving hints that society unconsciously conditioned them to act a certain way to be deemed acceptable and to compensate for their sexuality were brought up. This idea is the second societal issue that this doctoral project uncovers. The following statements are from the participants. It is noticeable that, for some, this idea was passed on to them by their parents. The said issue was also discussed in Chapter Three under the concept of *utang na loob* wherein some LGBT children were not disowned by their parents, despite objections on their SOGIE, due to expected financial support in the future.

Jovina (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): Growing up, my mom would tell me this and that... As long as I am not hurting anybody or I am not taking advantage of anyone, that's what she would always tell me.

Jung (24, Mindanao, did not disclose SOGI): That's what my parents used to say: as long as I am not hurting anybody, I should do whatever makes me happy and I should be comfortable and confident about myself.

Octus (22, Visayas, gay man): I told my older sister that even though I'm gay, I can go places. And I can show society that even though I'm gay, I'm not hurting anybody. I'm not abusing anybody. I know that I deserve to be free. I deserve to be out of my shell... For me, as long as you're not doing anything wrong, they will treat you good as a payback. It will depend on you if you would be doing good or bad things.

Smith (24, Visayas, bisexual man): You have to show to your environment that you need to do good things for them to see or appreciate you.

The treatment of gay men as deviants in Philippine society is apparent in the participants' statements. Based on these anecdotes, it can be surmised that some members of the public could have associated being gay with different negative actions. As some participants shared in the previous chapter, the media does not help because it consistently portrays gay men as paedophiles and hungry for male flesh. The narrative "as long as we are not hurting anybody" had become normalised to help the LGBT Filipinos cope with the discrimination that they face. Most Filipino gay men perform their dictated social norms to avoid discrimination (Acaba, 2018). Acaba also shares the same statement of this doctoral project that the Philippine society is ambivalent about its attitudes towards LGBT people. Acaba adds that this societal attitude is one of the reasons why the public treatment of them, up to the institutional level, is not ideal. However, gay men can sometimes break free from the stereotype or public intimidation if they are deemed useful by the heterosexual community. For example, the male gay participants in Acaba's study state that their career achievements and the ability to provide financial support prompted their families to stop commenting about their sexualities and same-sex relationships. In the previous chapter, some participants of this doctoral project have also expressed their desire to excel in life to be accepted. This can be through higher education, better clothing, or affluence. This idea reinforces the statement that gay men must compensate for their sexuality. Participants Octus (22, Visayas, gay man) and Smith (24, Visayas, bisexual man) had to create community programs that benefit people to help change their status quo to cease the discrimination they were experiencing

from their communities. This is similar to what Acaba's participants have reported stating that as long as they are giving financial sustenance to their family members, regardless of whether their sexualities are accepted or not, they will remain silent about their gay activities and same-sex relationships.

The 'system justification theory' is being offered as one of the explanations for why some Filipino gay men feel that they need to compensate for their sexuality. System justification theory is introduced in Chapter Three. It is the desire to "legitimise the status quo—that is, the relative inferiority of their group in comparison to the majority group—in order to minimise the dissonance created by their unfavorable social status" (El Hazzouri et al., 2015, p. 719). Tsai (2010) explains that such practices made some American gay men feel seen and validated when the American brand sectors acknowledged their group by building them as the most profitable consumer within the LGBT community. System justification theory is practised by some minority groups so that they will be seen as the better group in the marginalised communities. Such validation from the American corporate has created a misguided sense of self-worth that "they have made it" (Tsai, 2011, p. 93). It has also made them feel like they are better than the other LGBT consumers because the industry has profiled them as the dream consumer, the gay spenders, and the dominant representative of the DINKs or dual income, no kids (Tsai, 2010). Hence, this type of motive develops competition within the minorities wherein one minority group desires to be better than the other minority groups.

While this theory can also explain why Filipino gay men dominate lesbians in the media and society, it can also explain where the feeling to compensate for their sexuality may have originated. The male gay respondents in this doctoral study know that while they are overwhelmingly visible in the media, they are still treated very poorly. However, this is tolerated by the community because, even though their visibility is based on ridicule and comic relief, it is one way to legitimise their status quo in Philippine society. While gay men know they enjoy better tolerance than lesbians because of their media exposure, they also know they must fit a certain role and behaviour to be accepted and considered non-threatening to the patriarchal society. This can explain the general public's answer in Chapter Six, wherein they tend to believe that the comedic stereotype in media is similar to what they see in LGBT people in their surroundings. Gay men must remain funny to feel accepted

and cope with the discriminating society. Any attempt to deviate from the assigned role might result in more ridicule and discrimination from the public. This is one reason why the LGBT participants in this study have been conditioned to, based on their statements, act a certain way, stay in their lane, and not hurt others so that the people will 'treat them good in return.'

Another example of ambivalence expressed by the heterosexual respondents in Chapter Six is the acceptance of messages in the 'showing support' theme in the five advertisements that portray LGBT people non-stereotypically. They have also expressed acceptance of messages about 'same-sex relationships.' However, they are ambivalent on the 'same-sex attraction' theme, which this study suggests as being more identified with the romantic and sexual actions of same-sex couples toward each other. Acaba (2018) explains that it is deemed acceptable in the Philippines to be gay, but "having sex with another man is a moral transgression and same-sex attraction must be treated" (p. 1). Most LGBT participants in this doctoral project suggest that this overview of them by the public may gradually change if their status in media is improved. They have suggested that if the Philippine media can normalise the humanised representation of LGBT people having romantic relationships with the same sex, the Philippine society might eventually catch up with this idea. However, in the previous chapter, one participant states that there is no need to do this. Transwoman Maddy (did not disclose age, Mindanao) shares that the current LGBT media representation is already enough, and there is no need to ask for more. Considering Maddy's experience growing up with a homophobic grandfather and father and the hate comments she receives from people in person and on social media, it is understandable why she feels it is better to conform to the prevailing standards than call for its improvement.

The previous chapter introduces the idea "don't ask for too much" and the Filipino habit "*okay na 'yan*" or "*pwede na 'yan*" to explain where Maddy's ideas could have originated. Nevertheless, the 'culture of silence' introduced by scholars De Leon and Jintalan (2018) can also explain Maddy's answers. It can also explain why same-sex attraction did not gain positive responses from the general public. The 'culture of silence' is defined as the people's half-hearted acceptance of LGBT people as they regress their acceptance of their sexuality once the right for same-sex marriage or legal union is discussed (ibid.). The scholars explain this idea through their content

analysis of how the audiences of live noontime shows in the Philippines (*'Eat Bulaga'* for GMA Network and *'It's Showtime'* for ABS-CBN) reacted when same-sex relationships, particularly gay men, were featured in the program. The study discovers that the audiences are accepting of same-sex partnerships, their cohabitating arrangement, and showing affection in these live TV shows based on their expressions and giddy reactions to the couples. However, the authors highlight that such a spectacle is still in the form of comedic sketches. While a few serious issues are discussed about the lives of LGBT people featured in the shows, such as one participant's experience of being hospitalised, the objective of these programs is still to entertain people. The scholars have also added that, as a live audience, they are expected to display tolerance. Hence, the authors state that the live audience's reactions to these two noontime shows do not reflect the acceptance of LGBT people in Philippine society.

Maddy's refusal to seek changes in their status quo is based on traumatic events she experienced. The culture of silence prevails because some LGBT people have similar experiences or are afraid of backlash and discrimination. Some LGBT participants in this doctoral study have stated that they do not blame their fellow LGBT peers because they understand that some still prefer to remain in the closet to protect themselves. However, the participants still call for improvement in their media representation to change their status in media and society. One of their crucial suggestions discussed in the previous chapter is accurately representing the LGBT community in the Philippine media. 'Accurate representation' for them means a media production should be composed of all-LGBT workers, and an LGBT actor should play their characters. The participants consider that applying this technique will guarantee that an LGBT portrayal, mannerisms, and characters will be accurate.

IV. The Perceived Pros and Cons of “The Future”

Aside from 'accurate representation,' some LGBT participants in this study suggest a few narration strategies that may help transition their media portrayal from stereotyped to positive. One participant, Blue (19, Luzon, bisexual cisman), proposes centralising media plots on LGBT romantic stories. Pinky advocates for real LGBT actors on sex scenes. While most of the participants recommend the broader utilisation of social media to educate the public about LGBT people, to disseminate information about proper sex education, and to show good examples of

acceptance to help the public's attitude transition from tolerance to acceptance. However, this section challenges the idea of 'accurate representation' or an all-LGBT workforce-produced LGBT media content by critically analysing the potential adverse repercussions it may cause to the community. This section discusses three possible negative repercussions of 'accurate representation.'

In Chapter Three, different advertising approaches deemed helpful in alleviating the negative repercussions of LGBT stereotyping are discussed. First is the human interest (HI) advertisements, wherein the ad is much longer than the traditional thirty-second ones, giving more extended opportunities to tell more stories. This approach is applied in Uber, Bench, Close Up, and Pantene ads. Because of this approach, these ads are able to show different elements that may have contributed to the audience's understanding of the LGBT community. For example, the Uber ad illustrates the range of emotions that the protagonist went through upon seeing his crush. By giving an ample amount of time for the ad's ending, it gives the audience a sense of closure. The audience experience that HI ads give might differ from the traditional thirty-second ads wherein information is congested. It also might only have enough time to show one side of the story if applied in an LGBT narrative. The Smart ad is the shortest among the five commercials, with a duration of precisely sixty seconds. While Smart is able to show the different sides of the characters' points of view, some focus group participants of this doctoral study feel that the ending does not satisfy them. However, some feel that the ending is satisfactory enough, thus, implying that congesting the LGBT narrative can risk the attempt to build a connection between the brand and the audience.

Aside from HI ads, other techniques are also deemed helpful when portraying the LGBT community in media. These are the 'modernist quest ads,' wherein the storyline focuses on the person's personality, not sexuality, and 'out-of-the-closet advertising,' wherein LGBT people and couples are presented noticeably. However, Tsai (2011) and his LGBT participants are also aware that some techniques, such as 'out-of-the-closet advertising' can be problematic as it perpetuates stereotypes in the US, such as "effeminate gay men or sexualised femme lesbians" (p. 90). However, this is still tolerated and practised "for the sake of political visibility" (ibid.). Some focus group participants in this doctoral project express similar reservations regarding the Close Up ad. For example, Bunny thinks this is an 'advertising for

sympathy' tactic wherein the LGBT narrative is only used to appeal to the community even though the story has no connection with what the ad is trying to sell. It can be argued that Filipino gay men desire to affirm their status quo in the Philippines and retain their dominance and perceived higher social status than other LGBT members. If driven by these reasons, Filipino gay men might also tolerate problematic representation 'for the sake of political visibility.'

Hence, the study's LGBT participants call for media content produced by an all-LGBT cast and production crew as they regard this technique can provide them with better representation in the Philippine media. They cite reasons such as the production of authentic storytelling or writing because the stories are based on first-hand experiences from an LGBT member. It will also give them a sense of validity and acceptance because they deem it justifiable for an LGBT actor to play an LGBT character. Some participants feel that some heterosexual actors only use the LGBT narrative to gain fame and then leave it once the intended purpose is achieved. They also feel that the heterosexual actors playing an LGBT role contradict themselves because they showcase themselves as an ally but will later end up in homophobic controversies. One example is heterosexual actress Natalie Hart's portrayal of a lesbian in a TV show of real-life stories from the people, *Maalaala Mo Kaya*, in February 2021, which gained praise from the lesbian community. However, Hart later offended the community when she stated that it was hard for her to pretend to be in love with a fellow woman and that she could not relate to the lesbian role (Guno, 2021). A situation like this is a reasonable basis for understanding the participants' call for 'accurate representation.'

Accurate media representation can be beneficial to the LGBT community in terms of encouraging positive attitudinal change from the public. Based on Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli (2015), it is possible to influence the audience's attitudes and direct them to change how they view their social realities. This can be achieved if the media content that will be given to them does not follow a similar pattern to what has always been given to them in the past (ibid.). For example, LGBT-themed advertisements in India showing characteristics of being empowered and proud of their sexuality helped make people view LGBT people in their social reality the same way as seen in the ads (Chauhan and Shukla, 2016). Another example is a social survey in the US from 1972 to 2009 that reported that audiences continuously

exposed to TV shows with LGBT characters exhibited higher tolerance for LGBT people (Nisbet and Myers, 2012, cited in Yan, 2019.). Ward et al. (2013) also argue that exposing people to LGBT media content can lead to a moderate acceptance of the community (cited in *ibid.*). Finally, Yan's (2019) findings show that the effect of the consumption of contemporary LGBT-inclusive US TV shows on American heterosexual respondents shows positive signs of changing attitudes toward the LGBT community. However, one interesting result that Yan's study further discovers is that the respondents tend to only show these positive changes to their friends --- which is one of the perceived cons that this doctoral project anticipates if an 'accurate representation' in the Philippine media is normalised.

In the previous chapter, participant Blue discusses the success of the Boys' Love (BL) series in the Philippines during the pandemic. While it provided good results, such as exposure to mainstream media, Blue acknowledges that such content may only stay within the echo chamber or be exclusively patronised by those interested in the LGBT narrative. What this means is that even though they are finally portrayed positively in media, the content may not be consumed by the general public if they do not find LGBT narratives interesting at all. As a result, the positive messages it conveys will only influence a limited number of members of the public. Blue's opinion mirrors Yan's finding that the positive effect of LGBT media exposure to heterosexual audiences is only felt by LGBT people within their peer groups. Yan speculates that this might happen because of the "law of small-number bias", which is the people's tendency to "make strong inferences based on very limited amount of data" (2019, p. 852).

Based on Yan's study and Blue's opinion, it should be critically analysed if the idea of 'accurate representation' should be one of the fundamental approaches for "the future" to help encourage positive attitude change in the public. Firstly, this move can be built upon the foundation of confirmation bias, which may later provide negative repercussions for the LGBT community. Confirmation bias is "people's tendency to search for information that supports their beliefs and ignore or distort data contradicting them" (Peters, 2020, p. 1351). Moreover, people tend to "seek information that is consistent with their stereotypes of other groups and avoid disconfirming information" (Williams and Fedorowicz, 2019, p. 3112). Confirmation bias can produce problematic effects because it generates cognitive dissonance, or

contradictory opinions on things, especially if what they see in media is not aligned with their social realities. For example, Williams and Fedorowicz notice that despite the four US state police department's efforts to provide helpful information about the localities and enhance the public's knowledge of law via their social media pages, their followers still exhibit dislike in their online interactions. The study explains that this happens because some of their followers are still not trusting the police. Some followers report factors that affected their online interaction with the police's social media pages, such as race and exposure to violent television content (ibid.). This is an example of confirmation bias wherein cognitive dissonance among people has been formed. Despite the rise of police performance outreach ratings from poor to excellent and the rise of educational and informative content on their social media pages, their followers are still not convinced. Such cognitive dissonance can also be produced in Philippine society by inadvertently developing a social construct of *idealised Filipino gay people*. This will be explained in the following paragraphs. But first, let us include the discussion of the 'mirror vs. mold' effect of advertising on society in the cognitive dissonance discourse.

Peters (2020) reasons that confirmation bias may only be beneficial if the social reality of a person has changed to match their perception. Peters adds that "it helps us bring social reality into alignment with our beliefs", which can reduce people's cognitive dissonance (p. 1371). An interesting result from this doctoral project's survey, especially from the Light Social Media (LSM) users, is introduced in Chapter Six. While the majority of the respondents agree that the LGBT media stereotype 'poor or belonging to low social class' is similar to what they see in the LGBT people in their social realities, all of the LSMs have reported the opposite. One explanation this study offers as to why the LSMs have thrown out such a response is the possibility that the social reality they are currently living in no longer matches the representation they see in the media. In other words, the LGBT people in the LSM's social reality are not poor. The debate of 'mirror vs. mold' in the advertising industry is introduced in Chapter Three. The debate centres on whether the advertisements mirror what is seen in society or mold society by presenting narratives with ulterior motives that later become the prevailing norm. Pollay (1986) argues that advertisements can mold society by influencing audiences and consumers to become materialistic by representing unrealistic but good lifestyles to sell their products. Holbrook (1987) disagrees with Pollay and states that advertisements

mirror the target consumer's values to appeal to them and induce brand salience. The LGBT participants of this doctoral study have given accounts to corroborate that the five advertisements and the current media landscape can both mirror and mold Philippine society's LGBT portrayal.

For the 'mirror' argument:

- The lack of coming out culture in the five ads is similar to the personal experiences and observations of most LGBT participants in this study.
- The "*okay na 'yan*" or "*pwede na 'yan*" culture in the Philippines, the attitude of being complacent to substandard work because the attitude of having something is better than nothing, is observed in the Philippine LGBT media production by the LGBT participants. Some participants have observed that the Philippine media industry lacks the originality or initiative to produce LGBT content. According to Blue's group, especially concerning the BL series, the Philippine media only produced such because it was proven commercial success in some neighbouring countries.

For the 'mold' argument:

- The survey participants accept Pantene's message of LGBT empowerment despite only seeing the ad during the survey. This can potentially mean that the positive LGBT message can mold the minds of the audiences to perceive LGBT people positively. Moreover, most survey respondents have reported not having seen all five ads before the survey. However, this positive response to Pantene's message can indicate that consistent production of positive LGBT media content can unconsciously mold the general public's mind to encourage positive thinking about the LGBT community.
- Most focus group participants have indicated some LGBT media personalities that affected their lives positively. For example, Kevin Balot and her achievements inspire some to persevere to gain life achievements. Jagger also shares that Tom Daley's approach to his relationship helps him relieve his fear and anxiety about showing his relationship to the public. These statements point out that the presence of LGBT icons can mold LGBT people's mind positively and inspires them to make changes to create a better environment for themselves.

