



### RELIGION AND SOCIAL TOLERANCE: GENERATION Z'S VIEWS ON EXPOSURE TO HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE MASS MEDIA

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#### Abstracts

The media exerts a considerable influence on individuals' views, attitudes, and behaviors, particularly on those who lack access to alternative sources of information or are still shaping and forming their identities and perspectives. Attitude towards homosexuality has been different in understanding to type of societies' cultural and moral development or political circumstance. Arising out of this issue on homosexuality is the idea of natural law and some interpretations of that law as forbidding homosexual sex. Traditionally, homosexuals have been underrepresented and misrepresented in television series and feature films. Homosexual characters have been cast in stereotypically negative roles purely for amusing the audience. In this paper, the researchers were able to analyze how the introduction of content presenting and detailing LGBT individuals and concerns into the mainstream media affects the audiences' attitudes and acceptance of the issue, particularly the Generation Z. The findings indicated that the majority of generation Z residents in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, aged 15-19, are not influenced by the media in their views on homosexuality, and the interpretation revealed a neutral conclusion in terms of fully tolerating homosexuality in the community.

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## Introduction

The mainstream media has an important role as an information provider and social model. As a primary source of information, the media has a strong influence over individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, especially for those who don't have wide access to other information or are just beginning to shape and form their identities and opinions. When visitors to the Philippines remark that Filipinos openly tolerate and/or accept homosexuality, they invariably have in mind effeminate, cross-dressing men (*bakla*) swishing down streets and squealing on television programs with flaming impunity. This is sadly misinformed. If their society was truly tolerant of (male) homosexuality, then Filipinos would see not just flaming transvestites shrieking their heads off in TV sitcoms and variety shows, but local men, frenching and erotically manhandling each other in steamy 'gay telenovelas'.

Homosexuality is a sexual orientation, as opposed to a gender identity such as male, female, and non-binary. People who are homosexual could refer to themselves as gay, lesbian, LGBTQ, queer, or a number of other terms (WebMD 2020).

Attitude towards homosexuality has been various in accordance to type of societies' cultural and moral development or political situation. Arising out of this issue on homosexuality is the idea of natural law and some interpretations of that law as forbidding homosexual sex. References to natural law plays an important role in contemporary debates about homosexuality in religion and politics. A central issue raised by queer theory, is whether homosexuality, and hence heterosexuality and bisexuality, is socially constructed or purely driven by biological forces.

Homosexuals have historically been under represented and stereotyped in television shows and films. Traditionally, homosexual characters have been shown in stereotypical, negative roles solely for the audience's humor (Life Site News, n.d.). These stereotypes include characters lacking stable relationships, being preoccupied with their sexuality, and being laughable, one-dimensional figures. As the prominence of gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) figures in the media have risen, it seems likely that the media's impact on the lives of GLB individuals has also grown. Media exposure has in fact shown significance in determining attitudes about content.

Locally, Homosexuality is a taboo topic in Sultan Kudarat. With the trend of boys' love films going on, many people especially some boys find homosexuality inappropriate to the eyes. However, throughout years of growth of the media as a platform of social expression, there is notable progression in representations and attention to homosexuality.

This paper aimed to examine how the introduction of content portraying and describing homosexual people and issues into the mainstream media relates to audiences' (especially Generation Z's) outlooks and acceptance in the said issue.

## Methods

The present study aims to uncover the current attitudes of the participants sample group, as well as the ability to use the data to broaden one's perspective on a topic. This study is best described as cross-sectional study design where the researcher measures the outcome and the exposures in the study participants at the same time because it was used to capture knowledge or attitudes one point at a time.

A cross-sectional study examines the relationship between variables of interest as they exist in a defined population at a single point in time or over a short period of time. The researchers needed to get data from specific respondents, therefore they utilized a type of non-probability sampling called convenience sampling which is used for samples from the general population chosen since they are easily accessible to the researchers. This research

utilizes quantitative method of research design to describe the profile of the students and how the media influenced them when it comes to the acceptance of Homosexuality in the society.

### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents are Generation Z Students of Sultan Kudarat both male and female ranging from 15-19 years old. The researchers chose 386 respondents among 9,643 Generation Z in the municipality of Isulan. The survey is composed of different questions which will conclude if this research would be possible.

### **Locale of the Study**

The study was conducted at Isulan, the capital municipality of Sultan Kudarat. The chosen municipality has an overall total of 17 barangays namely: Bambad, Bual, D'Lotilla, Dansuli, Impao, Kalawag I, Kalawag II, Kalawag III, Kenram, Kolambog, Kudanding, Lagandang, Laguilayan, Mapantig, New Pangasinan, Sampao, and Tayugo



**Figure 1.** Political Map of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat

### **Research Instrument**

To determine the influence of this study, the researchers used a quantitative approach that will give the rating of the students with the use of multiple-choice survey questionnaires that will be applied to confirm the previous studies through a survey that will consist of 3 (three) parts; (1) will contain the personal information of the chosen respondents; the information will determine the respondent's name, age, address and gender which their response will be confidential and their anonymity is secured, (2) will consist of questions regarding their engagement on mass media platforms such as television, magazines, newspaper, internet, and social media platforms, (3) about the social acceptance of Generation Z to homosexuality. Likert type items were used to assess participants' overall media use. Likert scaling is based on the assumption of an underlying (or latent or natural) continuous variable whose value characterizes respondents' attitudes and opinions. Likert scales are widely utilized in many fields, including psychology, sociology, health care, marketing, attitude, preference, customer quality perceptions or expectations, subjective well-being in health care, and so on. Individual Likert scale items typically include an odd number of response categories, such as 5 or 7. Strongly approved, Approved, Undecided, Disapproved, and Strongly disapproved are some descriptive response options. Response categories are typically assigned numbers such as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, or by -2, -1, 0, 1, and 2 or any linear transformation of such numbers. Assigning sequential integer values to scale categories, on the other hand, has been criticized as unrealistic.

With this scale, the respondents are asked to rate items on a level of agreement or disagreement. Specifically, the Likert Scale Response Anchor that the researcher used is Likelihood (Definitely-Never).

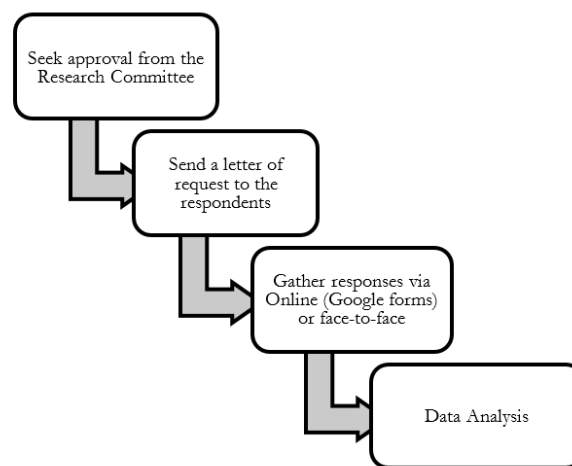
### Sampling Technique

The target participants would be selected based on the Purposive Sampling Technique. The first step in the recruitment for the interview and focus group respondents begins with word-of-mouth referral and through selective respondents within the community. The selected location of the respondents is in the municipality of Isulan. The researchers would choose 386 respondents in the chosen municipality. Once recruited, respondents would be given survey questionnaires in order to accumulate information for the study. Mainly, the basis of the questionnaires is to determine the social tolerance among Generation Z towards the exposure of homosexuality in mass media.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers sought approval and permission from the research Committee regarding the research method and instrument to be used. With the approval, the researchers requested a written recommendation from the respective respondents where this study has been conducted. Also, the researchers sent a letter of request for the conduct of the study to the respondents. A written agreement has been made between the researchers and the schools or places where the study was conducted. Then the researchers met the participants through face-to-face and online and discussed their participation in their study and set schedules for the actual data-gathering.

