

Extent of Acceptability of and Extent of Exposure to Queer Literature of Students: Inputs for Teaching Queer Texts Among Senior High School Students

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Abstract: The current state of inclusivity in terms of LGBTQ inclusivity has been dismal especially in a predominantly Catholic and patriarchal country as the Philippines. A prevailing culture of silence and the dominance of heteronormative values have resulted in the marginalization of LGBTQ voices and the lack of LGBTQ-themed materials in schools. This absence contributes to the persistence of stigma, stereotypes, and institutionalized homophobia. With the aim of fostering allyship among students, the study explored the extent of student acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature, the extent of their exposure to such literature, the relationship between acceptance and exposure, and the significant differences in responses based on gender and grade level. The study employed a descriptive-comparative-correlational design, utilizing purposive sampling to gather data from Senior High School students through a researcher-developed instrument. Results revealed that students generally demonstrated a moderate level of both acceptance and exposure to LGBTQ literature. Significant differences were found between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ respondents, with LGBTQ students showing higher levels of both acceptance and exposure. However, no significant differences were noted between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students. A significant positive correlation was also observed between acceptance and exposure, indicating that increased exposure to LGBTQ-themed literature is associated with greater acceptance. These imply that an increase in access to and integration of LGBTQ literature in the curriculum is imperative to allow students to understand LGBTQ people better, helping counteract heteronormativity and dismantling stereotypes about their members.

Keywords: Acceptance, Exposure, Homonormativity, Inclusivity, LGBTQ Literature.

1. Introduction

In the Philippines which has been a predominantly Catholic country, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) people have long been the subject of discrimination and marginalization of society due to the member's "deviant" behaviors. From this religious background, Libiran et al., 2024 noted that the country has long viewed LGBTQ as "sinners" because of this religious background. Members of the community has experienced "discrimination,

exclusion, and prejudice" (ibid., 2024) which has led the members to feel "excluded, rejected, and marginalized" (Chiongbian et al., 2021). The negative view coupled with the religious upbringing of the majority of the Filipinos contributed to the "negative" view on LGBTQ people. With this negative view, gays, and in a broader view even including the other members of the LGBTQ, have been forced to shut themselves in as there is an existing "culture of silence" centered around gay personalities (Wright, 2017).

This culture of silence is anchored, the researcher posits, since there are no available LGBTQ materials for people to read. This very big gap on the absence of texts, particularly literature, taught among the students that depict LGBTQ resulted to widespread misinformation about members of this group and the stigma that 'unknowing' people attach to them through the unknowing heterosexual and cisgender representation of characters in most available literary texts to date.

As of current, there has been a wealth of resources that can be utilized in the teaching of queer texts to high school students. In Wright's 2017a and 2017b study, he identified literary texts that contains "gay themes" which include *The Doll* by Emigdio Alvarez-Enriquez, *The Chamber of the Sea* by Edith Tiempo, *High Fashion* by Gilda Cordero-Fernando, *Geyluv* by Honorio de Dios, and *The Husband* by Jaime An Lim.

The ubiquity of gay-themed texts is not confined in print, but also can be traced in media. Dolphy—the nation's comedy icon—built his career on portraying transvestic and homosexual characters, starting with his 1954 film *Jack en Jill* and includes a wide list of films which includes, but are not limited to *Facifica Falayfay* in 1969, *Fefita Fofongay, Sarhento Fofongay* in 1973, *A... Ewan* (Oh...I Don't Know) in 1974, *Ang Tatay Kong Nanay* (My Dad The Mom) in 1978, and *Markova: Comfort Gay* in 2001 (Gian, 2012). Among all these films, the last two are portrayed as serious and address major issues which was a stark contrast to the often humorous, albeit stereotypical, portrayal of gay characters by Dolphy.

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Despite the availability and readiness of LGBTQ-themed literature, there remains a hindrance to its use in the formal teaching – the acceptability of such literary texts. A study conducted by Flores in 2021 where he measured the Global Acceptance Index (GAI), a metric used to measure the relative level of acceptance of LGBTI people and issues in each country for a specific time period, found that there was a minimal shift in the acceptability of the Philippines towards LGBTQ people between the years 1981 and 2020. It says specifically that roughly 32% of the countries saw a rise in acceptance, 35% saw no change, and 33% saw a fall in acceptance. From the Flores' analysis, there was little discussion about countries which saw no changes in their GAI – which includes the Philippines.

The GAI scores range from 0 to 10, with higher scores indicating greater acceptance. The document does not provide the exact GAI score for the Philippines, but it does mention that the mean GAI score across all countries is 4.6 with a standard deviation of 1.2. This suggests that the Philippines' GAI score is likely around the average or slightly above or below, given the lack of significant change mentioned. Looking at this, the Philippines has seen a relatively stable level of acceptance of LGBTQ people over the past four decades, with no significant increase or decrease in acceptance as measured by the Global Acceptance Index. In the current landscape of the Philippines, the criminalization of discrimination based on one's gender preference is yet to be ratified into law, as included in the SOGIE Bill, otherwise known as House Bill 4982 and Senate Bill 689, which was first introduced during the 14th congress from 2007-2010 (Ildefonso, 2024).

Despite these seemingly positive numbers, Poushter and Kent (2020) argued that the “acceptance of LGBTQI+ people vary globally” with lower acceptance corresponding from less developed and poorer countries.

A study conducted by Esmabe *et al.*, (2024) took 424 heterosexual respondents to measure their level of acceptance and attitude towards the LGBTQIA+ community. The results showed that all students exhibited high to very high acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community with the exception of heterosexual respondents who “have no schooling completed” whose rating indicate low level of acceptance. This is contrasted by a survey of 700 Filipino LGBT respondents conducted by Tan in 2014 which found that one in ten had been victim of violence and abuse which may mean that despite the high acceptance of heterosexual there is still prevalent violence against members of the LGBTQ which may be stemming from the stereotype of gays being “cheap drag queens, screaming faggots; the parloristas, the cross-dressers who work in cheap salons” (Wright, 2017).

A. Heteronormativity in Literature and the Acceptability of Queer Literature

Heteronormativity has been the standard in society – that everything a heterosexual does is the basis of what is normal, and therefore, what is acceptable. Snyder (2020) noted that literary texts are similar to mirrors because literature reflects reality through a writer's work. True enough, since the norm of society is to adhere to heteronormative and cisgender ways and

behaviors, these also became the ‘normal’ in literature.

Recent studies affirm that literature acts as a strong reinforcer of social norms. Page (2017) noted that dominant curricular materials in secondary education largely favor cisgender, heterosexual narratives, subtly excluding queer voices and reinforcing an implicit standard of “normal” storytelling.

Goldsmith in 2016 noted that most protagonists in literary texts are portrayed as heterosexual and cisgender and that queer characters are often typecast as a “friend, relative, or educator.” This means that for the most part LGBTQIA+ characters play the supporting roles and never the main roles in stories - which is one way in which queer people have also experienced marginalization even in literary texts. The relegation of the secondary role to LGBTQ character is not a coincidence – it is because they play stereotypical or foil characters in relation to the protagonist of a text.

Research by De Vera (2016) further elaborated that Philippine mass media continues to propagate “effeminized comic relief” portrayals of gay men, seldom giving serious depth or dignified narratives to LGBTQ characters. These repeated portrayals subtly reinforce public misconceptions about queer identities.

The role of literature in perpetrating these derogatory characteristics is more prevalent than one can imagine. As literature encroaches on the boundaries of different media, characters in literature are being portrayed in real or live action shows which further give ‘flesh’ to these characters. Sen & Karagul (2021) provide an in-depth discussion on how characters are functional in a work of fiction and outline how characters are developed and subsequently analyzed.

Notable in their work is the discussion on how a character is made 'realistic' in the minds of the readers, that is, the characteristics of the character are seemingly real or true among the readers which allow them to identify themselves with these characters. This opens a whole new discussion on how important characters are.

The identification of readers with characters which they feel they have a similarity with is an inevitable phenomenon in literature. As illustrated by Landt (2013), she posited that boys, or males, need role models to which they will base their actions and life to and that they get these role models from literature that they read, or they know. While Landt (*ibid.*) advocates for a more holistic representation of male characters by including multicultural males as role models, the study lends its importance to the present study by virtue of its analysis of how literature is seemingly used as a guidebook by young readers to navigate the complexities of life.

As children or young adults read literature, they unknowingly imbibe the stereotypes which are systematically and culturally included in these. In this light, Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2018) emphasized that when young readers continuously encounter limited and heteronormative portrayals, it shapes their worldview early, strengthening the invisibility and marginalization of queer communities.