However, cognitive dissonance is observed from the LSM's response regarding the 'poor' LGBT stereotype, which does not fit the 'mirror vs. mold' debate. This doctoral project perceives that the Philippine media has the capacity to mirror or mold Philippine society regarding LGBT issues. This is illustrated by the persistent LGBT stereotypes in the media that influenced the public's opinions and shaped the LGBT members' experiences growing up. The prevailing representation has been deeply ingrained in society that it has become impossible to escape. The LSMs have noted not observing the 'poor' stereotype in their social realities. But that is simply because they are not exposed to social media. The LSMs only spend less than two hours a day on social media. As presented in the previous chapters, some Filipino scholars state that gay men have been mostly portrayed as poor and parlour gay in media. Taking into account the LGBT participants' statements that the five advertisements are mostly showing rich, affluent LGBT people – which is, according to them, not accurate to their social realities. Hence, this doctoral study argues that the current LGBT content in the Philippine media mirrors *some* LGBT experiences in real life. However, the lack of portrayal of other types of experiences, such as those in the middle class and non-attractive, may mold society's perception of what an LGBT person should be. Moreover, presenting only the positive side of the community might create cognitive dissonance among Filipinos. Such representation gives an *idealised* version of LGBT people, which can negatively affect the community. For example, Filipino audiences might develop acceptance only of the rich, attractive LGBT people that fit the current media narrative but only exhibit tolerance – or worse, can still exhibit negative attitudes – toward the poor, non-attractive ones. Another danger of this *idealised Filipino gay* in the current times is that it can mold the LGBT people's minds in an unhealthy manner in terms of looking a certain way because they would have to persevere, even if it compromises their health, to fit the molded appearance by the media that is presumed one of the best ways to encourage full acceptance from society.

As stated in Chapter Three, LGBT members would welcome the responsibility of representing the community to the mainstream. Hence, in this case, it is not considered a negative thing to the community. However, the 'burden' of representation in this case is how to change the overwhelming, idealised narrative, especially of gay men, from affluence to a reality-based media representation. Hence, the second possible repercussion of confirmation bias is that it might

produce rebel actions to gratify Filipino LGBT people's need to be validated and accepted in society. Peter (2020) states that confirmation bias seeks "support for... pre-existing, favored or not favored beliefs" (p. 1353-1354). One example is the billboard controversy of Bench's 'love all kinds of love.' Despite having no clearance to install the billboard due to the reservations of the Ads Standards Council relating to some of the male gay pictures that the marketing team presented, they still proceeded to install it and deface the 'holding hands.' Whether these actions are due to the hope of getting approved by the ASC or by purposely directing the public to create public discourse about LGBT discrimination in the country, it can be deemed that the motivation is driven by the need to get support from the public. It can be argued that the public's support affirms their place in this patriarchal society. Considering the history and culture of this country and the society's discriminatory treatment of the LGBT community, it can be assumed that there is a desire by the LGBT people to be genuinely accepted by their society. By subtly playing the victim through the narrative of censorship (the blackened picture of holding hands), the billboard ad successfully gained support from the Filipino people and antagonised institutions seen as oppressing the community. Being defended by the Filipino people from their oppressors may be viewed as acceptance - some things that the Filipino LGBT people deeply yearn for.

Thirdly, the male dominance in Philippine society might still favour gay men if an all-LGBT production crew approach is normalised. The earlier discussions around women's issues indicate that the Philippines' treatment of women based on history, religion, and media has been very poor and continues to transpire. According to this study's focus group participants, such treatment also manifests in lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender people. The negative repercussion that the confirmation bias might bring, through the all-LGBT production crew strategy, might be more evident to them because the Philippine society is still in a state wherein the lesbian community are still finding their place in the LGBT media narrative and society. Moreover, bisexual women and transmen are practically invisible. The media representation is still not balanced, and the scale still favours Filipino gay men.

Peters (2020) states that confirmation bias might distort some information due to "less reliable information processing" (p. 1352). The apparent lesser opportunity for LGBT women in mainstream media in today's society reminds us of the earlier times

when the power to dictate how women should be represented in media was only given to very few male executives. If the lesbian community is not given a place in an all-LGBT production crew strategy, there is a possibility that other members of the community will write their narratives for them. Hence, the risk of inaccurate representation, stereotypes, or symbolic annihilation might still exist. In an ideal society, an all-LGBT production crew approach should also benefit the lesbian, bisexual women, and transgender community. However, the reality is that there are very few opportunities for LGBT women in the Philippine mainstream media. The Philippine social media landscape is an excellent platform to equalise the imbalance as, according to some focus group participants, it does not favour anyone and provides exposure to everyone. Consistent and 'accurate representation' of the overlooked members of the LGBT community in social media can bring further awareness and education to the Filipino people. The BL series offers evidence of how this can be achieved, which is transitioning from online to mainstream media. However, suppose enforcing an all-LGBT production crew in media is not done right. In that case, there might be a chance to completely eradicate or further discriminate against the overlooked members of the LGBT community, who are mostly women, in a power struggle among the genders.

In Chapter Seven, some focus group participants also express their disappointment with the negative actions of some famous LGBT people in the country, such as Buknoy Glamurrr and Kevin Balot, because the public's negative comments also target them. Some participants are anxious about these situations because they view one LGBT member's negative actions tend to reflect on all of them. Hence, this study argues that if an all-LGBT production crew strategy is applied in "the future," media players should ensure that they will produce a new narrative that steers further away from the dominant LGBT media landscape. It can still be challenging to do so because the Philippine media is still a number game. Some members of society still prefer the stereotypical comic-relief comedy; hence some media players still stick to a technique that guarantees profit (Payuyo, 2012). Vice Ganda still applies his same comedic style to his movies and TV shows, and the public still patronises them. Moreover, it should be inspected whether it is ideal for all parties affected if the burden of representation is given to the LGBT community. It opens the question of whether such a move will improve or further discriminate against the community. Based on the discussion in the previous section, the community is actively

advocating for the distinct representation of all LGBTQ+ members for their diversity to be showcased and recognised. Hence, further studies and scrutiny are advised before implementing it. One possible effect of the careless implementation of 'accurate representation' is homonormativity in LGBT media representation, which might slowly lead to the erasure of the diversity of this community and be forced to conform to heteronormativity.

The danger of continuous stereotypical LGBT portrayal is that the Filipino people tend to appropriate them. For example, Vice Ganda's popularity and higher exposure rate in the mainstream media resulted in some people copying his comedic style. The danger in this instance is that Vice Ganda's jokes can be "crude" and "classless" (Diaz, 2015, p. 732). Vice Ganda embodies the *bakla* comedy, which includes being sarcastic in conversations, subjecting his friends' physical characteristics to ridicule, and, like Diaz's words, classless jokes on different people or issues. Unfortunately, due to his popularity and hypervisibility in mass media, this type of attitude has become normalised and is now being applied by most Filipino audiences in their lives. Some Filipino college students observed this attitude in their peers and felt negative about it (Bautista and Los Banos, 2012). More specifically, they felt discriminated against when subjected to these jokes and reject to be treated with the same expressions and jokes as Vice Ganda (ibid.). No one tried to call Vice Ganda out on his jokes because of his overwhelming popularity until that incident regarding his rape jokes (Diaz, 2015). This doctoral project argues that if and when the Filipino LGBT community are given an opportunity to shape the 'accurate representation' of their members in the mainstream media, it could be valuable to break this stereotype and redirect the narrative into something that can be beneficial to all members of the LGBT community.

V. "There are more important things than media representation."

While one participant, Vinny, argues that it is not only the media's responsibility to help change the perception or attitudes of the Philippine society towards LGBT people, she also notes that her exposure to homophobic content on the radio affected her perceptions growing up. The majority of this doctoral project's heterosexual respondents (60.13%) report that the media influenced their views towards Filipino LGBT people. Hence, one should not dismiss the media's power to influence people to think about a particular issue in a certain way. In alignment with Vinny's

opinions, the data in this study indicate differences in LGBT issues highlighted by different groups from different regions, which indicates media representation's varying degree of importance in their lives. The groups in the Luzon region are more vocal about their knowledge of media representation, followed by the participants in the Mindanao region. Both regions have exhibited updated and timely knowledge about the field, which they have discussed in-depth. One example is the discussion of 'transwomen are women,' transcending it to 'transmen are men,' and about how accurate the portrayal became when the crew of one LGBT-themed show sought advice from UP Babaylan – an LGBT organisation. It can be surmised that the groups in Luzon and Mindanao regions express a high rate of importance towards reforming the LGBT media portrayal in the country.

All groups from all regions exhibit the same gravitas towards media stereotyping. However, throughout the interview, the participants in the Visayas region are noticeably more focused on creating opportunities for themselves to break free from discrimination, homophobia, and ridicule and to uplift their status in their society. The geographical setting of the Visayan participants' area, combined with long hours of travel via painstaking means of transportation, makes the community slightly isolated from the nearby rural and urban cities in the region. At one point, when asked if they would be using the services of Uber because of the advertisement, most participants reported that they did not know what Uber was. Because of the narrative in the advertisement, they supposed that Uber was a social media platform like Twitter. Due to their geographical condition, there had never been a taxi operation in their locality hence their unawareness of the company. Only a few participants knew what Uber was because they had experienced using it when they visited an urban city. Most participants in this region also have put little importance on the influence and effect of the traditional media on their lives. According to them, the root of their discrimination is mostly family-based and from the people in their community via gossip. They also live in a relatively small area where everyone knows each other; hence, gossip about them can spread very quickly and easily. As explained by participants Smith and Octus in the previous chapter, they have taken it as an advantage to reform their social reputation from a mere *bakla* to someone who helps the community. They have made the most of the power of word-of-mouth in their locality, with the help of social media for added exposure to encourage positive attitudinal changes toward them.

What these narratives tell us is that the LGBT situation in urban and rural Philippines is very much different. The groups in the Luzon region enjoy better tolerance from the public compared to the other regions. They all live in the capital region NCR, the centre of the country's social, political, and economic trade. Hence, the LGBT notions in this region are more progressive and liberated than in the Visayas and Mindanao regions. Most of their needs are also met because the NCR has a socio-economic advantage compared to the other regions. According to the official report from the Commission on Audit's annual evaluation of the local government's assets, seven out of the top 10 wealthiest cities in the country for 2021 are in NCR (Manila Standard, 2022). The home city of the Mindanaoan respondents is also considered an urban city in their region. The city is in a relatively high ranking in the highly urbanised cities in 2022, showing they have better infrastructure and facilities than the Visayan respondents. The locality of Visayan participants in this study does not even have a hospital. They must travel to the nearby city for almost an hour for medical assistance. A study from Bionat et al. (2018) echoes this observation when describing that due to poverty and the economic problem in the Visayas region, specifically in Iloilo City, some of its LGBT participants moved to Manila to live a better life. According to the said study, aside from finding better jobs, they also reported feeling more liberated and educated about their sexualities when they moved to Manila. Some participants reported that this is due to Manila's more active LGBT lifestyle, with many LGBT-themed events they could not enjoy in their home city in Visayas (ibid.).

The participants in the Mindanao region also emphasise the need for access to LGBT education, not just in schools and universities but also at the community level. This is to help educate the public, especially the parents, on handling LGBT issues of their children, relatives, neighbours, and peers. A 2017 study by Human Rights Watch reports that bullying and discrimination in schools based on sexual orientation and gender expression, which also extends to physical or sexual attacks, is highly observed in secondary schools in Luzon and Visayas. The study suggests that the lack of access to LGBT information is one of the reasons why discrimination against LGBT people in educational institutions continues to proliferate. The study calls the attention of the Department of Education (DepEd) to address the problem by implementing rules and including sexuality education in secondary schools to educate the youths (ibid.). To address this overwhelming LGBT problem in the

country, in 2018, DepEd ordered the inclusion of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in secondary schools (Gregorio, 2023). In 2023, DepEd submitted a proposal to the Senate to enact CSE in all basic education levels. The proposed bill will also cover broader topics such as human sexuality, HIV-AIDs, and STDs/STIs (ibid.).

While a few actions are being taken to protect the LGBT citizens in the Philippines, some LGBT people in Mindanao still feel unprotected. It is important to note that the Mindanao participants in this doctoral project are all non-Muslims. Hence, they are not able to report any experiences through the lens of a Filipino LGBT Muslim living in Mindanao. The Muslim population in the said region is 94% (Baizas, 2018). According to Baizas, the region still majorly lack "LGBT initiatives and facilities" and "implementing government policies that are responsive to the needs of the LGBT" (para. 17-19). Moreover, many LGBT Muslims are still hiding and struggling with opening up about their sexuality because it is still considered *haram* or forbidden (ibid.). Additionally, cases are reported wherein LGBT people in the Islamic area of the region are given hostile treatment, victims of hate crimes, and murdered because of their sexualities (UNDP, USAID, 2014). Moreover, additional reports from Commission on Human Rights show that some LGBT children in similar areas have experienced harassment and physical violence from law enforcers, hostility based on Islamic beliefs, and verbal harassment from peers (Commission on Human Rights, 2019).

These issues are only a few of the many disparities between the participants to show that the socio-economic situations of all LGBT people in the Philippines significantly differ from each other. Hence, while improvement in media representation is the topic of the discussion, such problems still manifest in the conversations, indicating what the participants feel they need more to alleviate their challenging situation as LGBT persons. Participant Vinny cites that the media is not the only reason LGBT people struggle in all aspects of society in the Philippines. However, some participants attribute the current change in public attitudes to the positive treatment seen in some media platforms, such as advertisements.

Aside from the regional and socio-economical differences, the generational difference is also a huge factor influencing their opinions on the current LGBT

environment. Based on the responses of the focus group participants, Gen Zs seem to be more accepting of LGBT people compared to the generations before them. The participants observe that Gen Zs seem more educated and enlightened about LGBT issues, such as sexuality concepts, as they seem to hold more liberal knowledge than their elders. According to Scotch, one participant of this study, he feels more comfortable disclosing his sexuality to Gen Z people because he has never received any negative attitudes from them. Scotch even theorises that the millennials are still in the process of transitioning their LGBT views to the progressive side and are already at 70%. However, Scotch considers that the generations before the millennials are already set in their ways. Another participant, Blue, agrees with Scotch's statement, citing the traditional mindset of why conservative ideals still dominate Philippine politics.

One empirical evidence that this doctoral study offers is that the traditional media has successfully inculcated some stereotypical and negative LGBT traits in the public's mindset resulting in their negative attitudes to LGBT people, which the LGBT participants confirmed through discriminating experiences they got from people growing up. However, due to social media and the few positive changes in mainstream media, LGBT participants have reported a few improvements in their lives. Most participants report that social media has been a massive help in catalysing this change. For example, statements from Klint, Octus, Scotch (33, Luzon, gay man), Smith (24, Visayas, bisexual man), and Janna (31, Mindanao, transwoman), as explained in the previous chapter, are confirmations that the platform provided them with a safe space to be seen by the people, to be given a platform to speak up regarding LGBT issues and personal problems due to their sexuality, to educate people and spread awareness about the community, and to build positive online relationships that aim to support each other. This doctoral study agrees with the potential of social media in helping transition Philippine society from tolerating to accepting the LGBT community, and it is essential to tap into that as soon as possible.

Several times, the Philippines has been ranked as the world's social media capital (Llamas, 2020). A more recent study regarding country-specific internet usage in 2022 shows that Filipino people are heavy internet users, as 82.4% of the population spends an average of 10 hours and 27 minutes per day online (Kemp, 2022). More

importantly, the top two leading social media users by age are 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 years old. The data corroborates the heavy social media users' profile of this doctoral study which is 18 to 34 years old. Meanwhile, Manalastas et al. (2017) report that younger Filipinos accept their lesbian and gay neighbours more than older people. Based on all these studies and this doctoral study's LGBT participants, Filipino youths are more accepting of LGBT people and are heavy social media users. Hence, this study argues that the Philippines should tap into those sectors. Kemp's (2022) study also reports that Filipinos' main reason for internet usage is to find information (83.7%) and that the advertisements' target users are between 18 to 24 years old. Hence, by continuously producing positive LGBT content and advertisements in social media for the next few years targeting the youths, it is possible to create positive cultivation effects on them. Such action can encourage attitudinal change, starting with the younger generation, and may spread nationwide in the next few years. A cycle of cultivation strategy may develop upon applying the same technique to the upcoming generations. If the results are positive, the cycle can help catalyse the country's transition from tolerating LGBT people to their full acceptance in Philippine society.

VI. Conclusion

The answers that the survey respondents and LGBT participants have given not only address the primary question of this study but also provide an overview of other LGBT issues in the Philippines that goes beyond the scope of media stereotyping. First, the double standards on women and the exclusion of bisexual women and transmen uncover the hidden truth that women still have to play an imposed traditional societal role to be deemed accepted. The 'distorted notions of womanhood' and the religious teachings on women have confined women to double standards, and it is still evidently a struggle for them to get out of it. Attempts to fight the norm will only bring negative repercussions on them. Hence, lesbians prefer to remain under the radar to protect themselves from lesbophobia from the public. At the same time, transmen risk being seen as an outcast or a deviant if they come out. Secondly, gay men also still have to play a certain role to be deemed non-threatening by society. Unfortunately, they would have to remain aligned with the comical stereotype and be deemed useful by the heterosexual community in order for them to continue enjoying the higher level of tolerance that the public gives to

them as opposed to the tolerance given to other LGBT members. It is also discovered that the LGBT community is aware of this imbalance.

The stance of this research is that the presented problems are deep-rooted in the country. Hence, Filipino media players, in both traditional and social media, are being called to start producing more educational LGBT content to 'de-normalise' the public. De-normalisation reminds people that something inappropriate has become normalised and desensitised in society (Ging and Da Silva, 2022). The study argues that de-normalisation can help people be less desensitised and remind them what is appropriate and inappropriate by conducting workshops and other pedagogical approaches to educate them about gender and sexual issues (ibid.). Furthermore, it urges the media sector to consider this approach when conceptualising media content. It has been repeatedly emphasised how media can educate the public more about LGBT issues than the Philippine educational system. While the study trusts the country's education system, it also acknowledges that modification or altering it takes time because it has to undergo rigorous inquiry from the government before the changes reach young people and students. Producing de-normalised LGBT media content, mainly focusing on lesbians, bisexual females, and transmen, will educate not just students but all Filipinos because media has a more extensive reach with the potential to reach everyone, even those living abroad, via social media.