The researchers conducted an orientation with the respondents regarding the study's objectives and scope. It includes the discussion of the informed Consent Form which covered assurance of confidentiality, anonymity, and dissemination of results. Part of the orientation was the emphasis on voluntary participation and withdrawal participation may want to. Also, the researchers discussed the nature of participation and what the research would expect out of them.



**Figure 2.** Waterfall Diagram of the Data Gathering Procedure

### Statistical Treatment

In this study, Likert type items were used to assess participants' overall media use. Likert scaling is based on the assumption of an underlying (or latent or natural) continuous variable whose value characterizes respondents' attitudes and opinions. Likert scales are widely utilized in many fields, including psychology, sociology, health care, marketing, attitude, preference, customer quality perceptions or expectations, subjective well-being in health care, and so on. Individual Likert scale items typically include an odd number of response categories, such as 5 or 7. Strongly approved, Approved, Undecided, Disapproved, and Strongly disapproved are

some descriptive response options. Response categories are typically assigned numbers such as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, or by -2, -1, 0, 1, and 2 or any linear transformation of such numbers. Assigning sequential integer values to scale categories, on the other hand, has been criticized as unrealistic.

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## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

The primary objective of this study is to determine the social tolerance among Generation Z towards the exposure of homosexuality in mass media. This section analyses the various demographic characteristics of the respondents aged 15-19 from the different barangays of Isulan. It includes their gender, age and religion that would affect their outlooks regarding Homosexuality.

The table consists of the demographics and viewpoints of a diverse group of people who are accurately representative of those who watch the entertainment shows and read the news stories mentioned in the questions. Owing to the recent growth of homosexual media, as observed by Portwood (2016), younger generations' attitudes about homosexual media have shifted to be more tolerant. If media outlets or future researchers wanted to pursue to it or investigate opinions toward homosexuality based only on age, they might utilize this information to target a certain age group.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	168	43.5%
Female	156	40.4%
Prefer not to say	62	16.1%
<b>Age group</b>		
15	68	17.6%
16	63	16.3%
17	108	28%
18	75	19.4%
19	72	18.7%
<b>Religion</b>		
Roman Catholic	152	39.4%
Islam	71	18.4%
Allaiance	40	10.4%
Iglesia Ni Cristo	32	8.3%
Methodist	17	4.4%
Seventh Day of Adventist	12	3.1%

Wesleyan	10	4.1%
The Bible Holiness Church of God	12	3.1%
Christian	6	1.6%
Protestant	4	1%
Baptist	3	0.8%
CAMACOP	2	0.5%
Evangelical Christian	3	0.8%
Foursquare	3	0.8%
Jehovah's Witnesses	2	0.5%
Pentecost	2	0.5%
IFI	3	0.8%
Agnostic	1	0.3%
Born Again	2	0.5%
Atheist	1	0.3%
Glorious Ministry	2	0.5%
Union Espirita Cristiana Filipina Inc.	2	0.5%
Jesus Reigns	1	0.3%
Church of God	3	0.8%

The table reveals the gender composition, age distribution and classification of Generation Z ages 15-19 in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat in terms of religion. The gender composition reveals that 43.5 % are male, 40.4 % are female and 16.1 % are those Generation Z who prefer not to say their gender. This denotes that majority of the respondents are males.

The age distribution of the respondents which are the Generation z ages from 15-19 in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat which are provided in the table. The sample included only the residents in the target area and those respondents who were fifteen to nineteen years old. The percentage distribution of Generation Z was 17.6% are fifteen years old, 16.3% are sixteen years old, 28% are seventeen years old, 19.4% are eighteen years old and 18.7% are nineteen years old. Results have showed that the majority of the Generation Z in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat that have responded are 17 years old.

