

# Social Media Exposure and Same Sex Relationships Acceptance among Senior High School Learners

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the correlation between social media exposure and level of acceptance on same-sex relationships (SSR) among Senior High School learners. It utilized correlational design and thematic analysis in analyzing data from an online survey conducted among four schools in Pasacao, Camarines Sur. Specifically, this looked at: (1) demographic profile; (2) level of acceptance of SHS students in SSR; (3) level of social media exposure; (4) examination whether there is or there is no significant relationship between the level of social media exposure and the level of acceptance of SSR; and (5) reasons on how the social media affect perceptions on the SSR acceptance. It was conducted to 100 learners from two public and two private schools. Data were gathered using a researcher-made, expert-validated questionnaire. Reliability analysis yielded excellent internal consistency (overall Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.919$ ). This study applied Pearson correlation in determining significant relationships. Thematic analysis was applied in processing inputs on how social media affects perceptions on SSR. Results showed that (1) there were a total of 45 males and 55 females; (2) the level of acceptance came up with a weighted mean of 3.51, indicating high acceptance. (3) On the level of social media exposure, it was identified as 3.54 indicating a high or frequent social media exposure. (4) There was a 0.53 correlation meaning a moderately positive one. (5) Two themes arose: (a) expands knowledge and ideas and (b) appeals to free expression of emotions. It is recommended that these results be used for the enrichment of education programs; develop studies, policies, and paradigms focusing on the effects of social media exposure on SSR acceptance.

**Keywords:** *Social Media Exposure, Same Sex Relationships, Senior High School, Level of Acceptance, LGBTQ*

## INTRODUCTION

Society naturally changes. Various genders emerge as knowledge about sexuality and gender expands. In the Philippines, as a conservative country, gender identity still remains to be a big issue. Evident is the failure to pass the Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression Bill, which aims to limit discrimination in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) sector, due to some of its provisions. Gender expression is one of the universal human rights, along with freedom of expression, according to the Universal Declaration of Rights.

Over time, the view of the majority towards gender has gradually changed. People began to acknowledge the emergence of LGBTQs (Rozul, 2017). Despite this, LGBTQ people around the world continue to face challenges. These include lack of employment opportunities, and bias in accessing health care, housing and education (Burns, 2011). The killing of members of the LGBTQ community continues in various countries despite increasing calls for equality and freedom from all forms of discrimination and oppression (Brown, 2012).

A 2019 Pew Research Report revealed that approximately 73% of Filipinos think that homosexuality should be accepted by society. The survey looked at how 38,000 people in 34 countries saw homosexuality. When the same survey was conducted in 2013, the Philippines had the same acceptance rate of 73%. This means that there's no perception shift, hence, the Philippines is the only participating country that did not change its view from 2013 to 2019 (Abad, 2020).

In response, the Department of Education (DepEd) has released a gender-responsive policy framework – it calls for an end to discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation and gender identity (Thereson, 2017). Among these measures are: training school personnel to respond to bullying and discrimination; integrating gender, sexuality and human rights into teacher

training programs and curricula; and observing and celebrating Women's Month, LGBTQ Pride Month, and Human Rights Month.

### **Contextualization of LGBTQ and Same Sex Relationships in the Philippines**

The Philippines, despite having a conservative Christian majority, is home to a diverse and large LGBTQ community. Non-straight men are often beaten or forced to give up their 'unique' gender preferences. In the oppressive society, if one acts like a LGBTQ member, such an act is considered a disease that needs immediate treatment. Some religious institutions also preach that homosexuality is a sin (Bandola, 2015).

Adeyemo (2020) analyzed the extent of acceptance of sexual minorities (third sex) among Filipinos, especially those international students. While many of the respondents agreed that it is certainly normal if one of their relatives or family members is a sexual minority, the majority (56.98% from the 368 sample size) believed that those sexual minorities have a negative moral impact on society. A notable challenge is religion and its impact on how students perceive sexual minorities on campus. This challenge further revealed an interesting link as to why it may be difficult for international students to adapt to the socio-cultural environment of the Philippines.