The male-gay dominance is also well-observed in the mainstream media. The LGBT participants in this study call for exposure for all members of the community and enforce an 'accurate representation,' which is the all-LGBT-workforce-produced media content, to improve their representation in media. However, as the third key point discussed in this chapter, this study calls for a critical analysis of the possible repercussions of implementing such a strategy. First, there is a high risk of reinforcing the already proliferating distorted version of Filipino LGBT people in media. This study calls it the *idealised Filipino gay people*. This is due to the media's representation of only the affluent and perfect side of the community, driven by the desire to be seen as members of affluent groups. Doing so neglects the reality of LGBT people belonging to other social classes and excludes or trivialises their real-life struggles. The fourth idea discussed in this section is that the participants' opinions and their socio-economical differences with each other show that not all LGBT people are precisely similar to what was seen in Bench, Smart, Close Up,

Pantene, and Uber advertisements. The struggles the participants have shared in this study are only the tip of the iceberg, as some LGBT members in other areas of the country suffer far worse conditions, such as sexual assault and murder. Hence, this research calls for careful implementation of all-LGBT-workforce-produced media content to avoid developing cognitive dissonance among the public and the LGBT people and to not further exclude the other members of the community currently overlooked by the media and society.

The generational differences also gave an overview of the next generations' potential to catalyse societal changes regarding positive LGBT treatment in the Philippines. To achieve this, social media should be utilised. However, the content that will be circulated should break free from the traditional message system, and the production should be continuous and consistent. It may still be a challenge because investors still give higher importance to profit than creating an impact on the public. Contemporary society is already showing signs of breaking free from the limited thinking and representation obtained by consistent LGBT stereotyping in media in "the past." For example, Sassa Gurl's appointment as the 2022 calendar model of White Castle whisky. In the question of whether the Philippines is ready for such change, the heterosexual respondents in this study have reported that "the future" positive LGBT media content will be favourably welcomed. Hence, the vital thing to do is to continuously - but carefully - produce LGBT media content on social media dissimilar to the outdated LGBT media content, but also show the potential of richer LGBT narratives that remain untapped due to lesser opportunities given by the traditional media.

9 Chapter

Conclusion: From Being Neutral to Being Critical

I. Introduction

Numerous studies indicate that Ireland is one of the most gay-friendly countries in the world (Heavey, 2014; Kirk, 2019; Butler, 2022; Spartacus, 2023). The country has existing legal frameworks, such as rights to marriage and the implementation of the discrimination act, giving LGBT people rights and protection to live normal lives. The organisation LGBT Ireland (2023) has also launched a five-year strategic plan, from 2023 to 2027, organising programs and advocacies with the goal of making the country the best place in Europe to live in as an LGBTQI+ person. In the Philippines, while it is known to be one of Asia's most gay-friendly countries (Tubeza, 2013; Eighteenth Congress, 2019), the situation differs from Ireland. While the 2015 national referendum legalising same-sex marriage in Ireland implies a broader acceptance from the citizen that goes beyond the scope of being supportive on paper, tolerant Filipinos seem only accepting on paper.

This doctoral study very early on introduces the idea that "the Filipino LGBT people had been stereotyped in the Philippine media over the years" as an understatement. The data gathered in this research, specifically on their media depiction in the past decades, supports the phrase and further suggests that it has affected the Filipino people in different ways. Yes, that phrase is an understatement because misguided LGBT media depiction is only a surface level of how and why this kind of treatment manifested in the first place. It also hints at much bigger LGBT problems in the Philippines, such as systemic homophobia in the media and society. To argue that it is critical to discuss such problems, especially which, based on the findings from this

study, the Philippine media has become one of the Filipino people's crucial resources regarding opinions on the said community, is warranted. Moreover, the LGBT participants interviewed have also provided information that the media has become one of their most sought resources to educate themselves regarding their sexualities. Unfortunately, as explained in the previous chapter, the educational system in the Philippines is not equipped to educate students about LGBT issues. Dedicated pedagogy and academic modules corresponding to it are lacking, while sexuality education is still in its infancy.

Based on this information and upon critically analysing the data gathered, this doctoral study argues the plausibility of the Philippine media's power to influence Filipino audiences' perspectives regarding sexuality and gender issues in the country. It also argues that the Philippine media is a stringent power that can cause a social phenomenon regarding LGBT issues, or of any causes, nationwide. Consequently, it also has the capacity to cause negative repercussions for the LGBT community. In this concluding chapter, this argument is supported through the summaries of the findings and analysis gathered from the respondents. Moreover, it provides a brief recap of the theoretical framework and discussions on their importance to the overall composition of the research. Then these are followed by the answer to the research questions, contribution to knowledge, recommendations, limitations, and final words. The final words synthesise the research's argument acknowledging the media's influential capabilities on people and calling for citizens to tap into their critical stances in processing and producing LGBT media content.

II. The Relationship of the Research Questions and the Theoretical Framework

"What are the Filipino people's reactions to the recent LGBT-themed advertisements portraying Filipino LGBT people positively and non-stereotypically?" is the research's central question. It emerges from the social phenomenon that occurred in 2018 caused by the Bench advertisement "How long can you keep a secret?" Such advertisement portrays LGBT members non-stereotypically by centralising lived-experience issues, such as family acceptance and concealment of sexuality, which launches public interest, support and discourse. Moreover, this type of media representation is considered an imminent development in LGBT media representation (Marchadesch, 2018), which is non-

conforming to the usual script allotted to the members of the community that has proliferated over the years.

The phenomenon launches further interest in investigating the potential effects or implications of this uncommon type of LGBT media portrayal on two groups of Filipinos: the heterosexual (the general public) and non-heterosexual (the LGBT community). Moreover, the effects of the past media environment on the audiences, which is the stereotypical LGBT representation, and their possible responses to the future content in the following decades, assumed to be positive and non-stereotypical, are also sought. The following are the study's sub-questions and information per group:

1. For the general public: to identify if they are influenced by the negative and stereotyped portrayal in the past and their reactions to the positive LGBT-themed advertisements. They have been reached through surveys, gathering 158 respondents.
2. For the LGBT community: to identify their impressions and effects of the negative and stereotyped portrayal in the past and their opinions on the positive LGBT representation in the Philippine advertisement. They have been sought through focus group discussions, gathering 25 participants from the three main regions of the country: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

While it is acknowledged that the term “general public” is not a full representation of the Filipino people but an indicative representation of such based on demographic requirements set out by this study, the term is nevertheless utilised as it is inspired by one of the stances in Cultivation Theory. The theory states that the dominant group in a country can specify its society's position on a certain societal issue. As such, this doctoral study puts forward that the dominant group that has the power to indicate the Philippines' societal opinion regarding the LGBT problem in focus, which is media stereotyping, is the general public: heterosexual audiences, irrespective of social status, religion, LGBT opinions, and other factors.

Most of the concepts from this theory have been utilised to measure the extent of the past LGBT media treatment's influence on the minds of the general public. Hence, the discussions in the literature review chapters are composed of the long-term effects of media, particularly television and advertisement, through studies

produced by the founder and scholars of Cultivation Theory. The discussion is necessary to understand the possibility of exposure to negative LGBT depictions in the past decades in Philippine media, such as hysterics, parlour gay, and sexual deviants, affecting the Filipino people's attitudes toward the LGBT community. The scholars of this theory state that homophobic attitudes can be cultivated in audiences by feeding them consistent homophobic media content. Moreover, one of the theory's central concepts is that the more hours an audience spends on television, the more they tend to believe that television reality is similar to their social realities. The tendency to keep the formed opinion caused by media representation in the audience's mind for a long time is high because of 'mainstreaming.' In mainstreaming, the messages are collected in the centre of gravity, forming a dominant message about a particular issue. Once absorbed, it no longer matters what status or unique opinion an audience has, as mainstreaming would result in the formation of similar opinions among audiences.

At this moment, the dominant group formed during mainstreaming can now pinpoint the central message in the country's television system about a particular issue. Applying it to this study's context, the dominant group that has the power to dictate the Philippines' stance on LGBT issues, as seen on television, lies in the heterosexual community. The research data and evidence point the study to the Philippine society's ambivalence towards the LGBT media stereotyping issue. This finding, one essential contribution to knowledge, is further elaborated in the next section.

This work's second theory, Relevance Theory, is applied in approaching and assessing the LGBT people's opinions on LGBT media treatment. The basic concept of the theory is that a group of audiences with similar interests or socio-economic backgrounds read the media content based on experiences and transcend the discussion into a larger context or societal issue. This happens because the group members can relate to the situation and messages conveyed in the media content they discuss. Hence, their personal experiences and knowledge will affect how they form their opinions about the content. Consequently, relevancy will not be activated if someone in the group has no similarities with the other group members. Based on these notions, the LGBT participants in this research are treated as active receivers of LGBT media content. The participants have demonstrated that they are, in fact,

active receivers of such content and have the ability to transcend the discussions into societal problems. Moreover, they have exhibited abilities to read and analyse the contents critically.

Applying a participatory type of research data collection among the LGBT participants through focus group discussion is essential in addressing a gap in gender and media research in the Philippine academia earlier noticed by the researcher. Aside from a lack of timely study, a study seeking the LGBT people's opinions about how they are being represented in media is not found. The most available resources utilised, as discussed throughout the literature, methodology, and analysis chapters, are content analysis and analytical or scholarly opinions of researchers regarding LGBT media issues. Moreover, seeking LGBT people from all regions in the country is likewise lacking. To contribute to closing this gap in the research, the findings in this PhD study are offered as one insight that can help researchers further understand the topic.

More importantly, this work considers itself a distinctive piece of research after applying David Morley's ground-breaking change in how media studies were redirected from a simple encoding/decoding analysis to considering sociological elements that factored in how an audience process media texts. One theoretical assumption of this study, drawn from its data and findings, is that media readings are not as direct and monolithic as what a systematic approach like a content analysis might produce. Given that the central message system circulating for a long time in Philippine media was negative and stereotypical LGBT representation, it is clear that only one side of the story was consistently shown to the audiences. The argument that exposure to LGBT media content has different effects on different audiences in the Philippine context, derived from the data, produces an understanding that a Filipino audience's media reading is a behavioural event unique to a person's experiences. Thus, as much as possible, an analogous research study should be approached as a sociological inquiry.

The comprehensive discussion of Cultivation Theory and Relevance Theory is needed to advance a more critical, theory-based approach that is less biased. The researcher acknowledges that it is deemed impossible to implement full impartiality. Moreover, the researcher also considers herself a member of the

general public as she was exposed to "the past"⁶ LGBT media representation and was pulled at the centre of gravity during that time. Hence, the study is carefully designed and analysed based on the theoretical frameworks. It is not guided by any ontological and epistemological stances as the researcher considers that including such can welcome judgement and opinions that may lead to a biased, subjective, and partial outlook on the research. Hence, informed by the theories and guided by the principles from the mixed-method approach and thematic analysis, the research answers produced and presented are all based on data and themes emanating from the data.

III. Contribution to Knowledge

"The Past"

The extent of the influence of "the past" LGBT portrayal on the Filipino people is determined. The empirical evidence gathered supports the assumption that homophobic media portrayal of LGBT people in the past decades has influenced both the general public and LGBT people. The analytic principles of Cultivation Theory are utilised to assess the general public's opinions. Their TV and Social Media hours (the time they spend watching television/using social media per day) are used as the independent variables upon measuring their responses to the survey questions. As such, the following are discovered:

- A notable finding wherein the general public acknowledges that the LGBT stereotypes they see in media are also observed in the LGBT people in their social realities. The Cultivation Theory calls this the 'television answer.' More specifically, the general public's television answer is defined as being convinced that LGBT people are also funny or comedic, hysterical, abused and abandoned by their families, relatives, and partners in reality.
- The most prominent trend discovered in this study is the general public's overwhelming 'neutral' responses to questions about LGBT stereotyping in

⁶ "The past" is defined by this PhD research as the negative and stereotypical LGBT treatment in media from the 1980s to the 2010s and before the release of the five ads (2016 to 2019). For the *general public*, "the past" is exposure to LGBT-themed TV shows, movies, or any media content *aired on television* during the mentioned years. For the *LGBT participants*, it pertains to exposure to *any* LGBT media content shown or published during the said timeline.

media. The Cultivation Theory calls it the 'mainstream' answer. The relationship of the survey respondent's 'neutral' answers to questions about their opinion on LGBT media stereotyping issues in the country indicates ambivalence on the specific issue in the country. This reemphasises the theory's perspective that the dominant group will pinpoint the country's stance on a societal issue based on the country's central message system on television. In this case, the general public's mainstream response reiterates the Philippine society's existing, deep-rooted, dominant attitudes towards the LGBT people: tolerated but not accepted. In several chapters, this idea has been discussed at length regarding how this attitude manifested in society.

Beyond the ambivalence and tolerance from the heterosexual community, the experiences provided by the LGBT participants have enlightened us that negative, stereotypical, and homophobic media portrayal in the Philippine media *does* have adverse effects on the LGBT community. The participants characterised it through various instances, such as how media platforms, such as radio and television, normalised harmful stereotypical representations of their community, like paedophiles and sexual deviants. The participants have also critically analysed this, deducing that the people have formed their opinions regarding the LGBT community based on what they have absorbed from the media. Hence, representations such as hostile treatment toward an LGBT member are reported to have materialised in the participants' environments. These have resulted in aggression from their surroundings, simultaneously developing anxiety and depression, internalised homophobia and struggling to come out or accept their sexualities. The last point is crucial, as some participants have reported that the media was one of the factors that prevented them from freely practising their sexuality due to negative portrayals, such as sexual perverts. As such, some have regularly anticipated violent reactions from the public because this is what was being conveyed in the media. Fortunately for a very few participants, they grew up in a favourable family and environment and reported that the media did not affect them negatively.

“The Present”

The discussions around “the present”⁷ indicate that despite positive changes in the LGBT representation in contemporary media, the attitude of 'tolerance, not acceptance' from some members of the general public is still evident. Moreover, the data gathered also indicates that ambivalence from the general public persists.

This research utilises the five advertisements from Uber, Smart, Bench, Pantene, and Close Up to measure people's responses to this renewed LGBT media portrayal. These advertisements have suggested two themes: 'showing support in the abstract' and 'beyond the abstract.' The general public strongly agrees with messages from the first theme, such as family acceptance, coming out of the closet, and LGBT empowerment. However, the second theme is met with mixed responses and ambivalence when messages of same-sex relationships and attraction are discussed. The answers from both themes summarise society's conflicting attitude of supporting the community into living their truth but holding back on the reality of their sexuality, which is having a romantic connection with the same sex. Upon reflecting on these mixed responses, this study suggests that it should not be entirely viewed negatively but perhaps as an indication that the transition of attitudes from negative to positive is already in progress.

"The present" media environment is generally received positively by LGBT participants. Some feel that the characters' mannerisms and some physical characteristics in the five ads are getting closer to reality and that storylines have become relatable. While some members of the general public have shown reservations about seeing same-sex relationships and attraction in media, the case is different for LGBT participants. Such representation has given them the confidence to be out and proud of their relationships as opposed to the previous attitudes wherein same-sex partnerships were hidden from the public. Additionally, some participants felt positive shifts in how they are treated in their social realities that come with the changes in their media representation. They have reported experiences such as a less discriminating working environment and more job opportunities. Some attribute it to the emerging presence of non-stereotyped LGBT personalities in showbusiness, such as Kevin Balot. However, based on their reading

⁷ This study defines "the present" as the positive LGBT portrayal from when the five LGBT-themed advertisements were released (2016 onwards).

of the five ads, some have expressed awareness that some stories are unrealistic and conceptualised as a marketing strategy. Some also addressed their worries that the advertisements only show the community's affluent or idealised side, which might be disadvantageous to the community. The latter statement enables this study to conceptualise the term *idealised Filipino gay people*, which is discussed in the next section.

One reason supporting the necessity of reaching out to LGBT groups is to ask them directly how they would want to be represented in media. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the participants are asked what approach advertisers and media players should use in future LGBT media content to ensure holistic representation and provide an understanding of the community. Here are their suggestions:

1. Representation for all L-G-B-T-Q people.
2. Accurate representation: LGBT media content produced by a production crew and cast who are part of the LGBT community
3. Realistic representation: a showcase of variations of physical appearance, status, and other attributes, to ensure visibility and representation for all LGBT members in different parts of society.
4. The representation of the non-LGBT acceptance and same-sex family dynamics: to help educate the general public on how to foster acceptance of their LGBT children and peers.

Another key finding, as suggested by the LGBT participants, is a list of factors that can affect their decision on purchasing products advertised by an LGBT-themed advertisement. It is in the best interest of the Philippine marketing field to be informed of the study's finding that Filipino LGBT consumers can sense if the brands are not sincere in creating relationships with them via LGBT-themed advertisements. One gay man participant, Bunny, who also identifies as bisexual, even called it 'advertising for sympathy.' Even though the participants receive the five ads positively and are deemed constructive by the advertising players, these should still be put under microscopic inquiry. By placing the participants as active receivers of LGBT media content and implementing Relevance Theory's research approach, it is discovered that this group can give a richer interpretation of the ads. The responses call for advertisers to be genuine, intelligent, and critical in producing

such content because the LGBT consumer can feel if the brands are not authentic or exhibiting homophobic tendencies toward the community. They also can and will halt support for companies showing such actions. It is strongly recommended to review the factors and elements in the five advertisements that contribute to the LGBT consumer's preference or disinterest in supporting some of the products. The following are the factors that reportedly affect their purchasing decisions:

1. If the advertisements impact them (if they could relate or if it appealed to their emotions through genuine storylines).
2. Brand loyalty (the predominant answer).
3. Personal reasons (economic or health aspect).
4. The failure to connect with the ad's story or messages (misunderstood elements or exaggerated scripts).

"The Future"

"The future" is defined as the positive LGBT media portrayal from the year 2030 onwards. The idea of discussing "the future" originates from Cultivation Theory's Cultural Indicators. This suggests that responses from the audiences will offer indicators about the people's possible opinions of future media content. Applying this to the general public's survey responses suggests that future positive LGBT media content and such normalisation will be welcomed.