As noted by Kang in Cer (2015), children learn stereotypical gender roles which start as oversimplified, very general assumptions about the roles and responsibilities attached to

each gender. This is where literature comes in, as Cer (2015) advises a more inclusive selection of children's books that dismantle traditional and stereotypical gender roles, so the children learn these stereotypes as they are and are cleared of such, by making the children "understand the needs and roles of modern life."

Having laid out the idea about the prevalence of LGBTQ literature in the Philippines and the current state of the LGBTQ people in the country, the formal teaching of queer literature in schools remains elusive. In the modern times, LGBTQ-themed stories are being shown even in major broadcasting channels – “My Husband’s Lover”, “Beki Boxer”, “The Rich Man’s Daughter”, “Destiny Rose” to name a few (De Jesus *et al.*, 2022), which contrasts with the lack of teaching queer-themed stories.

Flores (2019) noted that the view on LGBTQ literature is a reflection on whether the country is progressive or not. At present, the Philippines is known as a “conservative” nation when it comes to issues pertaining to LGBTQ, because of the prevalence of the traditional cultures (Paisley and Tayar, 2015), which tend to temper the prevalence of non-conforming acts, especially those that are connected to gender roles – leading to strict adherence to socially accepted roles and the vilification of non-conforming activities.

Adding to this, Manalansan (2018) described how Filipino cultural discourse continues to idealize “family honor,” which frames non-heteronormative behaviors as dishonorable deviations, further explaining the cultural barriers that hinder the integration of LGBTQ topics into education.

B. *Exposure to Queer Literature and Representation*

De Jesus *et al.*, in 2022 noted that it is through the reading of queer oriented story that readers come in contact with worlds that are the same as theirs where “their identities matter”.

In Freyn’s (2019) paper, she discussed that the end goal of teaching LGBTQ literature to class is to create an “ally”. The concept of an “ally,” introduced by Washington and Evans (1991) according to Freyn (2019), serves as a foundation for understanding the importance of teaching LGBTQ literature in schools to promote allyship and dismantle stigma surrounding LGBTQ individuals. The term “ally” is defined as a member of the dominant or majority group who actively works to end oppression in both personal and professional contexts by supporting and advocating for marginalized populations (Washington and Evans (1991) in Freyn (2019). It is important to note that the creation of allies is instrumental in making people understand who are what the LGBTQ people are all about since allies have been characterized as instrumental in fostering social justice, and heterosexual allies, in particular, play a significant role in advancing LGBTQ rights (*ibid.*, 2019).

In order to create allies, there are, according to many different models and theories, many different process and steps that need to be undertaken. However, what stood out was Ji’s 2007 study who reflected and developed what it means in creating an ally (Freyn, 2019). Furthermore, Ji (2007) in Freyn (2019) advised that allies need to have the “knowledge” about LGBTQ people – their experiences, concerns, and the realities

that they face. It must be noted that being an “ally” is not just accepting but about openly expressing their support for and to the LGBTQ community. In this respect, an ally has, according to Ji (2007) in Freyn (2019), two important roles: to support and to advocate. Lastly, in his book, Ji (2007) explained the importance of being an ally through 13 reasons, with most of the reasons being about creating a sense of inclusivity, being an “accepting” person and embracing their personality, and being a support system for LGBTQ person.

With this in mind, it is not only imperative that people be exposed to LGBTQ literature in order for them to acquire the “knowledge” about LGBTQ people which, in turn, will help in making them as allies.

Dinkins and Englert (2015) in Freyn (2019), LGBTQ literature can play a crucial role in combating homophobia, heterosexism and heteronormativity. When LGBTQ literature is studied in the classroom, “windows and mirrors are created for an exploration of the world and self”.

In light of representation and gender roles perpetrated in literature, the article of Yilmaz and Yakar (2016) discusses on social gender which explains the root of stereotypes and the characteristics we associate for each gender or sex.

Jimenez’s (2015) analysis of award-winning YA novels found that while there is a wealth of white, gay, male characters, other spectrum represented in the LGBTQIA+ flag are not as represented, or other people who can be categorized as queer. According to Blackburn *et al.* (2015), the term queer is used as “an umbrella term to reference LGBTQ people in the early 21st century”. This recalls the conceptualization of LGBTQIA+ or queer, which other people interchangeably use.

Additionally, Jimenez (*ibid.*), found that there is an increase in YA novels contributing to the ever-growing repertoire of LGBTQ literature and that the text she analyzed veer away from the common portrayal of LGBTQ characters which, according to Epstein (2014) “are often shown to be unhappy or to feel divided or to believe that they have to be gay or straight and cannot have a bisexual identity”. This is also the case with Blackburn *et al.* (2015) which found that there increasingly positive representation of queer characters by disrupting the common representations of queer characters.

Why is there a need to include representations of LGBTQIA+ characters in literature? Manchester (2017) noted the fact that representation in literature is by part or whole connected to politics - those characters sometimes touch on realistic issues and concerns centering on queer characters and that these are important tools in discussing these issues inside the class. Manchester goes to say that in order for the struggles of these characters to be properly discussed in the classroom, the students must first be critical in analyzing “social norms and cultural loads” presented in literature since LGBTQIA+ characters are measured against these standards.

C. *On Queer Identities in Literature*

Since it has been established that there is a need for students to learn about LGBTQ characters – from creating “allies” (Freyn, 2019) to creating spaces where LGBTQ-related topics can be discussed (Manchester, 2017), it is apparent that there is

a growing need to include LGBTQ literature in the academe.

In fact, Blackburn, et al. (2016) indicated that there has been a clamor for the inclusion of LGBT-themed literature in English or Literature classes (Athanases, 1996; Epstein, 2000; Hamilton, 1998; Reese, 1998; Schall & Kauffmann, 2003 in Blackburn, et al. 2016) to "combat" heteronormativity and to at least lessen the homophobia among students. Blackburn et al. (ibid.) also hints at the idea that pedagogy must also include 'queer texts' to match this inclusion in the curriculum. The inclusion of teaching LGBTQ topics is devoid of deeper meaning when only discussed in abstraction. Hence, in order to concretize the experiences of marginalization, LGBTQ should be complementarily discussed with literary texts that show just this. As such, these queer texts become sites of "deconstructive revolts" where misconceptions are dismantled. This only goes to show that there is a need to include LGBTQ-themed literatures in the curricular offerings of schools in the modern day.

As Malo-Juvera (2016) notes, incorporating LGBTQ-themed literature into English classrooms is not a new practice. As early as 1996, Athanases (in Malo-Juvera 2016) indicated that English/Language Arts (ELA) classrooms have been identified as key sites for the integration of LGBTQ-themed curricula due to both the inherent nature of literary study and the growing availability of high-quality young adult literature addressing LGBTQ themes (Banks, 2009 and Clark & Blackburn, 2009 in Malo-Juvera, 2016). Scholars argue that beyond standalone interventions, the ELA curriculum provides an organic and meaningful avenue for addressing diverse gender and sexual identities through narrative, critical reading, and class discussion.

One strategy for supporting this inclusion is increasing access to LGBTQ texts in school libraries. Hughes-Hassell, Overberg, and Harris (2013) proposed that improving the availability of such materials can empower students to independently engage with LGBTQ narratives. However, other scholars argue for a more integrative approach. Cart (1997) and Hayn and Hazlett (2008) in Malo-Juvera (2016) advocate for incorporating LGBTQ literature into whole-class instruction, emphasizing that all students—regardless of sexual orientation—should be exposed to texts that reflect the lives and experiences of LGBTQ individuals.

This integrative approach is supported by Blackburn and Buckley (2005), who assert that using LGBTQ-themed literature in class discussions allows students to confront a wider spectrum of values and identities. They argue that such engagement can potentially reduce homophobia by fostering understanding of "the range of gender and sexual identities that constitute everyone's world" (p. 203).

Evidently, the implementation of a more "inclusive" education is the way to integrate LGBTQ literature in the academe.

Moreover, according to Martinez-Exposito (2013), LGBT films, and therefore literature, plays a role in the "debate between normalization and anti-normalization" which has been the long-standing struggle of the members of the community. The text discusses how there is a lack of main characters who

are members of LGBTQIA+ (the lack of the use of I to refer to queer characters and the dominant use of the third person to refer to them), how laughing at them became an initial and learned response towards queer characters and how the comedic representation of characters became a standard for stories containing homosexual characters.

This concern regarding limited and stereotypical portrayals is also echoed by Page (2017), who found that even when queer characters are included in English curricula, they are often marginalized or "tokenized," lacking complexity or agency. Her study advocates for a shift toward texts that not only include queer characters but position them as central, relatable figures—thus promoting empathy and challenging internalized heteronormativity among students.