The table also reveals the classification of Generation Z ages 15-19 in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat in terms of religion. The percentage distribution of Generation Z ages from 15-19 years old that are Roman Catholic are 39.4%, 18.4% are Islam, 10.4% are Alliance, 8.3% are Iglesia ni Cristo, 4.4% are Methodist, 3.1% are Seventh Day Adventist, 4.1% are Wesleyan, 3.1% are The Bible Holiness Church of God, 1.6% are Christian, 1% are Protestant, 0.8% are Baptist, 0.5% are CAMACOP, 0.8% are Evangelical Christian, 0.8% are Foursquare, 0.5% are Jehovah's Witnesses, 0.5% are Pentecost, 0.8% are IFI, 0.3% are Agnostic, 0.5% are Born again, 0.3% are Atheist, 0.5% are Glorious Ministry, 0.5% are Union Espirita Cristiana Filipina Inc., 0.3% are

Jesus Reigns and 0.8% are Church of Christ. Results have showed that majority of the respondents are Roman Catholics.

**Table 2.** Level of General Media Exposure on Homosexuality to Generation Z

Parameters	n	Mean	SD	Interpretation
How often are you exposed to issues and events about gay rights and homosexuality in the news media?	386	2.79	1.17	Sometimes
How often do you engage with entertainment media platforms (including non factual television programs and films)?	386	2.62	1.17	Sometimes
How often do you watch series/movies/dramas relating to Homosexuality?	386	3.03	1.19	Sometimes
How often do you engage with news media platform (including factual news broadcast, online articles or newspapers)?	386	2.73	1.14	Sometimes
How often do you engage yourself in reading books, magazines and e-books such as Wattpads relating in homosexuality?	386	3.14	1.21	Sometimes
How often do you engage in listening a drama/radio presentation relating to homosexuality?	386	3.15	1.18	Sometimes
How often do you engage yourself in the internet to follow the characters promoting sexuality?	386	3.00	1.21	Sometimes
Have you heard or watched any local queer shows such as "Gaya sa Pelikula, Gameboys, Ben X Jim"?	386	2.76	1.16	Sometimes
What social media platforms do homosexuality is frequently shown?	386	3.03	1.19	Sometimes
How often do you engage yourself in online activities and campaigns regarding homosexuality?	386	3.17	1.17	Sometimes
<b>Grand Mean/SD</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>

Table 2 contains the results for the level of General Media Exposure on Homosexuality to Generation Z. As shown in the table, all of the interpretation are the same which implies that Generation Z aged 15-19 are not that influenced by the General Media in terms of understanding Homosexuality. Parameter 10 received the highest mean of 3.17 when it was asked how frequently does the respondent engage in online activities and campaigns regarding homosexuality, which was described as occasionally and interpreted as moderately exposed, while Parameter 6 received the lowest mean of 2.62 when it was asked how frequently does the respondent engage with entertainment media platforms (including nonfactual television programs and films), which led the researchers to the related study of Bond and Compton (2015) where they were able to examine heterosexual support for the homosexual community by assessing their exposure to homosexual characters on television while controlling for potentially influential characteristics such as sex, age, race, religiosity, and interpersonal interactions with homosexual individuals. The findings revealed that, even in the absence of any personal ties with openly homosexual individuals, heterosexual television viewers will support homosexuals based only on their media interactions with them. Gehrau, Bruggemann, and Handrup (2016) discovered that entertainment media presenting the homosexual community as engaging and amusing will lead viewers to get more engaged with and engrossed in them and their predicament. This was related to the Gibson (2003) research, which determined that the news media fails to depict homosexuals as genuine individuals in topics other than war or health-related issues. The researchers noticed that it is not that effective to use general media in terms of exposing the generation on Homosexuality so, it is suggested to let the media improve their engagement towards how media effects are received by the audiences.