However, inquiries regarding LGBT support through societal actions are met with further ambivalence. For example, buying the products advertised by an LGBT model, discussing the said ads with their peers, and posting the ads on their social media pages. Nevertheless, this inquiry is made to determine the Cultural Indicators that can pinpoint the possible direction of Filipino people's attitudes when positive LGBT media representation is normalised. This study suggests three phenomena to observe in the future Philippine society that may indicate that the step to full acceptance has commenced:

1. If exposure to positive LGBT media content can cause favourable responses from audiences,
2. If the exposure would translate to support through societal actions from the audiences, and

3. If continuous positive LGBT representation in mainstream media has been established.

Other Cultural Indicator emanating from the general public's responses is the possibility of the heterosexual community or general audiences supporting products with advertisements featuring LGBT models. This is affirmed when a considerable number of survey respondents have reported supporting the products in the five advertisements. The findings further suggest that it is possible to acquire the right balance of showing authentic support to the LGBT community while gaining sales from them simultaneously. Thus, this study strongly suggests that company brands and advertisers use this information as reassurance that producing more positive, non-stereotypical LGBT-themed advertisements will not put their business and investments at risk. Moreover, the data suggest the possibility of acquiring brand loyalty from LGBT consumers if the four suggestions given by the LGBT participants regarding how they would want to be represented are applied in the advertisements. Production of such media content will contribute to the normalisation of their positive treatment in media. Thus, this approach is regarded as advantageous for both the advertising field and the LGBT community.

The benefits of comprehensive but profound utilisation of social media to help improve "the future" has been highlighted by the LGBT participants. They consider the platform an effective tool for disseminating factual information and sources of knowledge regarding LGBT people that are deemed helpful in educating the public about them. More freedom in expressing themselves, gaining education or parental wisdom, and being influencers and at the forefront of spreading awareness and advocacies are some of the positive results they have experienced in using the platform. Moreover, stories of how participants Smith and Octus are able to change their status quo in their community with the help of social media offer a glimpse of "the future" if the platform is to be maximised for the benefit of the LGBT community.

Hence, this doctoral study strongly recommends using social media platforms to normalise positive LGBT media representation. Such platforms provide more exposure, time, and opportunities with less capital in producing such content than traditional mainstream media. Moreover, they offer the potential to reach broad

swaths of the Filipino population, as demonstrated by the data in both this research and studies discussed in the previous chapter regarding the Filipino people's heavy social media consumption. Furthermore, the possibility of cultivating positive LGBT information for young Filipinos with the prospect of generating a larger societal impact in the future is very feasible. One of the unexpected results gathered from the empirical data is that the LGBT participants who are in Generation Z have utilised social media to gain information and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues and politics. For example, Klint (18, Mindanao, gay man) learns various concepts of being a transwoman via a local social media content creator, which he has not learned in school or any other media platform. As discussed, younger Filipinos are more accepting of LGBT people, they are the target of online advertising on different social media platforms, and such advertisements reach users as young as 13. Hence, it is logical to anticipate the potential for social media advertisements to promote positive LGBT media representation to young users aligns with the Cultivation Theory's perspective, which views this as a significant advantage due to its belief that opinion formation occurs at an early stage of life.

In this work, such cultivation effect is coined "cycle of cultivation strategy." It is a cycle wherein "the future" LGBT content will target the youths with the aim of causing attitudinal change towards the community. If effective, this implies an evolutionary process whereby future "cycles" may lead to the normalisation of positive LGBT media content production leading to the country's transition from tolerance to acceptance in the future. This idea is further discussed in Chapter Eight. However, the risk of accessibility to express prejudice in the community via social media platforms is emphasised reiteratively. Thus, this PhD study firmly recommends carefully planning, implementing, and producing LGBT media content because stereotyping remains a pertinent issue. The four suggestions given by the LGBT participants of this study of how they should be treated in "the future" is recommended as a good starting point when creating LGBT-themed media content that may encourage the cycle of cultivation strategy among different generations in the country.

Other Findings

In Chapter Three, the study endeavours to produce a definition of LGBT culture in the Philippines that can be understood by outside readers using Western concepts.

The study's overview of homonormativity in the Philippine context was explained: it is unnecessary in advertisements, at least in the five ads that this study used. It should be reiterated that it is important to recognise the complexity of sex and gender ideas in the country in understanding such a position. While the appearance of the characters in the ads could be deemed to subscribe to homonormativity by Western scholarship standards, in the Philippines, such a representation is perceived as a *humanised* one. To corroborate that position, the director of the Bench ad states that his focus is to present a storyline and representation to promote LGBT acceptance, which starts from home, including strengthening father-gay son relationships (ABS-CBN News, 2018). The director's technique leans more towards the emotional side of the viewers and consumers by touching on the topic that is closer to all Filipino people's hearts: family relationships. It is a proven technique to gather attention from the public, based on the results that the Bench ad gathered, such as increased sales and winning a Webby award. Studies from Nielsen also state that advertisements that centralise real-life stories, family, health, value, and humour are themes that will guarantee attention from Filipino consumers and viewers as they are most likely to resonate with these stories (PANA, 2015).

As for the study's empirical data, the LGBT participants have also emphasised family support and acceptance, stating how their families' attitudes toward their sexualities have affected their lives both in good and bad ways. Those who are lucky enough to have a supportive family report that they can be themselves because of them. Those who are unfortunate to have homophobic and unaccepting families report growing up experiencing abuse, whether physical, verbal, emotional, or passive-aggressive behaviours. Some participants have to actively circumvent family prejudice, such as creating two social media accounts, compartmentalising their behaviours in their presence, and hiding their same-sex relationships from their parents. In the Philippines, the family will always play a significant role in people's lives, influencing their life choices, beliefs, and characteristics. This is particularly true for Filipino LGBT individuals, for whom living authentically is often contingent on family acceptance or rejection.

As such, one of the unexpected findings gathered from the participants is the perceived novelty of the portrayal of father-gay son relationships in the ads, which has been positively welcomed. Drawing upon Relevance Theory in this study is an

excellent choice as the importance that this simple, yet impactful portrayal can bring in advocating for LGBT acceptance in society via mass media has the possibility to escape the eyes of those who do not have the same lived experiences. Considering the many studies cited throughout this dissertation, as well as the historical, cultural, and religious factors existing in the country, particularly Catholicism and patriarchy, seeing the *padre de familia* trying to build relationships and be involved in their gay sons' lives on advertisements can be considered a big deal. Some interviewees, such as Bunny, are critical, stating that it is not a realistic portrayal, as Filipino mothers are perceived as more accepting than fathers. However, it is imperative to consider whether this perceived 'unrealistic portrayal' marks the Philippine media's departure from stereotypical representations of Filipino father-gay sons towards more positive images of fathers who are accepting and involved in their gay children's lives. If this is the case, the possibilities of a cultural shift in the next decade resulting from such consistent representation in the Philippine mass media are endless.

The need for an enriched explanation of Filipino culture, particularly the influence of religion, the importance of family, and concepts such as *kalooban*, is to provide a foundation for helping readers understand the uniqueness of Filipino LGBT culture and the necessity of viewing it through de-Westernized or de-globalised lenses. Yue's (2014) analysis of several existing scholarly studies in the Asian context highlights the different strategies implemented in various Asian countries to show distinctive characteristics of these societies that are respective to LGBTQ+ communities. Based on the responses of the LGBT participants, this thesis takes the position that their presence in the Philippine mainstream media would be helpful in terms of representation and showcasing the diversity of the community. It is not about homonormativity wherein advertisers and brand marketers would have to take great lengths to please the general or heterosexual consumers or use the platform for any political purposes. If it is indeed homonormative, Sassa Gurl's modelling work for the White Castle's 2022 calendar should not have seen the light of day as, under the concept, selling an item with a sexualised gay man to its general consumer, men, can be considered threatening or disturbing the harmony in society. After all, its regular consumers were being sold calendars with attractive heterosexual females in sensual attires for decades. However, Sassa Gurl's calendar was generally welcomed in Philippine society. If it is indeed homonormative, then

the same-sex relationship on screen would remain aligned with the binary belief of society. Thus, the portrayal of gay-straight man and *mars/pars* dynamics would continue and might simply reinforce the Filipino people's understanding of same-sex relationships that are heterosexual in nature as greatly influenced by Catholic teachings. But based on the empirical data of this study, the LGBT participants want to break away from that stereotype. Overall, the participants' call for a wider and more authentic LGBT representation in ads or the mainstream mass media is driven by the desire to be included, recognised, represented accurately, and accepted. However, the study also considers that, due to the lack of law recognising the protection of the LGBT community in the Philippines, the patriarchal society still holds control over them. As such, LGBT people's actions are still limited to some extent. However, it is perceived that once the bill becomes a law, it levels the playing field. To live in a harmonious society, the possibility of using the new homonormativity as a tactic in Philippine LGBT media representation is highly plausible. However, I still foresee that the country will have its unique definition of the new homonormativity different from the global understanding of that concept.

Another distinct factor gathered from the study's empirical data is that the socio-economic status will always be tied to the LGBT media representation. This study did not anticipate gathering information unique to the Philippines, such as the prevalent use of radio as a source of news and entertainment in this digital age, and the unawareness of the existence of modern technology, such as Uber. These were surprising results given the fact that the Philippines has been dubbed the social media capital users of the world several times in studies cited throughout this thesis. Hence, it is logical to anticipate that most citizens primarily use social media and digital platforms for sources of information, entertainment, services, and other needs. In small, isolated areas in the province, where limited media platforms are available, radio can still serve as a powerful tool for spreading prejudice against LGBT members, often through community radio. It can be used as a means for radio announcers to express their opinions on community issues. Community radio primarily caters to a specific, localised population, which means that the issues and points of view presented on this platform have the potential to become matters of community concern and opinion.

Moreover, due to the lack of access to education and restricted access to alternative voices on social media due to the challenges brought by their geographical location and support from the government, prejudice is likely to strengthen. The reality is that majority of the Filipino families rate themselves as poor: 14 million or 51% of the total population surveyed by Social Weather Stations in March 2023 (GMA Integrated News, 2023). Thus, the reality of majority of the Filipinos, regardless of SOGIE, is poverty. However, the data gathered by this PhD study shows that this is not what is being delivered to LGBT-themed advertisements in contemporary times. What the participants dominantly see, particularly in the five advertisements discussed in this study, is normalising certain physical characteristics of LGBT people, mostly physical attractiveness and financial affluence. It is alarming to them because, according to the participants, this is not the reality of a typical Filipino LGBT member. Hence, to reiterate Bowser and Spence's (2000) view on burden representation but adapted specifically to describe the Philippine culture, the burden of representation in the Filipino LGBT community, which is highly conscious of status and reputation, "assimilation and acceptance" are not accompanied with the burden of representation (p. 5). But such a representation validates their place in society resulting in their desire to be represented in only such a way. Hence, the burden in this case, which manifests more as a problem, is how to redefine the narrative, from affluence to a reality-based one to ensure inclusive representation for all members of the community. Hence, in defining the Philippine queer media study, *the idealised Filipino gay people* is offered. This has been thoroughly explained in the previous chapter and will be explained further in the next section.

IV. Answering the Research Question

Analysing the data gathered from reactions from both the general public and the LGBT community has enabled this study to determine in hindsight what the data is attempting to say about the relationship of the Filipino's reactions to the positive LGBT-themed advertisements to the LGBT problems in contemporary Philippine society. The following four main issues, which are discussed in Chapter Eight, are identified:

1. The people's less accepting attitudes toward female same-sex relationships, the persistence of double standards on women, lesbian and bisexual females'

lesser media exposure compared to gay men, and transmen's invisibility in Philippine media.

2. Filipino gay men have to compensate for their sexualities and conform to the stereotypes in exchange for better tolerance.
3. A critical analysis if and when "accurate representation" is mismanaged: the creation of the "idealised Filipino gay people" concept, cognitive dissonance, confirmation bias on Filipino audiences, and rebel actions from LGBT media players.
4. The different factors affecting all LGBT people's lives nationwide send a message that there are more problems concerning the community, other than media stereotyping, which need immediate addressing.

The analysis of the first two problems gives us an overview of how LGBT members have to conform to their assigned gender, sex, and societal roles so they will not be deemed deviant and not upset the harmony in society. One of these results to the community is the power struggle among genders. As seen in the five advertisements, the gay men group is the dominant member of the community. The dominance extends to society and media exposure leading to the other members being excluded. It has also developed gay men's sense of the upper hand within the community. The cost of this, however, is their conformity in playing the stereotypical role allotted to them, which contributes to the persistence of society's homophobic attitudes toward them. Moreover, to say that the lack or the misguided representation of lesbian, bisexual women, and transmen in media is still an existing problem in the Philippines is warranted, and it seems no one is addressing it. The lack of understanding leaves the people less educated about their struggles and more confused about their societal role leading to uneducated actions toward them. For example, information from the participants and some studies discussed in the previous chapter reveals that Filipino men are less accepting of female same-sex relationships. The stance of this PhD study is that the first two problems are deeply ingrained in the country as they have existed and persisted for years. Hence, the previous chapter offers the idea of de-normalisation in helping people get desensitised about gender and sexuality issues deeply ingrained in Philippine society. Another stance of this research is that the Philippine media is powerful enough to influence Filipino's opinions on LGBT people. Hence, the media sector is encouraged to consider this approach when conceptualising LGBT media content

especially that, based on the data gathered, most people actively seek and gain such information in media rather than in classrooms.

The third and fourth problems have opened up the opportunity for this study to critically analyse the type of help that LGBT people truly need in addressing media stereotyping issues. The third issue offers the implication that an "accurate representation" might cause if and when normalised in the future. To reiterate, *accurate representation* is defined as LGBT media content produced by all-LGBT media workers and actors. The analysis is to determine to what extent this action will remain beneficial and how far it should go. Too much power is never good because it can lead to more problems if mismanaged. This study argues that the boundary where problems begin is when media content starts to build upon confirmation bias. This is the process of looking for information that will confirm an existing belief disregarding other information that will invalidate it. The current media environment is susceptible to confirmation bias because gay men dominate it. Some perceived effects of confirmation bias identified in the previous chapter are further dominance of gay men, which might lead to the erasure, inconsistent or misguided representation of other sexual orientations. The occurrence of rebel actions from the dominant group, if their privileges are to be questioned, is also predicted. Interestingly, this has already been demonstrated by the spectacle during the Bench's "Love all kinds of love" billboard controversy in 2015.

The most critical perceived drawback that can be anticipated is the creation of cognitive dissonance, which leads to the creation of *idealised Filipino gay people*. The accounts from the survey respondents and LGBT participants have already given hints that these are already existing. The discussion concerning the 'mirror vs. mold' argument in the previous chapter offers the possibility that what people see in media no longer aligns with what they observe in their environment. Moreover, the LGBT participants add that the current media depiction only shows one side of being a gay person – the affluent side. According to them, the very few characters with consistent characteristics and mannerisms, such as physical attractiveness, invalidate the realities of other LGBT members who do not look or act the same way as what the media is showing. Hence, this study argues that if the method of accurate representation is misused, it might develop a social construct of *idealised Filipino gay people*. This idealised version of what a Filipino LGBT person should look like,

as propagated by "the present" media's representation of them, threatens the community because it develops a distorted meaning of acceptance. This study argues that normalising the *idealised version* can hugely hinder people's transition from tolerating attitudes to accepting one because it creates a false sense of who should be accepted. There is a huge risk of creating an acceptance of those who fit the attributes they see in media: good-looking, rich, educated, and other similar attributes. Consequently, it might only create tolerance, or even stronger prejudice, to those who do not possess similar qualities. Another problem it may cause is the LGBT member's willingness to compromise their health to adhere to the idealised version due to the need to be accepted by society.

The fourth problem is observed when the differences between the LGBT participants manifested during the discussion despite the focus on media representation issues. More importantly, their regional, socio-economical, and generational differences. The endeavour to reach LGBT people from all regions in the country is due to the lack of such research approaches in academic gender and media research in the Philippines. However, the study further discovers differences among LGBT people as influenced by the regions they live. For example, it is interesting to learn that some Visayan participants did not know what Uber was due to geographical aspects. Additionally, the participants have reported that the people from Generation Z are already showing strong signs of acceptance, not tolerance, towards the LGBT community. The knowledge they get from social media is deemed to be very helpful. Smith and Octus' stories of how they successfully transformed their community's attitudes toward them positively with the help of social media are very promising in showing that it is possible for a community's stance on LGBT people to change. Thus, the call to create a cycle of cultivation in the current and upcoming generations is reemphasised as one of the keys to transitioning society from tolerating to accepting. More importantly, the chance to set the tone for "the future" should not go to waste by reproducing old and outdated stereotypical LGBT representation in social media. It is strongly recommended to consider all the information presented in this PhD study and the current momentum in society as an opportunity to break the stigma, redirect the narrative, improve media representation, and create a safe and accepting environment for the Filipino LGBT community.

V. Recommendations and Limitations

Although the data gathered in this doctoral study give numerous information to contribute to the field, the space for discussion is limited. Hence, the following ideas are recommended for further exploration by future scholars of gender media studies and policy makers alike:

1. Three Cultural Indicators are recommended for consideration in future scholarly research in this domain, such as in LGBT media studies, media audience research, and studies that incorporate the Cultivation Theory framework. However, it is possible that these indicators may not apply to "the future" because unforeseen factors that can occur and significantly affect the Philippine media environment is recognised. For example, the emergence of the world pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus and the franchise issue that led to the shutdown of one of the most prominent free-to-air TV players in the Philippines, ABS-CBN Corporation. Hence, the three-pointer guide in inspecting the message system to find cultural indicators, as discussed in the conclusions chapter of Chapter Six, is offered to determine if societal changes towards LGBT people are progressing. The study suggests that upcoming research can assess audiences' reactions to future positive LGBT media content by finding answers to the questions indicated in the three-pointer guide.
2. Accordingly, researchers in the fields specified in the first recommendation can also determine and test more Cultural Indicators on audiences during the research. This work utilised only five advertisements in assessing the indicators. As such, it has only specified three indicators. Gauging the audience's reactions is beneficial to the community in determining which LGBT media content is working and which is not. Cultural Indicators can also be applied to other social issues in the country, such as the depiction of teenage pregnancy, rape, and women's issue.
3. Future Cultivation Theory studies, as well as media, audience, and marketing researchers, can focus on determining how to effectively reach the LSMs or light social media users. The LSMs tend to diverge from the mainstream by giving non-television and non-ambivalent answers on media stereotyping

issues. This type of LSM has a demographic profile of 25 to 34 years old, college educated, employed or working, and living in NCR. However, this study is not recommending these factors as their ultimate profile because they are low in number (11 out of 158 respondents). While less exposure to social media is a good thing, health-wise, researchers can take the information from this study to determine how to reach them. For academic research purposes, this ensures wide dissemination of updated and correct LGBT knowledge for everyone. As for marketing research purposes, this ensures broad exposure of positive LGBT-themed advertisements for everyone.