De Leon and Jintalan (2018) argued that Filipinos seem to be decreasing acceptance of homosexuality in terms of basic human rights such as the right to marriage and legal union due to what is considered a predominantly Catholic country with a long history of colonialism of the Spaniards. Furthermore, they argued that colonial and post-colonial perspectives play a greater role in discourses on same-sex marriage than ever before. They assumed that there seems to be a culture of silence in the Filipino society on the issue of same-sex marriage due to these colonial and post-colonial ideologies. This implies an endless cycle of cultural and ideological reproduction regarding homosexuality issues.

According to Tolentino (2019), the most mentioned phrase to describe the LGBTQ situation in the Philippines is "tolerated but not accepted". Being "tolerated" means that people can live with LGBTQ people who exist and "but not accepted". This means that those who belong to LGBTQ do not enjoy the same human rights that heterosexuals enjoy in society.

### **Policies in Basic Education**

DepEd issued the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy to address this disparity following the mandate stated in the 2009 Magna Carta of Women and other relevant laws on gender equality. The said DepEd policy generally seeks to incorporate the principles of gender equality, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human rights in the provision and management of basic education (DepEd Order No. 32, series of 2017).

Along with this policy, the DepEd issued Comprehensive Sexuality Education to enhance the holistic wellness of Filipino youth by ensuring that they are equipped with comprehensive information and appropriate life skills that can promote gender equality and empowerment (DepEd Order No 31, series of 2018). Human Rights Watch in the Philippines raised the concern that gender equality policies will still not bring much change, especially for the LGBTQ community, until they are followed with strict implementation.

### **The Role of Social Media Exposure**

In the speech of Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon M. Lopez at the Philippine Digital Convention 2021, he emphasized the digital landscape of our country. This makes it an ideal setting to support growth hyperscalers as well as data center operations. The Philippines is currently the social media capital of the world with 89 million active social media users. As of January 2021, according to the Global Social Media Use Ranking, the Philippines ranked 6th on Facebook, 10th on YouTube, 11th on Twitter and 18th on Instagram. Manila is also included among other Asian cities in the list of 30 leading startup ecosystems in the Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER).

It is said that social media has a great impact on the way people live and the way people interact with each other. Social media is also the most important platform to communicate, share information, act as search tool, advertising tool and to promote some social movements (Kidd & McIntosh, 2016). Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube allow people to share content with others quickly and easily with minimal time as well as free cost (Subramanian, 2017). In addition, the media itself has several functions, one of which is to influence the attitudes and behavior of a person or a group of people or society. The media influences people's perception in the process of creating their opinions or views (Voonaputra, 2018).

Social media also facilitates identity construction and communication by allowing LGBTQ youth to curate their online presence in a context characterized by relative safety (i.e., users can block or accept whoever they choose) and control anonymity (i.e., users can choose how much [if any] of their lives is made public) (Downing, 2013; Craig et al., 2020). The comparative

anonymity available online facilitates opportunities for youth to develop and explore their LGBTQ identities in ways that are not possible in offline communities (McInroy & Craig, 2015). LGBTQ identities and experiences are constructed and expressed through the use of technology (Bond & Figueroa-Caballero, 2016).

Despite these preliminary data, no major studies have been recorded in the research locale. Studies about students' acceptance of same-sex relationships are also limited and lacking. Because of this, this research was conducted.

This study determined the relationship of social media exposure to the level of acceptance of Senior High School Students in same sex relationships. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

- 1) What is the profile of Senior High School students based on (a) gender, and (b) sexuality?
- 2) What is the level of acceptance of Senior High School students in same-sex relationships based on (a) positive statements and (b) negative statements?
- 3) What is the level of social media exposure of the Senior High School students based on (a) immersion in Social Media and (b) influence of Social Media contents
- 4) Does the level of social media exposure have a significant relationship with the level of acceptance of same sex relationships?
- 5) How does social media affect perceptions on same-sex relationship acceptance?

### Conceptual-Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by Media Cultivation Theory (MCT) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). MCT(Gerbner, 1960 as cited in Perera, 2023) argues that people develop their understanding of social reality through their viewing habits. In addition, SCT (Bandura, 1986 as mentioned in Nickerson, 2025) claims that learners develop social attitudes by observing the behaviors and identities of peers and influencers in online spaces that provide relative safety and anonymity for exploring LGBTQ identities. In this study, following MCT, participants are being affected by the exposure they have in social media as an entity that may influence decisions, and the SCT highlights that behavior is being shaped by interaction between environmental observations, personal factors, and reinforced social modeling.