Expanding on representation, Hughes-Hassell, Overberg, and Harris (2013) conducted a comprehensive analysis of school library collections in the United States and found that LGBTQ-themed literature is still underrepresented—particularly texts that feature characters of color, disabled individuals, or those outside the gay/lesbian binary. This lack of diversity in representation contributes to a narrow understanding of what it means to be queer, especially in educational settings.

A groundbreaking finding, the research conducted by Freyn (2019) found that while heteronormative and cisgender students may not identify with queer characters that they read, they become an "ally". Freyn taught an LGBTQ literature course which aimed to "combat heteronormativity" is worth noting since this is not commonly seen in many dominantly Catholic countries, such as the Philippines. The literature course has many aspirations, with one being to develop allies among heteronormative students. Ally, according to Washington and Evans (1991), is someone who is "a member of the 'dominant' or 'majority' group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population". Through the teaching of LGBTQ literature, Freyn (2019) noted that the students became more vocal about their thoughts and are more 'embracing' of their selves and others.

D. Theoretical Framework

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity are two of the most controversial albeit misunderstood terms in our society today primarily because of the lack of knowledge on these. The two terms have been used to refer to a wide array of gender expressions. Since gender expression, as defined in the American Psychological Association (2015) as the presentation of the aspects of gender or gender roles chosen by a particular person, may or may not conform to societal standards of femininity and masculinity, people tend to make fun or bully people whom they associate this with. Sexual orientation (SO), gender identity (GI), and gender expression (GE) are terms related to the term "queer" which serves to be an umbrella term for SO, GI, and GE that does not "conform to dominant societal roles" (ibid., 2015).

In this light, the study makes use of Queer Theory as an overarching theme by which the study will be grounded upon.

Queer theory offers a robust framework for analyzing how societal structures perpetuate inequalities, particularly for marginalized individuals and communities, such as those identifying as LGBTQI+. Unlike theories rooted in a single author or text, queer theory emerges from a collective body of work that critically examines the interplay between societal power and those positioned on the margins (Foucault, 1978; Sedgwick, 1990; Zeffiro & Hogan, 2015; Alexander, 2017). It serves as an interpretive paradigm to scrutinize the ways structural inequalities shape and control lives, challenging normative notions of equality that often fail to encompass the lived realities of non-dominant groups.

Queer theory has long been misunderstood as a theory which applies to studies conducted with and about the LGBTQ. However, it should be noted that according to Grzanka (2019) and Riggs and Trehan (2017), queer theory is an “oppositional orientation” against everything that is deemed the “norm”. Hence, the theory should be understood as a set of concepts that aims to challenge the existing norm and standard set by any institution. As elaborated by Grzanka (*ibid.*), queer theory explores the “antinormative relationship to heterosexuality and its attendant structures” – that is queer theory serves to explain all forms of activities and behavior and attributes described as “deviant”.

As such, central to queer theory is its ability to transcend traditional frameworks of equality by interrogating the interaction between individuals, communities, organizations, and state powers (Medina, 2013 in Capobianco 2020). The theory pushes for a transformative understanding of marginalization that not only addresses structural inequalities but also advocates for collective action and socio-political change – an important aspect of the theory which lends itself so well to the study since the major goal of the study is to create allies by exposing the students to literary texts which features LGBTQ characters. Likewise, the essentialist view of humans is challenged in queer theory in favor of constructivism. This means that the theory examines whether identities are inherent or socially constructed and warns against “box-ing” individuals into fixed categories while uplifting the diverse voices of marginalized groups (Foucault, 1978; Medina, 2013; Sedgwick, 1990 in Capobianco 2020). This is especially helpful when analyzing the students assessment of their acceptability of studying and LGBTQ literary texts.

In the context of teaching LGBTQ literature, queer theory becomes a critical tool for addressing the rigidity of normalized sexuality, power structures, and societal control that reinforce heteronormativity. Highlighting the stories and experiences of LGBTQ individuals and allies acts as a form of resistance, fostering collective identification necessary for socio-political progress (Sedgwick, 1990; Stone, 2012 in Capobianco 2020). This approach not only normalizes non-dominant identities within existing power structures but also empowers individuals to challenge societal norms and build toward inclusivity – which is an important perspective to take in order to create “allies” among cis-gendered students.

Intersectionality further enriches queer theory by emphasizing the importance of examining the multiple social

positions and hierarchies that intersect in individuals’ lives (Capobianco 2020). It highlights the complexities of identity, privilege, and oppression, pushing for an analysis that goes beyond sexuality or gender to incorporate other axes of social positionality, such as race, class, and ethnicity (Alexander, 2017). By merging queer and intersectional lenses, this framework uncovers nuanced oppressions and creates pathways for solidarity, collective action, and new possibilities for challenging social inequalities.

Incorporating queer theory in this study, particularly through LGBTQ literature, aligns with the goals of this study to create allies among students. By fostering a deeper understanding of marginalization, privilege, and the intersections of identity, teaching LGBTQ literature not only dismantles stigma but also equips students with the tools to advocate for inclusivity. This theoretical foundation ensures that the study is grounded in both critical scholarship and transformative action, aiming to promote social change through education.

E. Statement of the Problem

With the end goal of espousing the inclusion of LGBTQ texts in the senior high school by proposing guidelines in teaching LGBTQ texts to teach, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the student respondents in terms of:
 1. Grade Level; and
 2. Gender
2. What is the assessment of the student respondents on their extent of acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of:
 1. Personal Attitude;
 2. Social Perception; and
 3. Academic Relevance?
3. Is there a significant difference between the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature in schools when grouped according to profile?
4. What is the assessment of the student respondents on their extent of exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of
 1. Classroom and Curriculum Exposure;
 2. Media and Entertainment;
 3. Reading Habits; and
 4. Peer and Social Influence?
5. Is there a significant difference between the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of exposure to LGBTQ literature when grouped according to profile?
6. What is the relationship between the assessment of the student respondents on their extent of acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature in schools and their extent of exposure on LGBTQ literature of the students?
7. Based on the findings, what guidelines can be proposed for the inclusion of LGBTQ literature in the High School Curriculum?

F. Hypotheses

The following were the hypotheses of the study tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the extent of acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature in schools and the extent of exposure on LGBTQ literature of the students.

Ho2: There are no significant differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the level of acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature in schools when grouped according to profile.

Ho3: There are no significant differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the level of exposure on LGBTQ literature of the students when grouped according to profile.

2. Methodology

To meet the goals of the study, the researcher utilized the Descriptive-Comparative-Correlational methodology. Since the study collected the demographic profile of the student respondents, the study made use of the descriptive research design. Likewise, the study also aimed to explore the relationship between the extent of acceptability of and extent of exposure on LGBTQ literatures. As such, the study used the Correlational Research Design to attain this goal. Lastly, the study also identified the significant differences between the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of and extent of exposure on LGBTQ literatures when their demographic profiles were considered.

The study took place in Emilio Aguinaldo College Manila located at 1113-1117 San Marcelino St. Ermita, Manila, a school founded by Dr. Paulo C. Campos in 1957.

The study made use of Senior High School Students currently enrolled in Emilio Aguinaldo College Manila (HS Department) for school year 2024-2025 as respondents. Due to constraints in time during the data gathering phase of the study, the study utilized purposive sampling as the sampling technique. According to Creswell (2012), purposive sampling means that to learn or understand the essential phenomenon, a researcher selects individuals and sites intentionally.

The study made use of a researcher-made two-part questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire is composed of the question on the demographic profiles of the student respondents in terms of their gender and grade level.

Right after this is the questionnaire for the extent of acceptance of and the extent of exposure on LGBTQ literature in schools as assessed by the students composed of 10 items each, totaling to a 20-item questionnaire. The respondents were asked to rate their level of acceptance and level of exposure using a 5-point scale.

The questionnaire’s 4-point item scale is described as such:

1. Strongly Agree.
2. Agree.
3. Disagree.
4. Strongly Disagree.

Given this context, the researcher subjected the questionnaire to pilot testing to ascertain its reliability. The overall reliability of the questionnaire obtained Cronbach's Alpha = 0.978

showing a very consistent result for all of the items.

In order to gather the data needed for the study, the researcher first asked for the permission of the principal, the assistant principal, and the area coordinators in order to do both the pilot testing and the formal data gathering by administering the questionnaire to the students.

After obtaining this, the researcher called on the participant in a venue and distributed the informed consent form to the student respondents. The students were informed about the nature of the study as well as how the information they will provide will be utilized for the fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the study.