4. Scholars concerned with areas, such as social media, advertising, and marketing research can use the general public's profile information for other purposes: light TV viewers but heavy social media users, 18-34 years old, college educated, employed or working, and living in NCR. Future researchers can also utilise the research approach of Cultivation Theory to understand more media effects of LGBT content, or any other media content, on Filipino audiences.
5. Academic researchers in the humanities and social sciences, including but not limited to those in media, communications, race and ethnic studies, and cultural studies, should reach out to LGBT participants with backgrounds different from those presented in this PhD research. This would constitute a novel contribution to knowledge, as it would provide insights into how individuals with, for example, an Islamic background or those who have not yet come out about their sexualities read LGBT media content in the Philippines.
6. Adopting the research methods used in Relevance Theory in LGBT media research, specifically focus group discussions, is highly recommended to media, humanities, and social sciences researchers. It is time to reach out to the community when it comes to LGBT media issues, as they are the ones who are receiving the advantages and disadvantages of media portrayal in the Philippines. Additional research on the 'mirror vs. mold' debate applied in the Philippine context may also be very interesting. This study is only able to

cover a few ideas about this debate. Hence, future researchers can determine several mirroring and molding instances to help people critically analyse and understand the impact of LGBT media portrayal in the Philippines.

7. Academic researchers, advertisers, and marketers can expound on the type of storylines the LGBT participants have suggested improving their media representation, such as focusing on romantic storylines. Additionally, examining advertising techniques discussed in the previous chapter, such as human interest (HI) advertisements, modernist quest ads, and 'out-of-the-closet' advertising, is also recommended. Future researchers should further inquire whether these techniques can benefit the Filipino LGBT community and determine the possible adverse effects and limitations.
8. Future media, humanities, social science, or education researchers can enrich the knowledge of 'de-normalisation.' This study recommends the de-normalisation of LGBT media content, more specifically on lesbians, bisexual females, and gay men's mindset that they have to compensate for their sexualities. Improving this knowledge will enable educators, advocates, organisations and policy makers to implement workshops and training for all Filipino people that correspond to de-normalising all LGBT issues in the country.

The limitations faced by this research study were primarily technical. First, the data collection phase for the focus group discussion was done at the height of Covid-19's Omicron variant surge in the Philippines and the post-typhoon disaster in the Visayas region. These events hindered the study from garnering responses from a larger number of LGBT participants because of the challenges and government restrictions that these events brought about. While some problems occurred during the recruitment of participants in the Visayas region, this is not considered a limitation because the circumstance has enabled this study to indicate the differences in LGBT lives nationwide. However, the opinions presented here by the LGBT participants are not representative of the entirety of LGBT Filipinos, as some members of the community are underrepresented. Hence, it is highly recommended that future researchers gather more participants representing all Filipino LGBT people, specifically transmen, those in the high class and from Islamic and other

non-dominant religious backgrounds. Moreover, due to its limited time and funding, this PhD study cannot execute a longitudinal study on the general public, which is the ideal and standard approach of Cultivation Theory. Thus, the research methodology and analysis only applied some of the theory's essential concepts. Despite that, this work is still a noteworthy and timely addition to Cultivation Theory studies because it is more specifically applied in the Philippine context than other related studies primarily focused on Western scholarship. Lastly, the researcher has found very few timely related studies regarding LGBT media research in the Philippines and Asia. However, this limitation is taken as an opportunity by this research to contribute to closing this gap. Furthermore, this milestone also contributes to one of the goals introduced very early on: to correspond to UNDP and USAID's recommendation for improving Filipino LGBT people's media presence. More specifically, adding a timely and comprehensive media study that can be added to a dedicated physical or online LGBT library if and when it gets developed.

VI. The Final Conclusion: Research Question Answered... What's Next?

For the study's final words, the overall reactions of the Filipino people towards the positive LGBT-themed advertisements indicate that the existing problems persist and are normalised in contemporary society. Yet there are glimmers of hope that attitudes towards the LGBT community are slowly changing for the better. Yes, the country has seen a phenomenon whereby from the margins, some LGBT members are able to reach and be recognised by the mainstream. While the LGBT community is still building a concrete path to solidify their continuous visibility in the Philippine media and a better and more positive representation of them, this study calls for Filipino audiences and media players to help establish this by transitioning their attitudes from being neutral to being critical. 'Critical' does not mean giving negative criticism or negative remarks about the LGBT community at any chance. 'Critical' in the sense that media producers should acknowledge that the existing intersectionality within the community is being transferred to the media. As a result, it becomes a general knowledge that may add to society's prejudice against the community. Thus, media players should try to prevent this by carefully conceptualising every LGBT media content to be produced. Be 'critical' in the sense that recognising that the LGBT people's fight for media visibility and better representation is only the tip of the iceberg for what they are actually fighting for - human rights, opportunities, and acceptance. The audiences can contribute to this

by being active receivers of all media content. Try to avoid passively accepting the messages that media conveys. Quickly conduct a fact-check or research if something does not look or sound right. Also, utilise social media to voice out one's opinion. The important thing is to keep the public discourse alive.

Even though this study calls for continuous production of positive LGBT advertising content, it is aware that relying heavily on the Philippine advertising field is not a feasible and long-term solution to solving the lack of representation of the LGBT community because the industry is still driven by profit. Future content reflecting the dominant attitudes and perspectives of their target markets and viewers, which can be non-inclusive, can invariably be expected. The Pantene commercial has shown young gay and transwoman children, which is recognising the existence of LGBT youths. But that is the extent of it. Those who are in the lower class, people with disabilities, older adults, and transgressive members of the community are still invisible in the Philippine advertising fields. Hence, the people should continue to nudge the government in promoting feasible and tangible solutions to see real progress, such as a dedicated part of the educational system educating young Filipino students about local and global LGBTQ+ issues, health, and politics. Participant Jagger's hypothesis that systemic homophobia in the country exists is logical. Hence, a solution needs to be engineered on the level of 'system.'

The significance of continuously bringing relevant discussion into the public discourse is to draw unceasing attention to solving LGBT issues. The media's role in this scenario is to amplify these issues, messages, and advocacies, which reach everyone, including the government. The readers are being called to be reminded of the time when Filipino women were not given full sexual health rights because of conservative reasons. The fight to legalise the Reproductive Health (RH) Law took a long time (14 years), but women and society got through it. In 2012, the RH law was signed into law. It was a collective effort, but the media's contribution kept the issue timely, relevant and remembered. The media also kept the public in the loop, educating them about the issue.

Currently, the anti-discrimination bill (SOGIE) that seeks to protect Filipino people from discrimination against sexual orientation, gender identity and expression is facing numerous resistance from the government and religious sector, preventing

its passage into law. This is very similar to the obstacle that the RH law faced. The SOGIE bill faces more resistance because LGBT groups are considered more marginalised in Philippine society than women. However, the RH Law proves that contested bills that disturb religious and traditional standpoints can still be passed into law. What this means is that society has been conditioned for a long time that such progressive bills will promote immorality in the country, hence the resistance. The data gathered by this research shows that progressive knowledge does more good than harm. Hence, society should be enlightened by the advantages the SOGIE bill can cause once implemented into law. Educating the public can produce informed citizens with a sophisticated understanding of the issue. The more it is discussed, the more it produces educated citizens, and the more it can pressure the government to accelerate the deliberations – and this is where the media comes in. The momentous 2015 referendum in Ireland has been dubbed as "a social revolution, an expression of decency, a country coming of age" (RTE, 2015, para. 5) and "the vanguard of social change" (Hakim and Dalby, 2015, para. 1). The Philippines can learn something from this social phenomena. More importantly, traditional and social media can become a vanguard of social change in Philippine society by genuinely promoting LGBT social issues. Now that it is known that "the past" caused detrimental effects on the LGBT community, the Philippine media should redirect its representation away from the outdated, negative, and stereotypical one. Now that it is known that there is a possibility that sales will not be compromised if media players show support to the community, the practice of producing and critically planning LGBT media content should be normalised. These actions can adequately educate the public and transition the Philippine society's attitude into a more supportive one.

Irish people's support for the LGBT community through the referendum has nudged the government to act. Based on the empirical data, this study argues that the Filipino people can do this too. However, should society force people to participate in another imminent social phenomenon regarding the LGBT community? Or should the society wait for the Filipino people to catch up? Some lawmakers are still pushing the narrative that the Philippines is not ready whenever LGBT issues and the SOGIE bill are brought up. While this research and its participants acknowledge that it might take some time before monumental changes occur, the empirical evidence strongly suggests that changes are already happening in different aspects

of society, not just in the media field. The argument is that this issue is persistent enough that it cannot be pressed down any longer. What the media and audiences can do is be critical and informed. In that case, it will only be a matter of time before it produces people who genuinely want to support LGBT causes, which can eventually transition the tolerating Philippine society to a more accepting one. Let this research be a reminder that, albeit slowly, contemporary society is already showing signs of genuine acceptance of the LGBT community. It is now up to the readers, future researchers, media players, audiences, marketers, advertisers, and LGBT members to make an informed decision on applying the knowledge presented in this study to Philippine LGBT issues to the best of their abilities.

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Appendix A

The Focus Group Participants' Profile

Note: The following profile information is based on what the participants provided during the interview. At times, the distinction between the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity were blurred as some of the participants used such labels interchangeably and, in some respects, in contradictory ways. Not every participant referred to their sexual orientation and/or having a gender identity.

Luzon:

1. Lavender, bisexual woman, 27.
2. Pink, bisexual ciswoman, 23.
3. Purple, pansexual ciswoman, 21.
4. Blue, bisexual cisman, 19.
5. Scotch, gay man, 33.
6. Bunny, gay man who also identifies as non-binary, 33.
7. Bona, gay man who also identifies as non-binary, 29.
8. Pinky, identifies as femme in lesbian relationships but does not specifically call herself a lesbian, 41.

Visayas:

1. Smith, bisexual man, 24.
2. Octus, gay man, 22.
3. Scorpion, gay man, 21.
4. Vanx, gay man who later on identifies as transwoman throughout the interview, 18.
5. Ryl, gay man, 21.
6. Vinny, lesbian woman, 25.

Mindanao:

1. Jung, did not disclose sexual orientation and/or gender identity, 24.
2. Jovina, did not disclose sexual orientation and/or gender identity, 24.
3. Bert, transwoman, 22.
4. Ba, bisexual man who also identifies as straight male, 21.
5. Maddy, transwoman who also identifies as straight, age was not disclosed.
6. JC, did not disclose sexual orientation and gender identity, 18.
7. Klint, gay man, 18.
8. John, gay man, 25.
9. Rhandy, transwoman who also identifies as gay, 37.
10. Janna, transwoman who also identifies as gay, 31.
11. Jagger, gay man who also identifies as bisexual, 33.

Appendix B

Letter of Request for Recruitment of Focus Group Participants

Scoil Chumarsáide
Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Baile Átha Cliath 9
Éire

School of Communications
Dublin City University
Dublin 9
Ireland

Dr Mark O'Brien
Head of School
T +353 1 700 8452
E mark.obrien@dcu.ie
W dcu.ie



Date

Dear (Name of Organisation),

Mabuhay!

I am a Ph.D. candidate at Dublin City University in Ireland. I am currently working on my thesis dissertation focused on the reactions of Filipinos towards LGBT-themed advertisements in the Philippines. To determine this, my study needs to gather the opinions of the LGBT community regarding the said advertisements and the current representation of the said community in the Philippine media.

One of the main goals of this study is to provide a platform in the academic field for Filipino LGBT people to voice out their opinions regarding their representation in the Philippine media. This approach is rarely used in media and communications studies, and I would like to address that gap through this research. Hence, I believe that the insights and experiences of the Filipino LGBT people will help achieve quality and authentic answers.

In line with this, I am presently seeking for members of the Filipino LGBT community to participate in a research focus group, and I would like to ask for your help in recruiting participants. The organization can help me by posting the call for participants on your social media pages or recommending possible participants from your members. Here are the details of the interview:

How many participants are in one group? 5 to 6 people

Interview duration: 45 to 75 minutes

Target date: 8th of January 2022 (Saturday)

Time: 11:00 am or 3:00 pm (The participants can choose which time is more suitable)

Place: (Undisclosed for privacy purposes)

Target date: 15th of January 2022 (Saturday)

Time: 11:00 am or 3:00 pm (The participants can choose which time is more suitable)

Place: (Undisclosed for privacy purposes)

Target date: 22nd of January 2022 (Saturday)

Time: 11:00 am or 3:00 pm (The participants can choose which time is more suitable)

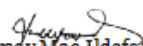
Place: (Undisclosed for privacy purposes)

Their participation is voluntary. I am aware that being a member of the LGBT community in the Philippines is challenging, raising concerns in participating in this group interview. Hence, I would like to inform you that the **anonymity and pseudonymity of the participants are assured**. Their personal information will never be divulged throughout the research. They may also have the option not to answer a few questions if they feel uncomfortable, terminate their participation during the discussion, or have some of their statements redacted after the interview. The discussions will be audio and video recorded but rest assured that all of the data will be stored in encrypted and password-locked storage devices strictly accessible by my supervisor and me. Please feel free to include this information in your recruitment announcement. As for the safety precautions in response to Covid-19, rest assured that all the necessary measurements will be implemented, including sanitizing the interview place and providing safety materials (face masks, hand sanitizer, etc.).

I am at your disposal if you would like to discuss these more or any other concerns to help with the recruitment process. You may reach me at tracy.ildefonso2@mail.dcu.ie.

Thank you very much for your help!

Sincerely,


Tracy Mae Ildefonso
Doctoral Candidate
School of Communications
Dublin City University
Ireland

Appendix C

Calls for Survey Respondents

 **Tracy Ildefonso**
September 17, 2021 · 🌐

Hello, everybody. I need your help with my thesis! I am a Ph.D. student at Dublin City University in Ireland, and my dissertation investigates the reactions of Filipinos towards LGBT-themed advertisements in the Philippines. It would really mean a lot to me if you could spare 7 to 10 minutes of your time answering the survey. This applies only to Filipino citizens currently living in PH!

English version: <https://di1xwu3q3id.typeform.com/to/OX0D0ezp>
Tagalog version: <https://di1xwu3q3id.typeform.com/to/s010GEyf>

Rest assured that ALL the information you'll be providing will be confidential and that your answers will never be traced back to you. All the data are safe and will only be accessed by my supervisor and me. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much. PLEASE SHARE!

Survey: the public's opinion on Filipino LGBT representation in advertisements.

This survey aims to determine the Filipino's perception of Filipino LGBTs as influenced by the Philippine media and the recent LGBT-themed advertisements. In this survey, you are expected to watch five (5) advertisements.

This study is asking for your complete honesty in answering the questions. Be assured that your personal data and opinions are protected. The responses you will give will not be disclosed to the public nor traced back to you. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study anytime.

We are asking for your patience in completing the survey. Your opinions are important contributions that can help improve the LGBT media representation in the Philippines.

Thank you!

Start press Enter ↵

🕒 Takes 7+ min

PLEASE CLICK THE LINK AT THE CAPTION. THANK YOU.

Your opinion is needed!

LOOKING FOR SURVEY RESPONDENTS

What do you think about the LGBT-themed ads in the Philippines?

THIS IS FOR YOU IF YOU ARE:
A FILIPINO CITIZEN AND RESIDENT
18 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE

TOPICS TO DISCUSS:
THE FILIPINO LGBT REPRESENTATION IN THE
PHILIPPINE MEDIA.
YOU WILL WATCH 5 ADVERTISEMENTS
THE SURVEY WILL TAKE 7 TO 10 MINUTES

YOUR PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY
ARE GUARANTEED. ALL INFORMATION
YOU SHARE IS SECURED AND WON'T
BE SHARED WITH ANYBODY.

YOUR INSIGHTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LGBT
REPRESENTATION IN PH!

Appendix D

Ethics Clearance

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



Tracy Mae Ildfonso
School of Communications

Dr. Aileen O'Driscoll
School of Communications

31st August 2021

REC Reference: DCUREC/2021/132

Proposal Title: From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes Among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Applicant(s): Tracy Mae Ildfonso and Dr. Aileen O'Driscoll

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your application to DCU Research Ethics Committee (REC). Further to expedited review, DCU REC are pleased to issue approval for this research proposal.

DCU REC's consideration of all ethics applications are dependent upon the information supplied by the researcher. This information is expected to be truthful and accurate. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that their research is carried out in accordance with the information provided in their ethics application.

Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Melrona Kirrane'.

Dr. Melrona Kirrane
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee



Taighde & Nuálacht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Baile Átha Cliath, Éire

Research & Innovation Support
Dublin City University,
Dublin 9, Ireland

T +353 1 700 8000
F +353 1 700 8002
E research@dcu.ie
www.dcu.ie

Appendix E

Plain Language Statement: Focus Group Participants (English)

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Plain Language Statement

(Focus Groups - English)

Project title:

From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes Among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Introduction to the research study:

- This research study is concerned with surveying the attitudes of Filipinos to people from the LGBT community and especially the reactions of the Filipino people to the increasing presence of LGBT people in the media, and in particular, in advertisements, as well as more generally asking people to reflect on their media usage. In addition, the study seeks to discuss, with Filipino LGBT people, their experiences and how they feel about the media's portrayal and engagement with them. The situation for those who are LGBT has been changing in the country in recent years. For example, the United Nations recommended that the Philippines take certain actions to improve the lives of the LGBT community. One aspect that has been highlighted as an area of concern is the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of LGBT in the media. Therefore, this study is interested in exploring such issues that relate to how the public perceives those who are LGBT and what they think of the media's representation of this group.
- This research is conducted by Tracy Mae Ildefonso, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Communications at Dublin City University, Ireland.
- Tracy Mae Ildefonso can be contacted via tracy.ildefonso2@mail.dcu.ie

Involvement in the Study:

- You are expected to participate in a focus group interview, consisting of 5 to 6 people, for approximately 90 minutes. The topics will determine your opinions on the Philippine media's portrayal of the Filipino LGBT people, the recent LGBT-themed advertisements that positively portray the said group, and suggestions for representing them in future advertisements. Because this study focuses on your reactions to the advertisements, you will be asked to watch five LGBT-themed commercials. Your honest answers are important to relay the real feelings of the Filipino LGBT people on how they are truly being represented in the Philippine media and how they would want to be represented.
- Personal data will be asked, such as your age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and city of residence. These data will only be used during the analysis of the discussions.
- The focus group discussion will be audio and video recorded and will, later on, be transcribed and translated.
- Your participation is voluntary. You are free not to answer questions that will make you feel uncomfortable. You are free to withdraw your participation in the focus groups at any time. Should you wish to have your responses redacted or removed from the study after participating the focus groups, you may contact me at tracy.ildefonso2@mail.dcu.ie.
- Your data and responses will be used for my future publications beyond this Ph.D. thesis. These will be used within five years from the start of this focus group interview and will be subject to the same protocol as the current ones.