Likewise, Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this research based on a correlational Independent-Dependent variable structure. The Independent Variable (IV) is Social Media Exposure, measured by the students' level of immersion (how often they use it) and the effect of social media content (interaction with friends and influencers). The Dependent Variable (DV) is the Level of SSR Acceptance, assessed by the learners' agreement with statements about gender equity, human dignity, and the influence of traditional or religious biases.

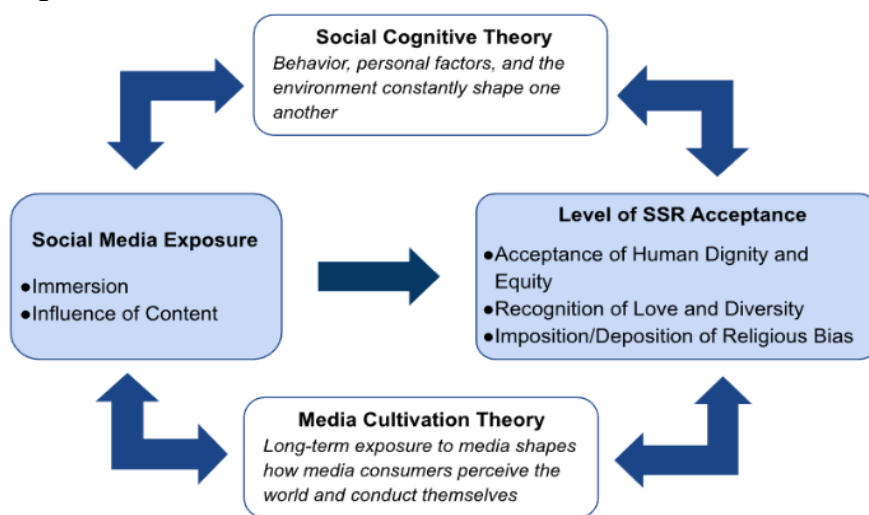


Figure 1. Theoretical-Conceptual Paradigm

The findings of this study will benefit the general public and LGBTQ members. This research will provide meaningful information and recommendations to schools. The data and conclusions in this study can be the basis of the **Department of Education** in improving the curriculum to make schools more gender-friendly. The study will pave the way for adding data and knowledge to the **National Youth Commission** on how powerful social media exposure and other factors are in accepting students, who are also Filipino youth, that have same-sex relationships. This study will serve as a map for **parents** on how social media and other factors affect students' moral standpoint. Additionally, parents will learn how open their children are to gender issues. **Aspiring researchers** can use the findings of this study as a basis for their ongoing or future studies.

This research focused on the correlation of social media exposure and the level of acceptance of Senior High School students in same-sex relationships in Pasacao, Camarines Sur. Senior High School students were chosen as the respondents because the researchers expected that they have sufficient knowledge on the issue.

## METHODS

This study utilized a mixed approach of correlational, descriptive, and thematic analysis in encapsulating the phenomenon. The primary goal was to draw a relationship between the two variables: social media usage and level of acceptance on same-sex relationships. This is calculated using Pearson Correlation. Descriptive statistics were used in determining demographic profiles. Meanwhile, thematic analysis was used in analysis inputs on how social media exposure affects perceptions on same-sex relationship acceptance.

There was a researcher-made online survey questionnaire. Online survey was used for the respondents due to a control variable: student's knowledge of technology use, and also there were restrictions brought by the pandemic. As social media exposure is primarily being studied, respondents were expected to be aware of filling out the online form for affirmation of appropriately determined respondents.

The questionnaire was a four-section survey with a combination of close-ended questions (in the form of 5-point Likert) and open questions in answering the fifth question. It went through the process of content validity. It was analyzed and reviewed by a group of experts, who are teachers of various fields and specialization, on the basis of syntax, contents, and scope. The criteria set by Carter V. Good, and Douglas B. Scates, modified by Abdullah (2015) was used.