After explaining the goals of the study and obtaining the consent of the students, the researcher asked the students to scan a QR Code to access the questionnaire. During the testing schedule, the researcher entertained questions from the respondents regarding items from the questionnaire that they have clarifications on.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Frequency distribution of the student respondents’ profile

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
LGBTQ	67	29.9%
Non-LGBTQ	157	70.1%
Total	224	100%
Grade Level		
Grade 11	73	32.6%
Grade 12	151	67.4%
Total	224	100%

In terms of gender, 29.9% of the student respondents are members of the LGBTQ and the remaining 70.1% are not members of the LGBTQ, making the majority of the student respondents as non-LGBTQ members which indicates that there are more non-LGBTQ students in the school, as reflected by the number of non-LGBTQ respondents which is twice the number compared to the LGBTQ respondents. The likelihood that some students may identify as LGBTQ but decide not to share this information—possibly out of privacy concerns, social stigma, or fear of discrimination—should also be taken into account. Whereas for grade level, 32.6% of the are from Grade 11 and the remaining 67.4% are from Grade 12. This shows that the majority of the student respondents are from Grade 12, akin that the 18-year-old students are in the higher grade levels.

A. Assessment of the Student Respondents on the Extent of Acceptability of Learning LGBTQ Literature in Schools

The data indicated that the highest assessment, as indicated by the mean of 3.52, was found for item 4 indicating that the students find that learning of LGBTQ is acceptable since it allows for a wealth of other perspectives to be heard by the readers, as indicated by the high extent of their acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature, which is an important aspect of learning literature, as reflected in the DepEd curriculum guide which state that students “appreciate the contexts of 21st century Philippine literature from the regions” (DepEd, 2019). This is especially important to note since the “contexts” of literature

Table 2
Assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of personal attitude

Personal Attitude	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
I'm open to reading books and stories that feature LGBTQ themes.	3.36	.78	Agree	Moderate Extent	5
I believe that LGBTQ literature is just as valuable and interesting as other types of literature.	3.44	.69	Agree	Moderate Extent	4
I feel comfortable sharing and discussing LGBTQ themes such as coming out, social acceptance, discrimination, and queer relationships from literature with others.	3.51	.70	Strongly Agree	High Extent	2
I think that LGBTQ literature presents different perspectives, especially those from the marginalized voices.	3.52	.64	Strongly Agree	High Extent	1
I think everyone should have the chance to read LGBTQ literature.	3.48	.66	Agree	Moderate Extent	3
I eagerly seek out new LGBTQ-themed literary works whenever I have the opportunity.	3.07	.84	Agree	Moderate Extent	6
Composite Mean	3.40	.58	Agree	Moderate Extent	

Table 3
Assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of social perception

Social Perception	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
I believe that including LGBTQ literature in our reading helps promote a more inclusive society.	3.50	.62	Agree	Moderate Extent	3
I think stories featuring LGBTQ characters can help break down stereotypes and end discrimination based on gender.	3.59	.57	Strongly Agree	High Extent	1.5
I believe that exploring LGBTQ literature deepens my understanding of different gender identities.	3.59	.60	Strongly Agree	High Extent	1.5
I feel that LGBTQ literature offers a realistic mirror to our society by challenging traditional norms.	3.47	.64	Agree	Moderate Extent	5
I believe LGBTQ literature should be a part of student's reading lists/ required readings.	3.18	.81	Agree	Moderate Extent	6
I believe that reading LGBTQ literature can help normalize diverse identities in our society.	3.48	.63	Agree	Moderate Extent	4
Composite Mean	3.47	.51	Agree	Moderate Extent	

give a nuanced understanding of the piece when the voices of the marginalized are factored in.

On the other hand, the lowest assessment, as indicated by the mean of 3.07, was found for item 6 which means that although the respondents may accept learning about LGBTQ literature but the students are likewise apprehensive in acquiring books that discuss LGBTQ-themes. This is exactly what Cer (2015) is concerned about since children's books, or books in general, helps in dismantling traditional and stereotypical gender roles by making the children "understand the needs and roles of modern life."

The overall mean of 3.40 and the standard deviation of 0.58 shows that the student respondents agrees, in terms of their personal attitude, that the learning of LGBTQ literature in schools is acceptable, as indicated by the moderate extent of their acceptance. This implies a generally favorable disposition among students, though not without reservations. According to Blackburn and Smith (2010), exposure to LGBTQ narratives within educational contexts can foster empathy, reduce prejudice, and promote inclusivity. While students in this study show a moderately accepting attitude, their limited eagerness to independently explore LGBTQ literature may reflect underlying social constraints or a need for more guided exposure and discussion within the classroom setting.

The assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of social perception showed that the highest assessment, as seen in the mean of 3.59 which shows a moderate extent of acceptability, was found for items 2 and 3 which shows that the students strongly agree that learning of LGBTQ literature in schools have positive impacts in the society – though not

readily evident. The findings is a response to the findings of Esmabe et al., (2024) who noted that LGBTQ individuals still face stigma and prejudice in all aspects of society as a result of the elusive acceptance and negative attitude towards members of the group. As such, the assessment of the students is a light in the darkness signaling that the students are somehow aware of the problems regarding the stigmatization of being “queer” and that they are open in resolving it, in the case of the study, through learning about them.

On the other hand, the lowest assessment, as denoted by the mean of 3.18, was found for item 5 which ironically means that although the students accept learning LGBTQ literature to a moderate extent, the low assessment on including LGBTQ-themed literary texts in required readings in school show that there are reservations among the students about requiring students to read LGBTQ literature. This directly contradicts the previous findings in that according to De Jesus et al. (2022), reading stories with a gay theme exposes readers to worlds similar to their own where "their identities matter." Surely, the idea of including LGBTQ literary texts in readings in schools will allow for an open dialogue on the matter.

The overall mean of 3.47 with the standard deviation of 0.51 shows that the students find that the learning of LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of social perceptions is moderately acceptable. The extent of acceptability, bordering on being identified as to a high extent, reflects the growing awareness and positive attitudes among the students. However, the findings also open the discussion on the need for broader efforts and supportive environments that can bridge the gap between passive acceptance and active advocacy, as advocated and evidenced by Freyn’s (2019) study which sought to create

Table 4
Assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of academic relevance

Academic Relevance	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
I believe that incorporating LGBTQ literature into our school curriculum is essential.	3.18	.74	Agree	Moderate Extent	6
I appreciate it if my teachers included LGBTQ themes in our lessons whenever appropriate.	3.46	.65	Agree	Moderate Extent	1
I believe that reading LGBTQ literature makes me think more critically and helps me empathize with LGBTQ members.	3.39	.69	Agree	Moderate Extent	3
I'd like to see schools and teachers encourage discussions about LGBTQ literature.	3.37	.69	Agree	Moderate Extent	4
I believe that academic exposure to LGBTQ literature can empower students to become supportive of members of LGBTQ.	3.45	.66	Agree	Moderate Extent	2
I believe that integrating LGBTQ literature into academic discussions prepares students for a diverse world.	3.32	.74	Agree	Moderate Extent	5
Composite Mean	3.36	.59	Agree	Moderate Extent	

Table 5
Differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools according to gender

Extent of Acceptability of Learning LGBTQ Literature in Schools	Gender	Mean	SD	T-value	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Personal Attitude	LGBTQ	3.7910	.29351	52.158	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non-LGBTQ	3.2335	.60148				
Social Perception	LGBTQ	3.7488	.35221	30.936	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non-LGBTQ	3.3556	.53045				
Academic Relevance	LGBTQ	3.7363	.36601	44.576	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non-LGBTQ	3.2102	.59859				
Overall	LGBTQ	3.7587	.29533	49.668	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non-LGBTQ	3.2665	.53770				

“allies” among the students.

The assessment of the respondents on their extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of academic relevance revealed that the highest assessment, as indicated by the mean of 3.46, was found in item 2 which illustrates that the students moderately accept the idea of being taught LGBTQ topics, which includes but are not limited to self-discovery, coming out, nonconformity, etc. In fact, Blackburn et al. (2016) espoused the idea that pedagogy must also include 'queer texts' to “combat” heteronormativity in the classroom and to lessen homophobia in the classroom.

On the other hand, the lowest mean of 3.18, was found in item 1 which shows that the students believe that incorporating LGBTQ literature into their school curriculum is essential. This may mean that the students are on the fence with regards to including LGBTQ literature in the curriculum, as indicated by the disparity between the moderate extent in the acceptance of including LGBTQ themes in the lesson but not on the curriculum. For the longest time, the advocacy on including LGBTQ literature in the curriculum has been going, not only in high schools, but also in other levels as well (Malo-Juvera, 2016).