Confidentiality:

- All the personal information you will provide will be private, anonymized and pseudonymized. The details you will provide will not be divulged in this study and in my future publications,

nor will not be traced back to you. The aliases will be in place from the discussions, transcriptions, and final dissertation.

- The data will be protected within the limitations of the law.

Data protection and destruction:

- All the data, including the audio and video recordings, will be saved in an encrypted storage device such as the DCU Google Drive, password-protected work computer, and personal laptop. The data is only accessible to my supervisor and me. The hardcopy data will be placed in a secured and durable plastic envelope or storage box with locking features that only I can access.
- The data will be retained five years from the start of this focus group interview. After which, the softcopy data will be permanently deleted while the hardcopy data will be shredded and disposed of via Dublin City University's confidential waste bin.
- Should you have other concerns on data protection, you may contact Mr. Martin Ward of DCU Data Protection Officer at data.protection@dcu.ie or +353 1 7005118 / 7008257
- You have the right to lodge a complaint with the Irish Data Protection Commission if you feel that your data protection rights have been violated. Visit <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>

Potential Risks to Participants arising from involvement in the Research Study:

- Due to the anonymity of the personal data that will be provided, there is no substantial risk to your personal or professional reputation. However, the study expects that you might give strong responses triggered by sharing your personal challenges and experiences as a member of the LGBT community in the Philippines. The discussion will remain in the media representation of the Filipino LGBT people. Moreover, you will continuously be informed of your rights to refuse to answer any questions that will make you uncomfortable and that you can opt out of the focus groups anytime.

Benefits (direct or indirect) to Participants:

- This study is providing a platform for you, as a representative of the Filipino LGBT community, to express your personal opinions towards how your community is being represented in the Philippine media. You may also use this study to inform the media players how to represent your community according to your suggestions, perceptions, and experiences.

Other information:

- You will be provided a final copy of the dissertation at the end of the research.
- This research is funded through the Postgraduate Research Scholarship scheme of the School of Communications in Dublin City University.
- This research was granted ethical approval by the DCU Research Ethics Committee on 31 August 2021.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel +353 1 7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix F

Plain Language Statement: Focus Group Participants (Tagalog)

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY Plain Language Statement (Focus Groups - Tagalog)

Titulo ng Proyekto:

From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes Among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Pambungad:

- Nilalayon ng pag-aaral na ito na matukoy ang mga reaksiyon ng mamamayang Pilipino at ng komunidad ng Filipino LGBT sa mga patalastas na may temang LGBT sa Pilipinas.
- Ayon sa pag-aaral ng UNDP-USAID noong 2014, kanilang inirekomenda ang ilang aksyon upang lipulin ang diskriminasyon laban sa komunidad ng Filipino LGBT. Ito ay sa pamamagitan ng pagpapakalat ng mabuting impormasyon, pagtaguyod ng isang pisikal o online na aklatan na nagbibigay ng impormasyong nauugnay sa LGBT, pakikipag-ugnayan sa media sa pamamagitan ng pagbuo ng mga plano para sa pag-advokasiya sa mga LGBT, at suportahan ang mga LGBT media outlet. Kakaunti din ang mga pag-aaral tungkol sa representasyon ng Filipino LGBT sa mga patalastas sa Pilipinas. Nais ng pag-aaral na ito na magbigay ng kontribusyon sa mga layunin ng UNDP-USAID sa pag-lupil sa diskriminasyon, pati na rin ang pagtugon sa mga kakulangan sa pananaliksik, sa pamamagitan ng pag-ambag ng isang napapanahong pag-aaral tungkol sa mga Filipino LGBT. Ang proyektong ito ay layon din na magbigay ng pagkakataon para sa mga Filipino LGBT na maibahagi ang kanilang mga pananaw at mapabuti ang diskurso sa pag-aaral ng kasarian, sekswalidad at komunikasyon sa Pilipinas.
- Ang pananaliksik na ito ay isinasagawa ni Tracy Mae Ildefonso, doktoral na mag-aaral sa School of Communication ng Dublin City University, Ireland.
- Maaring makipag-ugnay sa mananaliksik sa pamamagitan ng e-mail: tracy.ildefonso2@mail.dcu.ie

Pakikibahagi sa Pag-aaral:

- Sa bawat panayam, ang grupo ay binubuo ng 5 hanggang 6 na katao, at maaring magtagal ng humigit-kumulang 90 minuto. Ang mga kalahok ay inaasahang magbahagi ng kanilang opinyon tungkol sa paglalarawan ng medya sa Pilipinas sa mga Pilipinong LGBT, sa mga patalastas na may temang LGBT na positibong naglalarawan sa nasabing grupo, at kanilang mga mungkahi para sa maayos at nararapat na representasyon sa kanila sa mga susunod na patalastas. Dahil ang pag-aaral na ito ay nakatuon sa mga reaksiyon sa mga patalastas, asahang may papanuorin na limang patalastas na may temang LGBT. Ang iyong pang-unawa at matapat na pagsagot sa mga katanungan ay mahalaga upang maipahayag ang tunay na damdamin ng mga Pilipinong LGBT sa kung paano sila tunay na kinakatawan sa media ng Pilipinas at kung paano nila nais na sila'y katawanin.
- Itatanong ang ilang personal na impormasyon tulad ng edad, sexual orientation, gender identity, at lungsod na tinitirahan. Ang mga datos na ito ay gagamitin lamang sa panahon ng pagsusuri ng mga talakayan.
- Ang bawat panayam ay i-re-record, parehong visual at audio. Matapos nito, ang mga panayam ay isasalin sa papel (transcribe) at sa wikang Ingles (translate).
- Ang iyong partisipasyon ay kusang-loob. Kung may mga katanungan na hindi ka kumportable, malaya kang hindi sagutin ang mga ito. Malaya kang bawiin ang iyong pakikilahok sa panayam sa anumang oras. Kung nais mong i-redact o alisin ang iyong mga tugon mula sa pag-aaral pagkatapos lumahok sa focus group, maaari kang makipag-ugnayan sa akin sa tracy.ildefonso2@mail.dcu.ie.
- Ang mga impormasyon ay gagamitin para sa hinaharap na pag-aaral ng mananaliksik. Gagamitin lamang ang mga ito sa loob ng limang taon pagkatapos ng paglahok sa panayam. Isasailalim din ito sa parehong proteksyon tulad ng kasalukuyang protokol.

Usaping pang-kumpidensyal:

- Ang mga makokolektang personal na impormasyon ay pribado, nakatago (anonymized), maaring gumamit ng alias (pseudonymized), at hindi ibabahagi sa loob ng pananaliksik na ito, pati na rin sa mga hinaharap na pag-aaral ng mananaliksik.
- Ang mga personal na impormasyon ay protektado sa loob ng mga limitasyon ng batas.

Proteksyon at pagbura sa mga impormasyon:

- Ang lahat ng impormasyon, pati na rin ang video at audio recordings, ay naka-save sa isang protektadong (encrypted at may password) online storage device tulad ng DCU Google Drive, computer sa trabaho, at personal na laptop ng mananaliksik. Ang maari lamang maka-access nito ay ang mananaliksik at ang kanyang supervisor.
- Ang mga impormasyon ay mananatili limang taon pagkatapos ng pangangalap ng mananaliksik. Pagkatapos nito, ang softcopy ay permanenteng buburahin habang ang hardcopy ay itatapon sa isang kumpidensyal na basurahan ng Dublin City University.
- Kung mayroon kang iba pang mga alalahanin sa proteksyon ng mga impormasyon at data, maaari kang makipag-ugnay sa Data Protection Officer ng DCU na si G. Martin Ward sa data.protection@dcu.ie o +353 1 7005118/7008257.
- May karapatan kang mag-sumite ng reklamo sa Irish Data Protection Commission kung sa palagay mo ay nilabag ang iyong mga karapatan sa proteksyon ng data. Bisitahin ang <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>.

Iba pang impormasyon:

- Bibigyan ka ng kopya ng pag-aaral na ito sa katapusan ng pananaliksik.
- Ang pag-aaral na ito ay pinondohan ng Postgraduate Research Scholarship ng School of Communications sa Dublin City University.
- Ang pagsasaliksik na ito ay inaprubahan ng DCU Research Ethics Committee noong ika-31 ng Agosto, 2021.

Kung ang mga kalahok ay may mga alalahanin tungkol sa pag-aaral na ito o nais makipag-usap sa isang independiyenteng tao, mangyaring makipag-ugnay sa:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel +353 1 7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix G

Plain Language Statement: Survey Respondents (English)

" PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Project title: From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes Among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Introduction to the research study:

> This study aims to determine the reactions of the Filipino people and the Filipino LGBT community towards recent LGBT-themed advertisements in the Philippines.

> In a 2014 study by UNDP-USAID, a few of the recommended actions to help eradicate discrimination against the Filipino LGBT community is through information dissemination, establishing a physical or online library that provides LGBT-related information, engage mainstream media by developing an agreed-upon LGBT advocacy plan, and support LGBT media outlets. In addition to that, there are few studies on Filipino LGBT representation in Philippine advertisements. This study aims to contribute to the goals of the UNDP-USAID in eradicating discrimination, as well as addressing the gaps in research by contributing an up-to-date research project while providing a platform for the Filipino LGBTs to share their perceptions, help this community uplift their status, and improve Philippine gender, sexuality and communication studies resources and discourses.

> This research is conducted by Tracy Mae Idefonso, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Communications at Dublin City University, Ireland.

> Tracy Mae Idefonso can be contacted via tracy.ilefonso2@mail.dcu.ie

Involvement in the Study:

> Participants will be required to answer an online survey questionnaire form that is composed of 39 questions. These questions seek to determine your media habits and perceptions towards the Filipino LGBTs as portrayed in Philippine media. Because this study is focused on the people's reactions towards the advertisements, you will also be asked to watch five LGBT-themed commercials. Your patience and impartial reflection in answering the questions are important to establish the general public's honest reactions towards these recent LGBT-themed ads that positively portray Filipino LGBTs.

> Personal data will be asked, such as your e-mail address, age, and city of residence. These data will be mainly used during the analysis of the survey results. Your e-mail address will be asked to reduce the risk of having a bot, fake, or ineligible participants that may compromise the quality of the survey results.

> Your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your participation in the survey at any time. You may contact the researcher at tracy.ilefonso2@mail.dcu.ie if you wish to have your responses removed from the study after completing the survey.

> The data will be used for future studies of the researcher. The data will only be used within five years after the data gathering and will be subject to the same protocol as the current ones.

Confidentiality:

> All the personal information you will provide will be private and anonymized. The details you will provide will not be divulged in this study and future studies of the researcher, nor will not be traced back to you.

> The data will be protected within the limitations of the law.

Data protection and destruction:

> All the data will be saved in encrypted storage devices such as Google Drive, the researcher's work computer, and personal laptop. The data is only accessible to the researcher and her supervisor.

> The data will be retained five years after the data gathering. After which, the softcopy data will be permanently deleted while the hardcopy data will be shredded and disposed of via Dublin City University's confidential waste bin.

> Should you have other concerns on data protection, you may contact Mr. Martin Ward of DCU Data Protection Officer at data.protection@dcu.ie or +353 1 7005118 / 7008257

> You have the right to lodge a complaint with the Irish Data Protection Commission if you feel that your data protection rights have been violated. Visit <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>

Other information:

> Should you wish to be provided with a final copy of the study, please feel free to contact the researcher.

> This research is funded through the Postgraduate Research Scholarship scheme of the School of Communications in Dublin City University.

> The research obtained ethical approval from the DCU Research Ethics Committee dated 31st August 2021.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel +353 1 7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

I understand

press Enter

Appendix H

Plain Language Statement: Survey Respondents (Tagalog)

" PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Titulo ng proyekto: From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes Among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Pambungad:

> Nilayon ng pag-aaral na ito na matukoy ang mga reaksyon ng mamamayang Pilipino at ng komunidad ng Filipino LGBT sa mga patalastas na may temang LGBT sa Pilipinas.

> Ayon sa pag-aaral ng UNDP-USAID noong 2014, kanilang inirekomenda ang ilang aksyon upang lipulin ang diskriminasyon laban sa komunidad ng Filipino LGBT. Ito ay sa pamamagitan ng pagpapakalat ng mabuting impormasyon, pagtaguyod ng isang pisikal o online na aklatan na nagbibigay ng impormasyong nauugnay sa LGBT, pakikipag-ugnayan sa media sa pamamagitan ng pagbuo ng mga plano para sa pag-adbokasiya sa mga LGBT, at suportahan ang mga LGBT media outlet. Kakaunti din ang mga pag-aaral tungkol sa representasyon ng Filipino LGBT sa mga patalastas sa Pilipinas. Nais ng pag-aaral na ito na magbigay ng kontribusyon sa mga layunin ng UNDP-USAID sa pag-lupil sa diskriminasyon, pati na rin ang pagtugon sa mga kakulangan sa pananaliksik, sa pamamagitan ng pag-ambag ng isang napapanahong pag-aaral tungkol sa mga Filipino LGBT. Ang proyektong ito ay layon din na magbigay ng pagkakataon para sa mga Filipino LGBT na maibahagi ang kanilang mga pananaw at mapabuti ang diskurso sa pag-aaral ng kasarian, seksuwalidad at komunikasyon sa Pilipinas.

> Ang pananaliksik na ito ay isinasagawa ni Tracy Mae Ildelfonso, doktoral na mag-aaral sa School of Communication ng Dublin City University, Ireland.

> Maaring makipag-ugnay sa mananaliksik sa pamamagitan ng e-mail: tracy.ildelfonso2@mail.dcu.ie

Pakikibahagi sa Pag-aaral:

> Ang mga kalahok ay may sasagutang talatanungan sa online survey na binubuo ng 39 na katanungan. Ang mga katanungang ito ay hinahangad na matukoy ang iyong pag-konsumo ng media at iyong pananaw sa mga Filipino LGBT ayon sa paglalarawan ng media ng Pilipinas. Dahil ang pag-aaral na ito ay nakatuon sa mga reaksyon ng mga tao sa mga patalastas, hihilingin din sa iyo na manudod ng limang patalastas na may temang LGBT. Ang iyong pang-unawa at matapat na pagsagot sa mga katanungan ay mahalaga upang maitaguyod ang tunay na reaksyon ng pangkalahatang publiko sa mga patalastas na may temang LGBT na positibong naglalarawan sa mga Filipino LGBT.

> Itatanong ang ilang personal na impormasyon, tulad ng kasarian, edad, at lungsod ng tirahan. Gagamitin ang mga impormasyong ito upang masuri ang mga resulta sa survey.

> Ang iyong partisipasyon ay kusang-loob. Malaya kang bawiin ang iyong pakikilahok sa survey sa anumang oras.

> Ang mga impormasyon ay gagamitin para sa hinaharap na pag-aaral ng mananaliksik. Gagamitin lamang ang mga ito sa loob ng limang taon pagkatapos ng iyong pagsagot sa survey na ito. Isasailalim din ito sa parehong proteksyon tulad ng kasalukuyang protokol.

Usaping pang-kumpidensyal:

> Ang mga makokolektang impormasyon ay pribado, nakatago (anonymized), at hindi ibabahagi sa loob ng pananaliksik na ito, pati na rin sa mga hinaharap na pag-aaral ng mananaliksik.

> Ang mga personal na impormasyon ay protektado sa loob ng mga limitasyon ng batas.

Proteksyon at pagbura sa mga Impormasyon:

> Ang lahat ng impormasyon ay naka-save sa isang protektadong (encrypted at may password) online storage device tulad ng Google Drive, computer sa trabaho, at personal na laptop ng mananaliksik. Ang maari lamang maka-access nito ay ang mananaliksik at ang kanyang supervisor.

> Ang mga impormasyon ay mananatili limang taon pagkatapos ng pangangalap ng mananaliksik. Pagkatapos nito, ang softcopy ay permanenteng buburahin habang ang hardcopy ay itatapon sa isang kumpidensyal na basurahan ng Dublin City University.

> Kung mayroon kang iba pang mga alalahanin sa proteksyon ng mga impormasyon at data, maaari kang makipag-ugnay sa Data Protection Officer ng DCU na si G. Martin Ward sa data.protection@dcu.ie o +353 1 7005118/7008257.

> May karapatan kang mag-sumite ng reklamo sa Irish Data Protection Commission kung sa palagay mo ay nilabag ang iyong mga karapatan sa proteksyon ng data. Bisitahin ang <https://www.dataprotection.ie/>.

Iba pang Impormasyon:

> Kung nais mong mabigyan ng kopya ng pag-aaral na ito, huwag mag-atubiling makipag-ugnay sa mananaliksik.

> Ang pag-aaral na ito ay pinondohan ng Postgraduate Research Scholarship ng School of Communications sa Dublin City University.

> Ang pagsasaliksik na ito ay inaprubahan ng DCU Research Ethics Committee noong ika-31 ng Agosto, 2021.

Kung ang mga kalahok ay may mga alalahanin tungkol sa pag-aaral na ito o nais makipag-usap sa isang independiyenteng tao, mangyaring makipag-ugnay sa:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel +353 1 7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

I understand ☐ press Enter

Appendix I

Informed Consent Form: Focus Group Participants (English)

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY Informed Consent Form (English)

Project title:

From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes Among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Researcher and contact details: This research is conducted by Tracy Mae Ildefonso, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Communications at Dublin City University, Ireland. Email: tracy.ildefonso2@mail.dcu.ie

Purpose of the research: I am being asked by the researcher, Tracy Mae Ildefonso, to participate in this study. This study aims to determine the reactions of the Filipino public and the LGBT community towards the recent LGBT-themed advertisements that are portraying the Filipino LGBT people positively. I will be answering questions that are based on my personal experiences and opinions as a member of the Filipino LGBT community. My responses will help establish the real feelings of the LGBT community on how we are being represented in the Philippine media and how we want to be represented in future advertisements.