The reliability analysis of the instrument was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of each scale. The results showed that the section measuring the same sex relationships acceptance was found to be at  $\alpha = 0.969$  that indicates excellent internal consistency. Meanwhile, the section measuring social media exposure yielded an  $\alpha = 0.868$  which means that there is a good internal consistency. Furthermore, the overall instrument achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.919, which is categorized as excellent reliability. This indicates that the complete scale is characterized by an exemplary level of consistency and is appropriate for assessing the intended variables.

The research respondents were one hundred students in Grades 11 & 12 from two public and two private schools. They come from the Academic Track Strands and Technical Vocational Track Strands. This sample size was determined using heuristics determined by Lunenberg and Irby (2008) as mentioned by Barrot (2020).

Each of the respondents were asked to answer an online survey through Google Forms. Besides being voluntary, chain-referral sampling was applied. The sampling is highly recommended when working with attendees of educational programs or samples of research studies (Mathin et.al., 2017 cited in Ibardeola, et.al., 2022). Respondents were reminded of anonymity and confidentiality. The study complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and related regulations in processing personal data and upholding their rights as data subjects.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of the Senior High School students on the basis of sex and gender. There were 45 males and 55 females. On the basis of gender, 32 students identified themselves as males, 56 as female, 10 as members of LGBTQ, and 2 as non-binary.

**Table 1** Demographic Profile of the Senior High School Students

	Male	Female	LGBTQ	Non-binary	Total
<b>Sex</b>	45	55			100
<b>Gender</b>	32	56	10	2	100

Table 2 contains the combined positive and negative indicators that encapsulated the level of acceptance among Senior High School learners. Positive indicators involve statements that favor gender equity rights. Meanwhile, a reverse equivalent scoring was indicated for the negative indicators since these involve statements that promote homophobia and classical beliefs concerning gender and sex. These pioneered tests gauge the respondents' true acceptance of LGBTQ members and eliminate cases of tolerance.

The result in Table 2 manifested that students would defy the discriminant remark of not accepting people in employment-employee setup on the basis of his/her involvement in same-sex relationships. Thus, it marked a weighted mean of 4.01, ranking it first. Moreover, the students view that lessons in school help them understand the complex and diversified nature of LGBTQ

members and SSR, understand the love experienced by lovers involved in SSR, and defied the belief of Creator’s curse to those lovers with weighted mean of 3.86, 3.83, 2.93, and 2.91, respectively.

With a composite mean of 3.51 equated as ‘high acceptance’, this result supports the findings of Rodriguez-Sabiote et.al. (2021) that students' attitude towards same-sex couples in lieu of positive connotations fall between high (in terms of support) and medium (in terms of acceptance). Although there is a high acceptance on same-sex relationships, it does not equate that students are open in entering and liking their similar sex. This is consistent with what Brakefield et.al. (2014) have explained that there was no evidence of same-sex attraction in adolescence social networks.

Meanwhile, the result manifested that students have a neutral stance on the belief of sexuality as something that has no difference with gender. This is contrary to the findings of Porta et.al. (2019) that youth participants of their study have used nontraditional sexual and orientation identity labels associated with nontraditional gender labels. Hence, Senior High School students have knowledge, but not that wide, in the difference of the two key concepts.

Moreover, it was manifested that the students believed that religion has no strong influence on them and on their views regarding SSR. This finding contradicts the findings of Van der Toorn et.al. (2017), that religious opposition is linked to sexual prejudice. This disparity is explained by the Pew Research Center (2018) that youth has diminishing adherence to religion.

Table 3 displays the level of social media exposure of the Senior High School students in terms of immersion and influence of social media contents. Respondents always check and update their respective accounts as the first in the rank with a weighted mean of 4.21. Accordingly, using social media for leisure, watching random videos, updating to trends, and reposting photos or video clips has a weighted mean equivalences of 4.15, 4.02, 3.98, and 3.93. Also, the overall level of social media exposure is 3.54 which equates to ‘frequent’. These manifest that students have high immersion on social media. This implication is synonymous with the study of Yu et.al. (2020) that there was an excessive immersion in young adults.