The overall mean of 3.36 and the standard deviation of 0.59, showing a moderate extent of acceptability from the assessment of the students, indicates that the students agree that the learning of LGBTQ literature in schools in terms of academic relevance is moderately acceptable. This shows that the academic relevance of learning LGBTQ literature is still undetermined despite knowing the positive effects it has on the society and despite the positive perception of the students toward the learning of LGBTQ literature. This is consistent with research by Blackburn et al. (2016), who highlighted the value of incorporating LGBTQ-themed literature into English or literature classes in order to counteract heteronormativity and lessen student homophobia. Additionally, the need of

incorporating queer and trans-infused teaching approaches was emphasized by Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2018). Their research showed that students acquire early critical literacy abilities by reading works that explore gender fluidity, including "Princess Boy," which promotes acceptance and challenges strict gender standards.

B. Significant Differences in the Assessment of the Student Respondents on the Extent of Acceptability of Learning LGBTQ Literature in Schools

Significant differences are found when the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools was grouped based on their gender.

As can be gleaned from the table, personal attitude, social perception, and academic relevance respectively obtained high T-values of 52.158, 30.936, and 44.576 which indicates that there are great differences between the means of the LGBTQ respondents and the non-LGBTQ respondents which suggests that there were significant differences in the assessments of the two groups. This was confirmed by the obtained p-value of 0.00 which is similar among the three constructs of extent of acceptability. Since the obtained p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected which means that there is a significant difference in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools was grouped based on their gender

This suggests that there are disparities between how the non-LGBTQ respondents assess their extent of acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature in schools with that of the LGBTQ respondents. Across all constructs of the extent of acceptability, the mean is always higher for the LGBTQ respondents, as indicated by the means of 3.79, 3.74, and 3.73 respectively. The higher mean from the LGBTQ respondents evidently means that they have higher extent of acceptance on the learning of

LGBTQ literature when compared to the non-LGBTQ respondents. Non-LGBTQ students' lower assessment may indicate lesser familiarity or exposure to LGBTQ literature.

The assessment of the student respondents can be anchored in several key findings from existing literature. Freyn (2019) emphasized that exposure to LGBTQ literature fosters allyship, particularly among non-LGBTQ individuals, and that LGBTQ students themselves often view such literature as a mirror of their own experiences. This helps explain their stronger affirmation of its academic relevance and personal significance.

Consequently, LGBTQ students may perceive the inclusion of LGBTQ literature as a critical corrective measure to counter the lack of representation and recognition in school curricula. The higher acceptance levels from LGBTQ respondents align with Blackburn *et al.*, 2016 study which emphasized on the need for inclusive narratives that reflect diverse identities and lived experiences.

This finding also resonates with Ji's (2007) model of allyship as cited in Freyn (2019), which posits that knowledge and visibility are prerequisites to advocacy and support.

Significant differences were not found for the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in school when they are grouped according to their grade level.

As can be noted from the table, the computed T-values of 1.615, 3.136, and 1.011 was found for the following aspects of extent of acceptability, namely, personal attitude, social perception, and academic relevance respectively. This shows that there are little differences in the assessment of the student respondents regardless of the difference in their grade levels. Hence, the assessment of the Grade 11 student respondents and that of the Grade 12 student respondents are generally the same despite the difference in their grade level.

The p-values obtained likewise support these findings, as indicated by the following values computed for the aspects personal attitude, social perception, and academic relevance respectively, 0.205, 0.078, and 0.316. With the p-values being

greater than the significance value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted which means that there are no significant differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in school based on their grade levels.

This illustrates that the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools among the two groups of student respondents are the same, which mean that regardless of whether LGBTQ literature is taught in the grade 11 or 12, the respondents still find it acceptable implying their preparedness and willingness to engage with LGBTQ texts.

This finding is aligned with research by Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2018) and Snapp *et al.* (2015), who argued that the presence or absence of inclusive education plays a more influential role in shaping perceptions toward LGBTQ inclusivity—especially when students are exposed to progressive or critically engaging classroom environments.

Additionally, the results may be reflective of what De Jesus *et al.* (2022) observed among Filipino senior high school students: that exposure to queer literature, regardless of grade level, is positively associated with greater gender sensitivity and openness. This suggests that both Grade 11 and Grade 12 students may have had similar degrees of exposure or cultural engagement with LGBTQ themes, either through media, peer discussions, or school-related activities.

The grade-level uniformity suggests that age-related developmental differences do not significantly impact students' evaluations of the extent of their acceptance of LGBTQ literature, which supports the idea that changes in perspective and acceptance are driven by curricular exposure and institutional support rather than just student maturity. Likewise, this may be due to that fact that the differences in the maturity between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students is not that varied considering that the grade levels are not too far apart.

C. Assessment of the Student Respondents of the Extent of their Exposure to LGBTQ Literature

Taking into account the assessment of the student

Table 6

Differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools according to grade level

Extent of Acceptability of Learning LGBTQ Literature in Schools	Grade Level	Mean	SD	T-value	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Personal Attitude	Grade 11	3.3288	.54289	1.615	.205	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	3.4349	.60522				
Social Perception	Grade 11	3.3858	.49603	3.136	.078	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	3.5155	.52152				
Academic Relevance	Grade 11	3.3105	.55089	1.011	.316	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	3.3951	.60846				
Overall	Grade 11	3.3417	.49280	2.020	.157	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	3.4485	.54278				

Table 7

Assessment of the student respondents of the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of classroom and curriculum

Classroom and Curriculum	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
My school curriculum includes books or stories with LGBTQ themes.	2.71	.80	Agree	Moderate Extent	4
We've discussed LGBTQ literature in my English or 21 st Century Literature classes.	2.78	.83	Agree	Moderate Extent	3
My teachers allow us to read and talk about LGBTQ literature.	3.17	.73	Agree	Moderate Extent	1
I've had assignments or projects that involved LGBTQ literature.	2.70	.88	Agree	Moderate Extent	5
We've analyzed characters from LGBTQ literature during class discussions.	2.85	.82	Agree	Moderate Extent	2
I have participated in special school events or seminars focusing on LGBTQ literature.	2.68	.87	Agree	Moderate Extent	6
Composite Mean	2.81	.63	Agree	Moderate Extent	

Table 8
Assessment of the student respondents of the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of media and entertainment

Media and Entertainment	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
I watch movies or TV shows that feature LGBTQ characters or themes.	3.39	.78	Agree	Moderate Extent	1
I frequently encounter LGBTQ characters in the books and media (shows, series, movies, etc.) I like.	3.27	.81	Agree	Moderate Extent	2
I follow social media accounts or blogs that talk about LGBTQ literature.	3.08	.86	Agree	Moderate Extent	6
I've read online stories, comics, or graphic novels with LGBTQ themes.	3.17	.87	Agree	Moderate Extent	3
I regularly see movie posters and book covers that feature LGBTQ themes or characters.	3.16	.86	Agree	Moderate Extent	4
I explore streaming platforms for content about or that includes LGBTQ narratives.	3.11	.88	Agree	Moderate Extent	5
Composite Mean	3.20	.71	Agree	Moderate Extent	

Table 9
Assessment of the student respondents of the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of library and reading habits

Library and Reading Habits	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
I read a literary piece (novel, short story, poem, play, nonfiction, etc.) that include LGBTQ characters or explore LGBTQ themes.	3.10	.86	Agree	Moderate Extent	1
My school or local library has a special section for LGBTQ literature.	2.61	.89	Agree	Moderate Extent	6
I've purchased a book that features LGBTQ themes or characters.	2.63	.96	Agree	Moderate Extent	5
I often look for new books by LGBTQ authors or with LGBTQ themes.	2.70	.94	Agree	Moderate Extent	4
I've read a book that focuses on LGBTQ experiences from start to finish.	2.86	.97	Agree	Moderate Extent	2
I keep a list of LGBTQ-themed books/stories which I intend to read.	2.80	.97	Agree	Moderate Extent	3
Composite Mean	2.78	.76	Agree	Moderate Extent	

respondents of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of classroom and curriculum, the highest assessment, as indicated by the mean score of 3.17 which shows the moderate extent of exposure of the student respondents, was found for item 3 which means that the teachers are tolerant to the discussion of LGBTQ literature inside the classroom which coincides with the previous findings on the teachers injecting LGBTQ themes in their lessons whenever appropriate, implying that the students are moderately exposed to LGBTQ literature in the classroom. The exposure of students to LGBTQ literature at the classroom level has profound and positive impact to their gender sensitivity, as noted by De Jesus, Dorado, et al. (2022). The development of gender sensitivity is likewise significant in developing students who are more critical and accepting of differences that exist between and among people.