Research procedures: I understand that I will be signing a consent form if I participate in the focus group interview. I understand that the focus groups will consist of 5 to 6 people and will last up to 90 minutes. I am aware that I will be watching five Filipino LGBT-themed advertisements. I also understand that the discussions will be audio and video recorded and later on transcribed and translated. I am also aware that we will be using aliases to protect our identity. I was also given a chance to ask questions and address my concerns before participating in the focus groups.

Confidentiality: I am aware that the personal data collected from me will be private, anonymized, pseudonymized, and not be divulged in the research and the researcher's future publications beyond this Ph.D. thesis. I was also informed that the researcher will use these data in her future publications within five years after this focus group interview. I consent to this as long as the protocols in place are the same as the current ones. I am also aware that the data will be protected within the limitations of the law.

Data protection: I am aware that the data will be safely secured in password-protected DCU Google Drive, the researcher's work computer, and personal laptop. I have been informed that only the researcher and her supervisor can access these data. I am aware that the hardcopies will be placed in a locked storage box or envelope that only the researcher has access to. Lastly, I am aware that all the data will be disposed of five years after this focus group interview.

Voluntary participation and withdrawal: I confirm that my participation here is voluntary. I am aware that I can withdraw my participation from the focus groups at any time. I was also given the option to refrain from answering questions I might feel uncomfortable answering and have my responses redacted or removed from the study after completing the focus group interviews if I changed my mind.

Risk: I understand that the researcher has perceived no substantial risk on my personal and professional reputation. I also understand that strong emotions may arise during the discussion as triggered by personal experiences and challenges as an LGBT member in the Philippines.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

<i>I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)</i>	Yes No
<i>I understand the information provided</i>	Yes No
<i>I understand the information provided in relation to data protection</i>	Yes No
<i>I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study</i>	Yes No
<i>I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions</i>	Yes No
<i>I am aware that my interview will be audio and video taped</i>	Yes No
<i>I consent to the use of my personal data for future research (within five years after this interview, subject to the same protocols as this one)</i>	Yes No

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participant's Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix J

Informed Consent Form: Focus Group Participants (Tagalog)

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY Informed Consent Form (Tagalog)

Titulo ng Proyekto:

From the Margins to the Mainstream: An Analysis of Attitudes Among the Public and the LGBT Community to the Increase in LGBT Representations in Advertising in the Philippines

Mga detalye ng mananaliksik: Ang pananaliksik na ito ay isinagawa ni Tracy Mae Ildefonso, doctoral na mag-aaral sa School of Communications sa Dublin City University, Ireland. Email: tracy.ildefonso2@mail.dcu.ie

Layunin ng pagsasaliksik: Hinihikayat ako ng mananaliksik, na si Tracy Mae Ildefonso, na lumahok sa pag-aaral na ito. Nilalayon ng pagsasaliksik na ito na matukoy ang mga reaksyon ng publiko at ng komunidad ng LGBT tungkol sa positibong paglalarawan ng mga Filipino LGBT sa mga patalastas na may temang LGBT. Sasagutin ko ang mga tanong batay sa aking mga personal na karanasan at opinyon bilang miyembro ng Filipino LGBT community. Ang aking mga tugon ay makatutulong upang alamin ang tunay na damdamin ng komunidad sa kung paano kami kinakatawan sa media ng Pilipinas at kung paano namin nais na katawanin sa mga patalastas sa hinaharap.

Mga patakaran sa pagsasaliksik: Naiintindihan ko na ako ay pipirma ng Informed Consent Form kung lalahok ako sa focus group. Naiintindihan ko na kada grupo ay binubuo ng 5 hanggang 6 na tao at ang panayam ay tatagal ng hanggang 90 minuto. Naiintindihan ko na manonood ako ng limang patalastas na may temang LGBT. Nauunawaan ko rin na ang mga talakayan ay ire-record ng parehong audio at video at pagkatapos ay isasalin sa papel (transcribe) at sa wikang Ingles (translate). Alam ko rin na maari akong gumamit ng alias para protektahan ang aking pagkakakilanlan. Binigyan din ako ng pagkakataong magtanong at tugunan ang aking mga alalahanin bago makilahok sa panayam.

Usaping pang-kumpidensyal: Alam ko na ang mga makokolektang personal na impormasyon ay pribado, nakatago (anonymized), maaring gumamit ng alias (pseudonymized), at hindi ibubunyag sa pag-aaral na ito at sa hinaharap na mga pag-aaral ng mananaliksik. Ipinaalam din sa akin na gagamitin ng mananaliksik ang mga datos na ito sa kanyang mga publikasyon sa hinaharap sa loob ng limang taon pagkatapos ng panayam na ito. Pumapayag ako dito hangga't ang mga protokol ay pareho sa mga kasalukuyang protokol. Alam ko rin na ang mga datos ay mapoprotektahan sa loob ng mga limitasyon ng batas.

Proteksyon sa mga impormasyon: Alam ko na ang mga impormasyon ay ligtas na nakatago, at protektado ng password, sa DCU Google Drive, computer sa trabaho, at personal na laptop ng mananaliksik. Nabatid sa akin na ang mananaliksik lamang at ang kanyang supervisor ang maaaring maka-access ng mga impormasyong ito. Panghuli, may kamalayan din ako na ang lahat ng data at impormasyon ay buburahin pagkatapos ng limang taon.

Boluntaryong pakikilahok at pagbawi ng partisipasyon: Kinukumpirma ko na ang aking paglahok sa focus group ay kusang-loob. Alam kong maaari kong bawiin ang aking pakikilahok anumang oras. Binigyan din ako ng opsyon na kung ako ay hindi kumportable sa isang katanungan, maari ko itong hindi sagutin. Maari ko din ipa-redact o alisin sa pag-aaral ang aking mga tugon pagkatapos ng panayam kung magbago ang aking isip.

Mga kumplikasyon: Naiintindihan ko na ang mananaliksik ay walang nakitang malaking panganiib sa aking personal at propesyonal na reputasyon. Naiintindihan ko rin na maaaring makaramdam ng matinding emosyon sa panahon ng talakayan dahil sa mga personal na karanasan at hamon bilang miyembro ng LGBT sa Pilipinas.

Kalahok – mangyaring kumpletuhin ang sumusunod (Bilugan ang Oo o Hindi para sa bawat tanong)

Nabasa ko, o binasa sa akin, ang Plain Language Statement.	Oo	Hindi
Naintindihan ko ang mga nakasaad na impormasyon.	Oo	Hindi
Naintindihan ko ang mga nakasaad tungkol sa "data protection."	Oo	Hindi
Nabigyan ako ng pagkakataon na magtanong tungkol sa pag-aaral na ito.	Oo	Hindi
Nakuntento ako sa mga sagot na ibinigay sa akin.	Oo	Hindi
Ako ay may kamalayan na ang interview ay naka-record ng parehong video at audio.	Oo	Hindi
Pinapahintulutan ko ang paggamit ng aking mga impormasyong pang-personal para sa mga pag-aaral sa hinaharap (sa loob ng limang taon matapos kong sagutan ang survey, at dapat kapareho ng mga protokol tulad sa kasalukuyang survey).	Oo	Hindi

Lagda:

Nabasa at naunawaan ko ang impormasyon sa form na ito. Ang aking mga tanong at alalahanin ay nasagot ng mananaliksik. Mayroon akong kopya ng form na ito kaya naman pumapayag akong makibahagi sa proyektong ito ng pananaliksik.

Lagda ng Kalahok: _____

Pangalan (nakasulat sa malalaking titik): _____

Testigo: _____

Petsa: _____

Appendix K

Informed Consent Form: Survey Respondents (English)

ONLINE CONSENT FORM

By clicking "I accept," I agree with the following terms:

- ✓ I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me).
- ✓ I understand the information provided.
- ✓ I understand the information provided in relation to data protection.
- ✓ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.
- ✓ I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions.
- ✓ I understand I may withdraw from the research study at any point.
- ✓ I consent to use my personal data for future research (within five years after this survey, subject to the same protocols as this one.)
- ✓ I have read and understood the arrangements to be made to protect the confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided, is subject to legal limitations.
- ✓ I have read and understand confirmations relating to any other relevant information as indicated in the Plain Language Statement.

☐ A I accept

☐ B I don't accept

Appendix L

Informed Consent Form: Survey Respondents (Tagalog)

ONLINE CONSENT FORM

Sa pamamagitan ng pag-pili sa "I accept," pumapayag ako sa mga sumusunod:

- ✓ Nabasa ko, o binasa sa akin, ang Plain Language Statement.
- ✓ Naintindihan ko ang mga nakasaad na impormasyon.
- ✓ Naintindihan ko ang mga nakasaad tungkol sa "data protection."
- ✓ Nabigyan ako ng pagkakataon na magtanong tungkol sa pag-aaral na ito.
- ✓ Nakuntento ako sa mga sagot na ibinigay sa akin.
- ✓ Naiintindihan ko na maari kong bawiin ang aking partisipasyon sa survey na ito.
- ✓ Pinapahintulutan ko ang paggamit ng aking mga impormasyong pang-personal para sa mga pag-aaral sa hinaharap (sa loob ng limang taon matapos kong sagutan ang survey, at dapat kapareho ng mga protokol tulad sa kasalukyang survey).
- ✓ Naiintindihan ko na ang proteksyon sa aking mga impormasyong pang-personal ay napapailalim sa legal na limitasyon.
- ✓ Naiintindihan ko ang iba pang mga impormasyon na nakasaad sa Plain Language Statement.

I accept - Sumasang-ayon ako.

I don't accept - Hindi ako sumasang-ayon.

☐ A I accept

☐ B I don't accept

Appendix M

Focus Group interview: Discussion topics and questions

Initial phase:

1. What is your age, sexual orientation, gender identity (if any), city of residence, education and occupational status?

First phase: Discussion on LGBT representation in media

1. What are your opinions on LGBT representation in Philippine media? What are your opinions on the frequency of LGBT characters in media?
2. Is there a particular platform/genre/show/actors that stand out when it comes to LGBT representation?
3. Has the media done a good job in representing them? Why or why not?
4. Based on your experiences, do these observed representations extend in our society?

Second phase: Watch the following advertisements:

- Uber Philippines (2017) “Kilig #UberStories”
- Bench/ (2018) “How long can you keep a secret?”
- Smart Communications (2016) “Break down barriers and welcome change!”
- Pantene Philippines (2018) “Strength knows no gender. #StrongerNow”
- Close Up Philippines (2019) “#MakeYourMove Films - P.S. I Love You, Bro.”

Questions for each advertisement:

1. Based on your experiences, is the narrative portrayed similarly in your reality?
2. What are your opinions on how the LGBT people were portrayed in this advertisement? Was it accurate or inaccurate? Do the genre and script fit the advertisement?
3. What are your opinions on how the non-LGBT people were depicted in these advertisements?

Third Phase: Discussion on recognition in media

1. Do you feel more recognized and seen because of these new LGBT-themed advertisements? Why or why not?
2. What are your opinions on the wider LGBT visibility in media because of Vice Ganda and other LGBT-themed films, TV shows, and others?
3. Based on your experience, was society’s treatment of you changed because of these positive portrayals in media?

Fourth Phase: Discussion on advice for future advertisements

1. What are your suggestions in terms of LGBT representation in media?
2. In your opinion, what should the advertisers do to ensure good LGBT representations?
3. In your opinion, what are the elements of a perfectly represented LGBT member in an advertisement should have?

Appendix N

Survey Questions (English)

First phase: About you.

(The first five questions act as the verification process on whether they qualify to be a respondent to the survey. Each answers are designed to direct them to different pages informing them that they didn't qualify (for non-residents and non-citizens) or inviting them to join the focus-group discussions (for LGBT members).)

1. Are you:
- A. Male
 - B. Female
 - C. Transgender
 - D. Non-binary
 - E. Other _____

(Note: if they choose option C, D and E, they will be directed to a different page explaining that there is a separate data gathering for this group, aka the focus group interview)

2. Are you:
- A. Heterosexual
 - B. Homosexual (male)
 - C. Homosexual (female)
 - D. Bisexual (for both male and female)

(Note: if they choose anything other than option A, they will be directed to a different page explaining that there is a separate data gathering for this group, aka the focus group interview)

3. Are you a Filipino citizen?

- A. Yes
- B. No

(Note: if they choose No, they will be directed to a different page explaining that they don't qualify for the survey)

4. Are you currently living in the Philippines?

- A. Yes
- B. No

(Note: if they choose No, they will be directed to a different page explaining that they don't qualify for the survey)

5. What age category are you in?

- A. 17 and below *(if they choose this, they will be directed to a different page explaining that they don't qualify for the survey)*
- B. 18 to 24
- C. 25 to 34
- D. 35 to 44
- E. 45 to 54
- F. 55 to 64
- G. 65 and above

This is the end of the verification process. The qualified respondents will be directed to the questions below.

6. Current city of residence _____

7. What is your highest level of education?

- A. Elementary diploma
- B. High school diploma
- C. Vocational training
- D. Bachelor's degree (or current student)
- E. Master's degree (or current student)
- F. Doctorate degree (or current student)
- G. None
- H. Other _____

8. What is your work status?

- A. Employed

- B. Self-employed/Freelance
- C. Unemployed
- D. Student / Intern
- E. Retired
- F. Not able to work
- G. Other _____

Second phase: This is to determine your media habits and opinions on Filipino LGBT people as influenced by media.

9. Which traditional media do you use the most? Rank these choices.

- ____ Television
- ____ Radio
- ____ Print (Newspaper, Magazine)

10. How many hours do you spend watching television in a day?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 or more hours

11. Your given average daily TV hours is consistent for....

- A. Less than a year
- B. One year
- C. The past 2-3 years
- D. The past 4-5 years
- E. The past 6-9 years
- F. The past 10 years and above

12. How many hours do you spend browsing online/social media in a day?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 or more hours

13. Have you been exposed to these media platforms featuring or portraying a Filipino LGBT member?

Television	Yes	No
Online/Social Media	Yes	No
Radio	Yes	No
Print (Newspaper, Magazine)	Yes	No
Advertisements	Yes	No
Films	Yes	No

14. Which negative/stereotyped Filipino LGBT portrayal have you observed in media? You may choose more than one.

- A. Comedic / Hysterics
- B. Explicitly sexual
- C. Closeted
- D. No depth
- E. Poor / Belong to low social class
- F. Abused or Abandoned
- G. Others _____

15. I agree that the Filipino LGBT people have these characteristics in my reality/community:
Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).

Comedic / Hysterics	5	4	3	2	1
Explicitly sexual	5	4	3	2	1
Closeted	5	4	3	2	1
No depth	5	4	3	2	1
Poor / Belong to low social class	5	4	3	2	1
Abused or Abandoned	5	4	3	2	1
Others (if you have indicated any from the previous question)	5	4	3	2	1

16. Which positive Filipino LGBT portrayal have you observed in media? You may choose more than one.

- A. Highly educated

- B. Career-driven / Belong to middle to high social class
 C. In a healthy relationship
 D. Proud of their sexuality / Empowered
 E. Good company (friendship)
 F. Responsible son/daughter
 G. Others _____

17. I agree that the Filipino LGBT people have these characteristics in my reality/community: *Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).*

Highly educated	5	4	3	2	1
Career-driven / Belong to middle to high social class	5	4	3	2	1
In a healthy relationship	5	4	3	2	1
Proud of their sexuality / Empowered	5	4	3	2	1
Good company (friendship)	5	4	3	2	1
Responsible son/daughter	5	4	3	2	1
Others (if you have indicated any from the previous question)	5	4	3	2	1

18. How did the Philippine media contribute to your perceptions towards the Filipino LGBT people? *Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).*

The media influenced my perception of the Filipino LGBT people.	5	4	3	2	1
I have my own understanding based on my experiences, observations, relatives, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
I realized that the negative/stereotyped media representation is similar to the characteristics of the LGBT people in my reality/community.	5	4	3	2	1
I realized that the positive portrayals are similar to the characteristics of the LGBT people in my reality/community.	5	4	3	2	1
The media has been stereotyping Filipino LGBT people.	5	4	3	2	1
The media has been accurately representing Filipino LGBT people.	5	4	3	2	1

19. Which non-media factors influenced your understanding of the Filipino LGBT people most?

- _____ Education
 _____ Personal knowledge/observations
 _____ Personal Experience
 _____ Family and friends
 _____ Place of work
 _____ My region / city
 _____ Religion
 _____ Filipino traditions
 _____ None
 _____ Others: _____

Third phase: This is to determine your opinion on the five LGBT-themed advertisements.

First ad: Smart Communications (2016) “Break down barriers and welcome change!”

20. If you have previously seen this ad, where have you seen it?

- A. Television
 B. Online/ Social media
 C. I haven't seen it
 D. Others _____

21. What do you think about the messages and LGBT portrayal of SMART advertisement? *Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).*

Do you think showing the family acceptance of an LGBT member, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
Do you think showing same-sex relationship, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
The LGBT members were portrayed negatively or stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
They were portrayed positively.	5	4	3	2	1

Their portrayal is similar to what I observe in my surroundings.	5	4	3	2	1

Second ad: Uber Philippines (2017) “Kilig #UberStories”

22. If you have previously seen this ad, where have you seen it?

- A. Television
 B. Online/ Social media
 C. I haven't seen it
 D. Others _____

23. What do you think about the messages and LGBT portrayal of UBER advertisement?
Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).

Do you think showing same-sex attraction, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
The LGBT members were portrayed negatively or stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
They were portrayed positively.	5	4	3	2	1
Their portrayal is similar to what I observe in my surroundings.	5	4	3	2	1

Third ad: Bench/ (2018) “How long can you keep a secret?”

24. If you have previously seen this ad, where have you seen it?

- A. Television
 B. Online/ Social media
 C. I haven't seen it
 D. Others _____

25. What do you think about the messages and LGBT portrayal of Bench/ advertisement?
Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).