**Table 3.** Level of Acceptance of Generation Z to Homosexuality

Parameters	n	Mean	SD	Description
LGBTQ should be free to live their own life as they wish	386	2.13	1.03	Neutral
The love between two males or two females is quite different from the love between two persons of the opposite sex	386	2.80	0.95	Neutral
Two individual of the same sex holding hands or displaying affection in public is disgusting	386	3.74	1.04	Disagree
On average, how much time do you spend on the following media and get exposed to queer relationships	386	2.30	1.00	Agree
I don't care to learn more about the challenges Homosexual people face	386	2.40	1.06	Agree
LGBTQ itself is no problem unless society makes it a problem	386	3.85	1.03	Disagree
If a close family member was a LGBTQ member, I would feel ashamed	386	3.30	1.13	Neutral
Homosexuals should be kept separate from the rest of society (e.g. restricted employment, separate comfort rooms)	386	2.96	1.03	Neutral
Homosexuals do not deserve to have equal treatment with everyone	386	2.84	1.06	Neutral
Homosexuality, as far as I'm concerned, is sinful	386	3.66	1.09	Disagree
Homosexuals should not be allowed to go to churches	386	2.46	1.04	Neutral
<b>Grand Mean/SD</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

Table 3 summarizes the statistical analysis of the replies reflecting Generation Z's level of acceptance of homosexuality. As shown in the table, the majority of interpretations indicated a neutral position on fully accepting homosexuality in our community, with the highest mean of 3.85 at parameter 6 indicating that LGBTQ is not a problem unless society makes it one, described as disagree, and the lowest mean of 2.13 at parameter 1 indicating that LGBTQ should be free to live their lives as they please, described as neutral. In addition to the influencing power of media exposure alone, it is necessary to recognize the significant viewer factors that influence views on content, either alone or in conjunction with media exposure.

**Table 4.** Testing the relationship between level of general media exposure and level of agreement of social tolerance

Sources of Variation	n	Pearson Correlation r	Sig. Two - tailed	Description
level of General Media Exposure and Level of Agreement of Social Tolerance	386	-0.04	0.43	<b>There is no significant relationship.</b>

Not significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 reveals the results of the test of relationship between level of general media exposure and level of agreement of Social Tolerance of Generation Z towards the exposure of homosexuality. Thus, 0.43 P value is greater than 0.05 clearly justifies that there is no significant relationship between level of general media exposure and level of agreement of social tolerance of Generation Z towards the exposure of homosexuality as implied by the Pearson Correlation test result at 0.05 level of significance. It also implies a very low correlation or relationship with a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of -0.04. This is a very dependable relationship (Hechanova and Hechanova, 2012).

Therefore, with the results on the table it is obviously observed that there is no significant relationship between level of general media exposure and level of agreement of social tolerance of Generation Z towards the exposure of homosexuality



## Conclusion

The introduction of content portraying and describing homosexual people and issues into the mainstream media relates to audiences' especially Generation Z's outlooks and acceptance in the said issue. Homosexuals have long been stereotyped and underrepresented in television shows and cinema. Media exposure has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on content attitudes. According to Gonta, Hansen, Fagin, and Fong (2017) there has been a noticeable increase in depictions and attention to homosexuality in recent years. The viewers' perceptions of LGBTQIA+ people by advocating the premise that their perceptions may change after being exposed to the media. Their attitudes toward, treatment of, and communication with members of the LGBT community. When visitors to the Philippines remark that Filipinos openly tolerate and/or accept homosexuality, they invariably have in mind effeminate, cross-dressing men swishing down streets and squealing on television programs with flaming impunity this is sadly misinformed (iammharr, 2012). If their society was truly tolerant of (male) homosexuality, then Filipinos would see not just flaming cross dresser shrieking their heads off in TV sitcoms and variety shows, but local men, frenching and erotically manhandling each other in steamy 'gay telenovelas'. Locally, Homosexuality is a taboo topic in Sultan Kudarat. With the trend of boys' love films going on many people especially some boys find homosexuality inappropriate to the eyes (Garcia, 2004). Majority of generation Z from Isulan, Sultan Kudarat aged 15-19 years old are not influenced by the media in their view of homosexuality, and the interpretation revealed a neutral decision in terms of totally accepting homosexuality in the community.

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