On the other hand, the lowest assessment, as evident by the mean score of 2.68 which shows the moderate extent of exposure of the students to LGBTQ literature, was found for item 6 which indicates that although the students are moderately exposed from LGBTQ literature in their classrooms, the school is not as welcoming to the idea of exposing the students through organized events and/or activities, due to the lack of events that celebrate or include the themes of LGBTQ. The exposure to LGBTQ literature (through activities in the school) is imperative, if not important, for the students for several reasons – for one it significantly boosts self-awareness, openness, and allyship among non-queer youth (Fish et al., 2022).

The overall mean of 2.81 with a standard deviation of 0.63 shows that the student respondents assessed that they are exposed to a moderate extent to LGBTQ literature in their classrooms and through the curricular offerings of the school. The moderate exposure of the students may be due to the fact that there is an incongruence between the practice of the teachers and the activities set forth by the schools in relation to LGBTQ-themes. As with any other educational institution, the teachings of the teachers should be complemented by the co- and extra-curricular offerings of the school to further enrich and

develop the lessons taught to them. In fact, Freyn (2019) espoused the idea of teaching LGBTQ literature to students noting that through the teaching of LGBTQ literature, the students became more vocal about their thoughts and are more 'embracing' of their selves and others.

The highest assessment for the extent of exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of media and entertainment, as signified by the mean score of 3.39 which shows the moderate extent of exposure of the students, was found for item 1 which illustrates that the students are exposed, although only to a moderate extent, to LGBTQ literature through the mass media and other entertainment media as these are the primary means through which teens nowadays consume media content. The prevalence of LGBTQ characters may play a vital role as well to the moderate exposure of the students. As noted by De Vera (2016), there is a wealth of sources on Philippine media about “gay” characters but these characters are almost always the stereotypical portrayals of “gay” characters – lacking depth and seriousness which systematically conditions misconceptions about “gay” people.

In contrast, the lowest assessment, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.08 which shows that the moderate extent to which the students were exposed to LGBTQ literature, was found for item 3 which means that although there is a wealth of materials that students can be exposed to when it comes to LGBTQ literature, their conscious decision to “stay away” from representation of LGBTQ in social media limits their exposure to it. This conscious decision may be due to personal reasons, that coincides with the previous findings where personal attitude towards the acceptance of learning LGBTQ literature is only to a moderate extent. Social media presence of representation is important considering the role of media in shaping identity. As Yilmaz and Yakar (2016) emphasize, children's identity formation is significantly shaped by both the implicit and explicit messages about social genders they encounter in literature and media. Therefore, limited exposure to LGBTQ narratives on social media could mean missed opportunities for

Table 10
Assessment of the student respondents of the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of peer and social influence

Peer and Social Influence	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
I have friends who encouraged me to explore LGBTQ literature.	3.20	.86	Agree	Moderate Extent	4
I've recommended LGBTQ books to my friends.	2.93	.94	Agree	Moderate Extent	6
I talk with my friends about LGBTQ stories and characters.	3.16	.86	Agree	Moderate Extent	5
I feel that my friends are generally open and accepting of LGBTQ literature.	3.48	.71	Agree	Moderate Extent	1
I socialize with people who read LGBTQ literature.	3.36	.69	Agree	Moderate Extent	2
Conversations with friends frequently explore LGBTQ characters and/or literature we've/they've read that feature them.	3.31	.82	Agree	Moderate Extent	3
Composite Mean	3.24	.67	Agree	Moderate Extent	

Table 11
Differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature according to gender

Extent of Student Exposure to LGBTQ Literature	Gender	Mean	SD	T-value	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Classroom and Curriculum	LGBTQ	2.8905	.68875	1.185	.278	Accepted	Not Significant
	Non LGBTQ	2.7898	.60979				
Media and Entertainment	LGBTQ	3.6592	.42978	47.650	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non LGBTQ	3.0053	.72216				
Library and Reading Habits	LGBTQ	3.1692	.66824	26.046	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non LGBTQ	2.6274	.75110				
Peer and Social Influence	LGBTQ	3.6368	.44752	36.722	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non LGBTQ	3.0796	.69301				
Overall	LGBTQ	3.3389	.44670	31.856	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Non LGBTQ	2.8755	.60502				

broader understanding and identity development.

The overall mean of 3.20 with the standard deviation of 0.71 shows that the student respondents are exposed to a moderate extent to LGBTQ literature through various forms of media and entertainment modes. This moderate exposure of the students to LGBTQ literature in terms of media and entertainment may be due to the inappropriate representation of LGBTQ characters in existing shows and media or there is really a conscious evasion of media and entertainment which include or portrays LGBTQ themes or characters. This also signifies the pivotal role that media and entertainment play in exposing students to LGBTQ literature.

This is ironic since Page (2017) argued that there is greater visibility for LGBTQIA people in society than ever before, as indicated by media portrayals. Additionally, Wright (2017) and Zivtci (2007) underscored how mainstream media and literature have historically portrayed LGBTQ characters through stereotypical or minor roles. The same sentiments are echoed by Sen & Karagul (2021) who cautioned on how a character is rendered "realistic" in the readers' minds—that is, how the readers perceive the character's traits as genuine or true—is noteworthy in their work. As such, exposure to good and correct representation of LGBTQ characters is likewise imperative.

Taking into consideration the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of library and reading habits, the highest assessment, as evident in the mean of 3.10 which shows the moderate extent to which the students are exposed to LGBTQ literature, was found for item 1 which means that including LGBTQ themes in the discussion of literary pieces is natural especially if they really contain the said theme/s, whether the students are aware of it or not. As such, the students may have been assigned literary texts that, in a subtle way, discuss or refer to any LGBTQ themes. As noted by Wright in 2017a and 2017b, several seminal literary works from the Philippines, which by the way is taught in the first quarter of the subject 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World, contains "gay

themes" which include *The Doll* by Emigdio Alvarez-Enriquez, *The Chamber of the Sea* by Edith Tiempo, *High Fashion* by Gilda Cordero-Fernando, *Geyluv* by Honorio de Dios, and *The Husband* by Jaime An Lim.

On the other hand, the lowest assessment, exhibited by the mean score of 2.61 which shows that the students are exposed moderately to LGBTQ literature, was found for item 2 which states that the lack of LGBTQ materials in the library further hinders the access of students to LGBTQ literature exacerbating the already dismal results of the students' exposure to LGBTQ literature. The lack of a special section in school libraries for LGBTQ literature is, however, understandable given that it is not a separate classification of books under the Dewey Decimal Classification system, the system that most libraries in the Philippines utilize according to The National Library of the Philippines. Works related to LGBTQ topics, however, are typically classified under broader categories such as 306.76, which encompasses sexual orientation, transgender identity, and intersexuality. This may have made it more challenging for the students to locate LGBTQ literature since the books and other reading materials are dispersed across various categories which then leads to reduced exposure.

The overall mean of 2.78 and the significant value of 0.76 evidently indicates the moderate extent of the students' exposure to LGBTQ literature through the school's library of in their community's libraries. The contrary findings of the students being exposed through the reading of literary pieces with LGBTQ characters or themes and the difficulty in accessing LGBTQ literature from the school or community libraries show the incongruous practices of the teachers and the school at large – a running theme found in Classroom and Curriculum where it was found that teachers allow students to discuss LGBTQ literature but the school does not organize events for LGBTQ. The disparity between the two spheres of the school – that of the teacher and that of the school, may be partially the reason for the moderate extent of exposure of the students to LGBTQ literature in the academic setting.

This illustrates that although the students are moderately exposed to LGBTQ literature through the libraries or their reading habits, Hughes-Hassell, Overberg, and Harris (2013) noted that LGBTQ-themed literature is still underrepresented in school library collections, especially when it comes to works that include characters of color, people with disabilities, or those who are not within gay/lesbian axes. Particularly in educational contexts, this lack of variety in representation leads to a limited understanding of what it means to be queer.

The assessment of the student respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of peer and social influence reveal that the highest assessment, as displayed in the mean of 3.48 which shows that the students are moderately exposed to LGBTQ literature, was found for item 4 which means that the tolerant nature of the students' social circles mimics that of the teachers, two of the most important people to the students in shaping their awareness of different issues. The openness of the respondents' friends and other members of their social circle opens the conversations on how these can be avenues to further expose other people to LGBTQ literature. This is what Malo-Juvera (2016) called as "integrative" approach to teaching LGBTQ literature, which includes all, even the friends, chiming in to teach students about LGBTQ themes in order for them to develop a deeper understanding of LGBTQ literature.