Do you think showing the family acceptance of an LGBT member, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
Do you think showing that the kid can finally get out of the closet, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
Do you think showing same-sex attraction, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
The LGBT members were portrayed negatively or stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
They were portrayed positively.	5	4	3	2	1
Their portrayal is similar to what I observe in my surroundings.	5	4	3	2	1

Fourth ad: Pantene Philippines (2018) “Strength knows no gender. #StrongerNow”

26. If you have previously seen this ad, where have you seen it?

- A. Television
 B. Online/ Social media
 C. I haven't seen it
 D. Others _____

27. What do you think about the messages and LGBT portrayal of Pantene advertisement?
Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).

Do you think showing LGBT empowerment, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
The LGBT members were portrayed negatively or stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
They were portrayed positively.	5	4	3	2	1
Their portrayal is similar to what I observe in my surroundings.	5	4	3	2	1

Last ad: Close Up Philippines (2019) “#MakeYourMove Films - P.S. I Love You, Bro.”

28. If you have previously seen this ad, where have you seen it?

- A. Television

- B. Online/ Social media
 C. I haven't seen it
 D. Others _____

29. What do you think about the messages and LGBT portrayal of Close Up advertisement?
 Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).

Do you think showing same-sex attraction, as we see in the advertisement, is a good thing?	5	4	3	2	1
The LGBT members were portrayed negatively or stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
They were portrayed positively.	5	4	3	2	1
Their portrayal is similar to what I observe in my surroundings.	5	4	3	2	1

Fourth phase: This is to determine if there is a perceived change in perception of the Filipino LGBT people because of the five advertisements.

30. After watching these five advertisements featuring LGBT characters, did it influence your perception of Filipino LGBT people positively?

- A. Yes. After watching the ads, it changed my perception positively.
 B. It has slightly affected me.
 C. No, because I already feel positive about them.
 D. No, it does not affect me.

31. After watching these five advertisements featuring LGBT characters, did it influence your perception of Filipino LGBT people negatively?

- A. Yes. After watching the ads, it changed my perception negatively.
 B. It has slightly affected me.
 C. No, because I already feel negative about them.
 D. No, it does not affect me.

32. After watching these five advertisements featuring LGBT characters, how likely would you...
 Rate your answer on a scale of 5 to 1 (5 as strongly AGREE, and 1 as strongly DISAGREE).

Buy/support the products advertised	5	4	3	2	1
Discuss the advertisements with your peers	5	4	3	2	1
Share the advertisements on your social media pages.	5	4	3	2	1

33. In your opinion, can continuous positive LGBT representation in media reduce the negative perception of the public towards the Filipino LGBT people?

- A. I agree. Continuous positive representation can lead to full awareness and understanding of different LGBT issues.
 B. I somewhat agree or disagree because there are other societal and traditional factors involved.
 C. Probably. It normalizes their positive representation in media, but I don't think that it's a good thing.
 D. I disagree. The current Filipino LGBT representation is already enough.

34. In your opinion, can continuous positive LGBT representation in media increase the positive perception of the public towards the Filipino LGBT people?

- A. I agree. Continuous positive representation can lead to full awareness and understanding of different LGBT issues.
 B. I somewhat agree or disagree because there are other societal and traditional factors involved.
 C. Probably. It normalizes their positive representation in media, but I don't think that it's a good thing.
 D. I disagree. The current Filipino LGBT representation is already enough.

END OF SURVEY

Appendix O

Survey Questions (Tagalog)

Unang yugto: Tungkol sa iyo

(The first five questions act as the verification process on whether they qualify to be a respondent to the survey. Each answers are designed to direct them to different pages informing them that they didn't qualify (for non-residents and non-citizens) or inviting them to join the focus-group discussions (for LGBT members).)

1. Ikaw ba ay:

- A. Lalaki
- B. Babae
- C. Transgender
- D. Non-binary
- E. Iba pa _____

(Note: if they choose option C, D and E, they will be directed to a different page explaining that there is a separate data gathering for this group, aka the focus group interview)

2. Ikaw ba ay:

- A. Heterosekswal (straight na babae o lalaki)
- B. Homosekswal (lalaki)
- C. Homosekswal (babae)
- D. Bisexual (parehong lalaki at babae)

(Note: if they choose anything other than option A, they will be directed to a different page explaining that there is a separate data gathering for this group, aka the focus group interview)

3. Ikaw ba ay mamamayan ng Pilipinas?

- A. Oo
- B. Hindi

(Note: if they choose B, they will be directed to a different page explaining that they don't qualify for the survey)

4. Ikaw ba ay kasalukuyang naninirahan sa Pilipinas?

- A. Oo
- B. Hindi

(Note: if they choose B, they will be directed to a different page explaining that they don't qualify for the survey)

5. Ikaw ay nasa edad na....

- A. 17 pababa *(if they choose this, they will be directed to a different page explaining that they don't qualify for the survey)*
- B. 18 - 24
- C. 25 - 34
- D. 35 - 44
- E. 45 - 54
- F. 55 - 64
- G. 65 at mas mataas

This is the end of the verification process. The qualified respondents will be directed to the questions below.

6. Siyudad kung saan ka ngayon nakatira: _____

7. Ano ang pinakamataas na antas na edukasyon ang naabot mo?

- A. Diploma sa elementarya
- B. Diploma sa high school
- C. Pagsasanay sa bokasyonal
- D. Bachelor's degree (o kasalukuyang nag-aaral)
- E. Master's degree (o kasalukuyang nag-aaral)
- F. Doctorate degree (o kasalukuyang nag-aaral)
- G. Wala
- H. Iba pa _____

8. Ano ang iyong trabaho?

- A. Employed

- B. Self-employed/Freelance
- C. Hindi nagtatrabaho
- D. Estudyante / Intern
- E. Retirado
- F. Walang kakayanan mag-trabaho
- G. Iba pa _____

Ikalawang yugto: Ang iyong pagkonsumo ng medya.

9. Aling tradisyonal na media ang iyong pinaka-ginagamit? Pagsunud-sunurin ayon sa iyong paggamit.

- ____ Telebisyon
- ____ Radyo
- ____ Print (Diyaryo, Magasin)

10. Sa isang araw, gaano karaming oras ang ginugugol mo sa panonood ng telebisyon?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 o higit pa

11. Ang binigay mong oras na ginugugol mo sa panunuod ng telebisyon sa isang araw ay nagaganap sa loob ng....

- A. Mababa sa isang taon
- B. Isang taon
- C. Sa nakaraang 2-3 taon
- D. Sa nakaraang 4-5 taon
- E. Sa nakaraang 6-9 taon
- F. Sa nakaraang 10 taon pataas

12. Sa isang araw, gaano karaming oras ang ginugugol mo sa internet o social media?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 o higit pa

13. Na-expose ka ba sa mga uri ng media na nakalista sa ibaba na nagtatampok o naglalarawan ng isang kasapi ng Filipino LGBT?

Telebisyon	Oo	Hindi
Internet/Social Media	Oo	Hindi
Radyo	Oo	Hindi
Print (Diyaryo, Magasin)	Oo	Hindi
Advertisements (Patalastas)	Oo	Hindi
Pelikula	Oo	Hindi

14. Aling negatibo/stereotypical na paglalarawan sa mga Filipino LGBT ang iyong napansin sa medya? Maaring pumili ng higit sa isa.

- A. Komedyante / Maiingay
- B. Masyadong sekswal
- C. Closeted o tinatago ang tunay na sekswalidad
- D. Walang lalim ang karakter
- E. Mahirap o kabilang sa mababang klase ng lipunan
- F. Inaabuso o inaabandona
- G. Iba pa _____

15. Sumasang-ayon ako na ang mga Filipino LGBT ay may mga katangiang ito sa aking realidad / pamayanan: 5 - *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon*, 1 - *Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Komedyante / Maiingay	5	4	3	2	1
Masyadong sekswal	5	4	3	2	1
Closeted o tinatago ang tunay na sekswalidad	5	4	3	2	1
Walang lalim ang karakter	5	4	3	2	1
Mahirap o kabilang sa mababang klase ng lipunan	5	4	3	2	1
Inaabuso o inaabandona	5	4	3	2	1
Iba pa (kung mayroong kang sinulat sa naunang pahina)	5	4	3	2	1

16. Aling positibong paglalarawan sa mga Filipino LGBT ang iyong napansin sa medya? Maaring pumili ng higit sa isa.

- A. Edukado
 B. Career-driven / Kabilang sa gitna hanggang sa mataas na klase ng lipunan
 C. Nasa isang healthy at maayos na relasyon
 D. Ipinagmamalaki ang kanilang sekswalidad / Empowered
 E. Mabuting kaibigan, kamag-anak, ka-opisina, kapitbahay, atbp.
 F. Responsableng anak
 G. Iba pa _____

17. Sumasang-ayon ako na ang mga Filipino LGBT ay may mga katangiang ito sa aking realidad / pamayanan: 5 - *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon*, 1 - *Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Edukado	5	4	3	2	1
Career-driven / Kabilang sa gitna hanggang sa mataas na klase ng lipunan	5	4	3	2	1
Nasa isang healthy at maayos na relasyon	5	4	3	2	1
Ipinagmamalaki ang kanilang sekswalidad / Empowered	5	4	3	2	1
Mabuting kaibigan, kamag-anak, ka-opisina, kapitbahay, atbp.	5	4	3	2	1
Responsableng anak	5	4	3	2	1
Iba pa (kung mayroong kang sinulat sa naunang pahina)	5	4	3	2	1

18. Paano naimpluwensyahan ng media ng Pilipinas ang iyong pananaw sa mga Filipino LGBT?
 5 - *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon*, 1 - *Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Naimpluwensyahan ng media ang aking pananaw sa mga Filipino LGBT.	5	4	3	2	1
Mayroon akong sariling paniniwala mula sa aking mga karanasan, obserbasyon, mga kamag-anak, atbp.	5	4	3	2	1
Napagtanto ko na ang negatibong/ stereotypical na representasyon ng media ay katulad ng mga katangian ng mga LGBT sa aking realidad/ pamayanan.	5	4	3	2	1
Napagtanto ko na ang mga positibong paglalarawan ay katulad ng mga katangian ng mga LGBT sa aking realidad/pamayanan.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang media ay ini-stereotype ang mga Filipino LGBT.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang media ay perpektong inilalarawan ang mga Filipino LGBT.	5	4	3	2	1

19. Aling mga kadahilanan na hindi pang-media ang nakaimpluwensya sa iyong pananaw sa mga Filipino LGBT? Maaring pumili ng higit sa isa.

- _____ Edukasyon
 _____ Pansariling paniniwala o obserbasyon
 _____ Pansariling karanasan
 _____ Pamilya at kaibigan
 _____ Sa lugar ng aking trabaho
 _____ Sa siyudad o rehiyon kung saan ako nakatira
 _____ Relihiyon
 _____ Mga tradisyon sa Pilipinas
 _____ Wala
 _____ Iba pa _____

Ikatlong yugto: Ang iyong opinyon sa mga patalastas na may temang LGBT.

Unang Patalastas: Smart Communications (2016) "Break down barriers and welcome change!"

20. Kung napanood mo na ito, saan mo ito unang napanood?

- A. Telebisyon
 B. Internet/ Social media
 C. Hindi ko pa ito napanood.
 D. Iba pa _____

21. Ano ang iyong opinyon tungkol sa mga mensahe at paglalarawan ng Filipino LGBT sa patalastas ng SMART? *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon*, 1 - *Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng pagtanggap ng isang pamilya sa kaanak na miyembro ng LGBT, tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1

Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng same-sex relationship, tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa Filipino LGBT ay negatibo o stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay positibo.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay katulad ng nakikita o naoobserbahan ko sa aking paligid.	5	4	3	2	1

Ikalawang Patalastas: Uber Philippines (2017) “Kilig #UberStories”

22. Kung napanood mo na ito, saan mo ito unang napanood?

- A. Telebisyon
- B. Internet/ Social media
- C. Hindi ko pa ito napapanood.
- D. Iba pa _____

23. Ano ang iyong opinyon tungkol sa mga mensahe at paglalarawan ng Filipino LGBT sa patalastas ng UBER? *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon, 1 - Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng atraksyon o pagkagusto sa same-sex, tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa Filipino LGBT ay negatibo o stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay positibo.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay katulad ng nakikita o naoobserbahan ko sa aking paligid.	5	4	3	2	1

Ikatlong Patalastas: Bench/ (2018) “How long can you keep a secret?”

24. Kung napanood mo na ito, saan mo ito unang napanood?

- A. Telebisyon
- B. Internet/ Social media
- C. Hindi ko pa ito napapanood.
- D. Iba pa _____

25. Ano ang iyong opinyon tungkol sa mga mensahe at paglalarawan ng Filipino LGBT sa patalastas ng Bench/? *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon, 1 - Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng pagtanggap ng isang pamilya sa kaanak na miyembro ng LGBT, tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1
Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng kalayaan mula sa pagiging 'closeted,' tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1
Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng atraksyon o pagkagusto sa same-sex, tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa Filipino LGBT ay negatibo o stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay positibo.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay katulad ng nakikita o naoobserbahan ko sa aking paligid.	5	4	3	2	1

Ika-apat na Patalastas: Pantene Philippines (2018) “Strength knows no gender. #StrongerNow”

26. Kung napanood mo na ito, saan mo ito unang napanood?

- A. Telebisyon
- B. Internet/ Social media
- C. Hindi ko pa ito napapanood.
- D. Iba pa _____

27. Ano ang iyong opinyon tungkol sa mga mensahe at paglalarawan ng Filipino LGBT sa patalastas ng Pantene? *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon, 1 - Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng LGBT empowerment, tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1

Ang paglalarawan sa Filipino LGBT ay negatibo o stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay positibo.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay katulad ng nakikita o naoobserbahan ko sa aking paligid.	5	4	3	2	1

Huling Patalastas: Close Up Philippines (2019) “#MakeYourMove Films - P.S. I Love You, Bro.”

28. Kung napanood mo na ito, saan mo ito unang napanood?

- A. Telebisyon
- B. Internet/ Social media
- C. Hindi ko pa ito napapanood.
- D. Iba pa _____

29. Ano ang iyong opinyon tungkol sa mga mensahe at paglalarawan ng Filipino LGBT sa patalastas ng Close Up? *Matindi akong sumasang-ayon, 1 - Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon*

Sa iyong palagay, ang pagpapakita ba ng atraksyon o pagkagusto sa same-sex, tulad ng ipinakita sa patalastas, ay isang magandang bagay?	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa Filipino LGBT ay negatibo o stereotyped.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay positibo.	5	4	3	2	1
Ang paglalarawan sa kanila ay katulad ng nakikita o naoobserbahan ko sa aking paligid.	5	4	3	2	1

Ika-apat na yugto: Ang iyong opinyon tungkol sa mga Filipino LGBT

30. Matapos mong mapanood ang limang patalastas na nagtatampok ng mga karakter na LGBT, positibo ba nitong naimpluwensyahan ang iyong pananaw sa mga Pilipinong LGBT?

- A. Oo. Matapos kong panoorin ang mga patalastas, naging positibo ang aking pananaw tungkol sa kanila.
- B. Bahagya lamang itong nakaapekto sa akin.
- C. Hindi, dahil positibo na ang pakiramdam ko sa kanila bago ko pa napanood ang mga patalastas.
- D. Hindi, walang naging epekto sa akin.

31. Matapos mong mapanood ang limang patalastas na nagtatampok ng mga karakter na LGBT, negatibo ba nitong naimpluwensyahan ang iyong pananaw sa mga Pilipinong LGBT?

- A. Oo. Matapos kong panoorin ang mga patalastas, naging positibo ang aking pananaw tungkol sa kanila.
- B. Bahagya lamang itong nakaapekto sa akin.
- C. Hindi, dahil positibo na ang pakiramdam ko sa kanila bago ko pa napanood ang mga patalastas.
- D. Hindi, walang naging epekto sa akin.

32. Matapos mapanood ang limang patalastas na may temang LGBT, ikaw ba ay...

Matindi akong sumasang-ayon, 1 - Matindi akong hindi sumasang-ayon

Bibili o susuporta sa mga produkto na ineendorse ng mga patalastas	5	4	3	2	1
Pag-uusapan ang mga patalastas kasama ang iyong mga kaibigan	5	4	3	2	1
I-she-share ang mga patalastas sa iyong social media page	5	4	3	2	1

33. Sa iyong palagay, ang tuluy-tuloy ba na positibong representasyon ng LGBT sa media ay makakatulong para mabawasan ang negatibong pang-unawa ng publiko sa mga Filipino LGBT?

- A. Sumasang-ayon ako. Ang patuloy na positibong representasyon ay maaaring humantong sa buong kamalayan at pag-unawa sa iba't ibang mga isyu tungkol sa mga Filipino LGBT.
- B. Ako ay medyo sumasang-ayon at hindi sumasang-ayon, dahil may iba pang mga bagay na nakakaapekto dito tulad ng tradisyon at mga paniniwala sa lipunan.
- C. Maari. Ni-no-normalisa nito ang kanilang positibong representasyon sa media. Pero sa palagay ko, hindi ito magandang bagay.
- D. Hindi ako sang-ayon. Sa aking palagay, ang kasalukuyang representasyon ng Filipino LGBT sa medya ay sapat na.

34. Sa iyong palagay, ang tuluy-tuloy ba na positibong representasyon ng LGBT sa media ay makakatulong para mapabuti ang positibong pang-unawa ng publiko sa mga Filipino LGBT?
- A. Sumasang-ayon ako. Ang patuloy na positibong representasyon ay maaaring humantong sa buong kamalayan at pag-unawa sa iba't ibang mga isyu tungkol sa mga Filipino LGBT.
 - B. Ako ay medyo sumasang-ayon at hindi sumasang-ayon, dahil may iba pang mga bagay na nakakaapekto dito tulad ng tradisyon at mga paniniwala sa lipunan.
 - C. Maari. Ni-no-normalisa nito ang kanilang positibong representasyon sa media. Pero sa palagay ko, hindi ito magandang bagay.
 - D. Hindi ako sang-ayon. Sa aking palagay, ang kasalukuyang representasyon ng Filipino LGBT sa medya ay sapat na.

SALAMAT SA IYONG ORAS