Contrarily, the lowest assessment, as indicated by the mean of 2.93 showing that the students are moderately exposed to LGBTQ literature, was found for item 2 which may be because the students are not aware of texts that they can recommend to other people be due to their limited exposure to LGBTQ literature, which is also somehow connected to the previous findings regarding the lack of LGBTQ sections in libraries. As such, they have no or limited recommendation as far as LGBTQ texts are concerned. Quite alarming since exposure to LGBTQ literature, as with any other good old fashioned marketing of products, is better if it comes from word of mouth. As noted by Hughes-Hassell, Overberg, and Harris (2013) in Malo-Juvera 2016, improving the availability of such materials can empower students to independently engage with LGBTQ narratives.

Overall, the composite mean of 3.24 and the standard deviation of 0.67 shows the moderate extent of exposure of the students to LGBTQ literature when their friends and other social spheres are considered. The moderate exposure of the students to LGBTQ literature brought by their social circle is a refreshing take – implying that the students are related to or knows someone who is either open to discussing LGBTQ themes or LGBTQ literature or someone who is both open to discussion and is a member of the LGBTQ. This openness to discuss LGBTQ themes is refreshing since opening the dialogue about it may be the first step in achieving the formalization of the inclusion of LGBTQ literature in the curriculum. In the same light, the study of Cart (1997) and Hayn and Hazlett (2008) in Malo-Juvera (2016) advocated incorporating LGBTQ literature into whole-class instruction, emphasizing that all students—regardless of sexual orientation—should be exposed to texts that reflect the lives and experiences of LGBTQ individuals.

D. Significant Differences in the Assessment of the Student Respondents of the Extent of their Exposure to LGBTQ Literature

Significant differences were identified in all aspects of the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature when it was grouped according to the respondents' gender, except for classroom and curriculum.

As can be seen, the T-values obtained for media and entertainment, reading habits, and peer and social influence were 47.650, 26.046, and 36.722 respectively. The large numbers computed for the T-values clearly indicate differences in the mean of the assessment of the LGBTQ respondents from the non-LGBTQ respondents – most likely showing a disparity in the assessment between the two groups of respondents. This means that gender is an important aspect in the shaping of the extent of exposure of the students to LGBTQ literature.

Comparing the assessment of the student respondents from the two groups, the LGBTQ student respondents have the higher assessments between the two groups. The mean for media and entertainment, reading habits, and peer and social influence are as follows: 3.6592, 3.1692, and 3.6368 which are significantly higher than the means obtained from the assessment of the non-LGBTQ respondents, showing that LGBTQ students are more exposed to LGBTQ literature than non-LGBTQ respondents.

Lastly, looking at the p-values obtained, 0.000 for media and entertainment, reading habits, and peer and social influence aspects of extent of exposure. Since the p-values obtained for the three aspects (media and entertainment, reading habits, and peer and social influence) were less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected which means that there are significant differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of media and entertainment, reading habits, and peer and social influence when gender is a test factor.

Several studies support these findings. Freyn (2019), for instance, argued that LGBTQ students often seek out affirming content as a means of validating their identities and navigating their lived realities—whether through media, social groups, or personal reading. This explains the higher exposure scores in non-institutional domains, such as entertainment and peer networks.

Moreover, the high level of exposure through media and entertainment is consistent with the works of Dabao (2024) and De Jesus *et al.* (2022), who highlighted the growing visibility of LGBTQ characters and themes in Philippine popular culture. This includes texts like *Zsazsa Zaturnnah*, as well as mainstream TV dramas like *My Husband's Lover* and *The Rich Man's Daughter*, which play a crucial role in making LGBTQ narratives accessible outside the classroom.

The significant differences in reading habits further highlight what Hughes-Hassell, Overberg, and Harris (2013) and Jimenez (2015) noted as a pattern: LGBTQ individuals are more likely to proactively seek representation through literature, especially in contexts where formal education has not yet fully embraced LGBTQ-inclusive content. Similarly, Goldsmith (2016)

emphasized that queer readers are often forced to find themselves in texts despite literature's general bias toward cisgender and heterosexual protagonists, a reality that may encourage LGBTQ students to turn to alternative sources of literature, which may not be properly processed if not taught in schools.

The significant difference found in peer and social influence is supported by De Jesus *et al.* (2022) who found that peer communities play a critical role in the informal education of queer youth. In the absence of curricular representation, LGBTQ students often form social networks where identity-affirming resources are shared, discussed, and validated.

On the other hand, since the p-value obtained for classroom and curriculum is 0.278, the null hypothesis is accepted which means that there is no significant difference in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature in terms of classroom and curriculum when gender is a test factor.

The non-significant difference findings for classroom and curriculum may suggest that school-based exposure to LGBTQ literature remains generally scarce, if not limited, across both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ student respondents. This aligns with Page (2017) and Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2018), who argue that despite the proliferation of inclusive literature outside the classroom, schools often lag behind in integrating such content into formal education. This absence limits the opportunity for both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students to critically engage with LGBTQ narratives in an academic context, where they are more guided and controlled.

Taking into account the assessment of the students respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature considering the grade level of the students, it can be noted that there were no significant differences found across all the aspects, namely classroom and curriculum, media and entertainment, library and reading habits, and peer and social influence.

As can be seen from the table, the T-values obtained for all the aspects of the extent of exposure are 1.338, 2.155, 0.819, and 1.671 respectively for classroom and curriculum, media and entertainment, library and reading habits, and peer and social influence. The values obtained are quite small which may mean that there are more variations in the assessment of the student respondents within each group than when the variations are compared between the groups, hence, the non-significance of the difference in the means between the groups. As such, the assessment of the Grade 11 students and that of the Grade 12 students are similar in terms of the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature.

This is further supported by the p-values obtained for all the aspects of extent of exposure, 0.249 for classroom and curriculum, 0.144 for media and entertainment, 0.367 for library and reading habits, and 0.197 for peer and social influence. Since the p-values are greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted which means that there are no significant differences in the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature when the respondents are grouped according to their grade level.

The non-variability of the assessment of the grade 11 and grade 12 students on exposure indicates that the exposure of students from both grade levels are similar – which shows the limited exposure of the students since the findings only indicate that the students are moderately exposed. Limiting factors may constitute this result, especially considering that it was found that the school does not have activities that celebrate or is about LGBTQ, students don't actively expose themselves to media and entertainment contents that portray or contain LGBTQ themes or characters, the difficulty of the students in accessing LGBTQ texts since there are no special sections in school and community libraries, and, as a result of the latter, the limited knowledge of the students as to the available LGBTQ texts that they can read and subsequently recommend.

The result supports the findings of Snapp *et al.* (2015) and De Jesus *et al.* (2022), who found that systemic access and cultural openness have a greater impact on students' exposure to LGBTQ issues than age or grade level. LGBTQ literature is typically exposed through shared external environments, like social media, entertainment, and peer interactions, in which students of all grade levels are equally immersed.

Moreover, the uniform assessment between the two grade levels observed is supported by the absence of a formal curriculum integration mentioned by Page (2017) and Hughes-Hassell *et al.* (2013) which indicates that students in Grades 11 and 12 may have received an equal amount of formal academic exposure, especially in classroom and library settings. The absences of an age-appropriate or grade-level appropriate LGBTQ literature may have been the reason for the similar assessments between the two groups.

E. Relationship between the Assessment of the Student Respondents on the Extent of Acceptability of Learning LGBTQ Literature in Schools and the Assessment of the Student Respondents of their Exposure to LGBTQ Literature

As can be noted from the table, all aspects of the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools was found to have a significant correlation with all aspects of the extent of exposure of the student respondents to LGBTQ literature.

F. Personal Attitude

Focusing on the dimension of personal attitude, the strongest correlations were observed with media and entertainment, with an r-value of 0.732, and peer and social influence, with an r-value of 0.695, both of which are interpreted as high positive correlations. These findings show that students who personally accept the inclusion of LGBTQ literature in school settings are more likely to have been exposed to such literature through media platforms and social circles.

In addition, a moderate correlation was found between personal attitude and library and reading habits, with an r-value of 0.573, indicating that students with more accepting personal attitudes towards the learning of LGBTQ literature tend to engage more frequently with LGBTQ literature through formal reading channels, though to a lesser extent than through media or peer influence.

The weakest correlation was between personal attitude and

Table 12
Differences in the assessment of the student respondents of the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature according to grade level

Extent of Student Exposure to LGBTQ Literature	Grade Level	Mean	SD	T-value	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Classroom and Curriculum	Grade 11	2.8904	.58083	1.338	.249	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	2.7859	.65811				
Media and Entertainment	Grade 11	3.1005	.74419	2.155	.144	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	3.2494	.69599				
Reading Habits	Grade 11	2.8562	.80619	.819	.367	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	2.7572	.74827				
Peer and Social Influence	Grade 11	3.1621	.66491	1.671	.197	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	3.2870	.68372				
Overall	Grade 11	3.0023	.62330	.042	.838	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 12	3.0199	.59088				

Table 13
Relationship between the assessment of the student respondents on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools and the assessment of the student respondents of the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature

Extent of Acceptability of Learning LGBTQ Literature in Schools	Extent of Student Exposure to LGBTQ Literature	Computed r	Sig	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Personal Attitude	Classroom and Curriculum	.315	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Media and Entertainment	.732	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Reading Habits	.573	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Peer and Social Influence	.695	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Total	.353	0.000	Rejected	Significant
Social Perception	Classroom and Curriculum	.645	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Media and Entertainment	.540	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Reading Habits	.682	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Peer and Social Influence	.421	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Total	.694	0.000	Rejected	Significant
Academic Relevance	Classroom and Curriculum	.607	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Media and Entertainment	.708	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Reading Habits	.729	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Peer and Social Influence	.315	0.000	Rejected	Significant
	Total	.732	0.000	Rejected	Significant
Overall Extent of Acceptability of Learning LGBTQ Literature in Schools	Overall Extent of Student Exposure to LGBTQ Literature	.573	0.000	Rejected	Significant

classroom and curriculum, with an r-value of 0.315, signifying a low positive correlation. This suggests that despite increasing awareness, classroom-based exposure are still limited or inconsistent in fostering stronger personal attitudes toward LGBTQ literature.

Lastly, the overall correlation between personal attitude and extent of exposure to LGBTQ literature was also relatively low, indicating a low positive correlation as observed in the computed r-value of 0.353, which shows that an increase in the personal acceptance of LGBTQ literature will somehow increase the exposure to the students to LGBTQ literature, although it may be more strongly influenced by other aspects rather than the espoused academic integration.

The findings supports the work of Freyn (2019), who emphasized that LGBTQ-themed media content fosters identity development and allyship, particularly when formal educational structures are absent or limited. Wright (2017) and De Vera (2016) also noted that portrayals in Philippine media, while sometimes stereotypical, have played a formative role in exposing audiences to LGBTQ characters, albeit often through humor or marginal roles. In fact, Page (2017) and Martinez-Exposito (2013) argued that even when LGBTQ content is included in curricula, it is often “tokenistic”, reinforcing rather than disrupting heteronormative norms.

G. Social Perception

In terms of social perception, the strongest correlation was found with library and reading habits (r = 0.682), followed closely by classroom and curriculum (r = 0.645), both of which

indicate high positive correlations. This suggests that students’ social views of LGBTQ literature are significantly shaped by formal learning experiences and access to diverse reading materials, highlighting the important role of educational institutions, through the formal teaching and inclusivity in book collections, in influencing social acceptance of discussions of LGBTQ themes.

Moreover, moderate correlations were recorded between social perception and media and entertainment (r = 0.540) and peer and social influence (r = 0.421), suggesting that while informal sources contribute to shaping social attitudes, they may do so less strongly than formal academic channels in so far as forming the social value of LGBTQ literature is concerned.

Finally, the overall correlation between social perception and extent of exposure also indicate a high positive correlation, evidenced by the r-value of 0.694, indicating that as students’ exposure to LGBTQ literature increases, their broader social acceptance of such literature also tends to rise. This illustrates that academic intervention in the form of teaching LGBTQ literature to students will strongly influence the social acceptance of teaching and learning LGBTQ literature among students.

The findings are supported by Snapp et al. (2015), who found that LGBTQ-inclusive curricula result in increased peer acceptance and reduced discrimination, not just for LGBTQ students but across the student population. Likewise, Malo-Juvera (2016) emphasized the potential of English and Literature classrooms to serve as critical sites for confronting social biases through the inclusion of LGBTQ narratives,

critically espoused by Blackburn *et al.* (2016), who emphasized literature's potential to challenge entrenched biases and social invisibility.

H. Academic Relevance

Regarding academic relevance, the highest correlations were observed with library and reading habits ($r = 0.729$), media and entertainment ($r = 0.708$), and classroom and curriculum ($r = 0.607$). All three r -values reveal high positive correlation, suggesting that students who perceive LGBTQ literature as academically relevant are consistently those who have encountered such content across both formal (through the teachings of a teacher or through the books or texts they were required to read) and informal (media and entertainment) channels.

In addition, the lowest correlation was found between academic relevance and peer and social influence ($r = 0.315$), showing low positive correlation. This indicates that the academic value of learning LGBTQ literature is weakly related to the exposure of the students. This weak relationship shows that the perceptions of academic relevance are less influenced by peers and social dynamics and more by institutional or personal academic engagement.

The overall correlation between academic relevance and extent of student exposure to LGBTQ literature denotes a high positive correlation as evidenced by the r -value of 0.732. This means that the students who are accepting of the academic merits of teaching, and subsequently learning, of LGBTQ literature are also those who are exposed to LGBTQ literature. The findings reinforce the previous findings that students who are more exposed to LGBTQ literature across various domains tend to recognize its educational value and importance.

The findings reflect the argument of Malo-Juvera (2016) that academic relevance is enhanced when LGBTQ literature is integrated across various educational platforms. Blackburn & Buckley (2005) also emphasized that such texts should not be relegated to supplemental materials, but instead be used in whole-class instruction, enabling deeper student engagement and legitimacy of LGBTQ identities in academic discourse.

The academic validation of LGBTQ literature is grounded more in structured instruction than in casual social conversation, as Lopez-Ropero (2012) and Dinkins & Englert (2015) in Freyn (2019) stressed, perceptions of legitimacy are shaped by authority figures, curriculum design, and school-wide support.

In sum, the overall computed r -value of 0.573 between the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools and the extent of student exposure to LGBTQ literature indicates a moderate positive correlation. This indicates that an increase in the acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature also indicates an increase in the exposure of the student to LGBTQ literature and vice versa. This finding underscores the importance of enhancing access to and integration of LGBTQ literature across multiple domains (curriculum, library, media, and peer groups) in order to expose students to LGBTQ literature which will then allow them to understand LGBTQ people better by dismantling systematic stereotypes attached to

them, as pointed out by Libiran *et al.*, (2024).

This finding aligns with Ji (2007) in Freyn (2019), who emphasized the need for "knowledge" as a precursor to creating advocates and allies. Similarly, Cruz & Mallari (2008) asserted that understanding the socio-cultural forces affecting sexual identity requires reading and engaging with LGBTQ narratives.

Furthermore, Yilmaz and Yakar (2016) emphasized that stereotypical gender roles are reinforced through uncritical exposure to traditional literature. Therefore, increasing access to authentic LGBTQ narratives helps counteract these stereotypes and fosters more inclusive identity formation.

4. Conclusion

1. The demographic profile of the student respondents revealed that the majority of the students are non-LGBTQ and are in the grade 12.
2. The students reported moderate acceptance on the learning of LGBTQ literature. Students understand that reading LGBTQ literature has social importance, however, the students are reluctant or uneasy with regards to including LGBTQ literature into the curriculum. While the students are open to discussing LGBTQ themes in class when appropriate, they do not actively seek out LGBTQ literature.
3. There are significant differences in the assessment of the student on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools when it was grouped according to gender. However, there were no significant differences found when the assessments were grouped according to grade level.
4. Students reported moderate exposure to LGBTQ literature, with friends, social media, and teachers contribute significantly to their exposure but the lack of school-wide initiatives or events suggests limited institutional support.
5. There are significant differences in the assessment of the student on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature when it was grouped according to gender, except for classroom and curriculum. However, there were no significant differences found when the assessments were grouped according to grade level.
6. Moderate positive correlation was observed between the assessment of the student on the extent of acceptability of learning LGBTQ literature in schools and the assessment of the student on the extent of their exposure to LGBTQ literature implying the positive impact exposure may have to the acceptance of LGBTQ literature in the academe.

Authors' Biography

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With over a decade of teaching experience, Mr. Clemente has been actively involved in various academic and administrative roles at Emilio Aguinaldo College-Manila. As the Junior High School Coordinator, he oversees academic concerns, quality control of instructional materials, accreditation processes, and professional development programs for teachers. In addition, he serves as Head Teacher 3, handling subjects such as Creative Writing and Creative Nonfiction for Senior High School students while also teaching English in the Junior High School.

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