**Table 2** Senior High School Students’ Level of Same Sex Relationships Acceptance

Indicators	WM	VI
*I will not accept people in same-sex relationships because I believe it is bad luck for business if I were to become an employer.	4.01	HA
I think the lessons at school helped me better understand the complexity and diversity of LGBTQ members and same-sex relationships.	3.86	HA
I understand the love experienced by lovers of the same sexuality and I have no problem with it.	3.83	HA
*I strongly believe that being LGBTQ and entering into a same sex relationship is a sign of Creator's curse on a family that has a member of it or it is a disease of society that is acquired.	3.78	HA
*I believe that people in same sex relationships are bad-influences to Filipino youth.	3.75	HA
I believe that people in same sex relationships should be respected and accepted fully because they are also human beings with dignity.	3.72	HA
I believe that society is changing and LGBTQ members are increasing, I will accept and welcome them in their time of need.	3.61	HA
I think social media have influenced my views about same sex relationships.	3.54	HA
I have friends who are LGBTQ and in same sex relationships.	3.50	HA
*I don't want to see Public Display of Affection (PDA) of people in same sex relationships.	3.49	LA
*I strongly believe that the Filipino culture is brave, strong, and fearless. So showing softness, defying culture and normalizing same-sex relationships is blasphemous.	3.49	LA
I will accept it if ever I have a child who is LGBTQ member and enters into a same sex relationship.	3.46	LA
*I believe that religion has a strong influence on me and same sex relationships are violations to human morality.	3.44	LA
*I believe that sexuality (sexual orientation) has no difference with gender, it's just an invention of those who	3.43	LA

don't know if they're female or male.

\*I believe that LGBTQ youth have greater vulnerability to a wide range of health, mental health, and social problems such as eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, difficulties in school, forced sex, lack of housing, violence and suicide. 3.38 LA

\*I strongly believe that men are for women and women are for men and no other relationships should exist. 3.32 LA

I am aware of the existence of same sex relationships. 3.28 LA

I personally find it annoying to be against love because of gender. Regardless of race, gender, or label, love is love. 3.20 LA

\*I believe that members of the LGBTQ should be a subject of compassion like the interpretation of one church. 3.02 LA

I am open to the possibility of entering or liking the same sexuality. 2.79 LA

**Composite Mean 3.51 HA**

*Legend: 4.50-5.00 Extreme High Acceptance (EHA) 3.50-4.49 High Acceptance (HA) 2.50-3.49 Low Acceptance (LA) 1.50-2.49 Non Acceptance (NA) 1.0-1.49 Extreme Non Acceptance (ENA) \*Negative Statements had inverse equivalents.*

On the other hand, in terms of social media exposure with relation to its influence, the table shows that respondents tend to follow and interact with friends on social media irregardless of their identity. Also, students interact with friends who had previously exposed same sex relationships online. This means that students are not cognizant with gender identity in interacting and following their acquaintances in social media. These results contradict the study of Majundar et.al. (2022) that social identities marked online interactions. These conflicting results may be due to the variance of demographics since the latter's study involved 442 public comments while the present study involves 100 survey responses.

**Table 3**  
*Senior High School Students' Level of Social Media Exposure in Immersion and Influence of Social Media Contents*

Indicators	WM	VI
I always check and update my social media account.	4.21	Frequent
I use social media for leisure.	4.15	Frequent
I watch random videos on social media.	4.02	Frequent
I am always updated to trends in social media.	3.98	Frequent
I repost photos or video clips in my social media accounts.	3.93	Frequent
I follow and interact with friends on social media irregardless of their identity.	3.88	Frequent
I follow one or more influencers.	3.84	Frequent
I make time to use social media for various purposes.	3.80	Frequent
I react to any random posts whenever I can relate to it.	3.75	Frequent
I interact with friends who had previously exposed same sex relationships online.	3.54	Frequent
I use my social media for education.	3.52	Frequent
I usually make my time productive using social media.	3.44	Sometimes
I see what my friends think about gender.	3.42	Sometimes
I follow artists who promote gender equality.	3.36	Sometimes
I follow personalities who have been portrayed in a male-male fiction.	3.25	Sometimes

I watch male-male fiction contents promoted by influencers.	3.10	Sometimes
I join groups found online that clamor for equity and gender rights.	2.89	Sometimes
I share my opinion about gender and sex on my social media accounts.	2.80	Sometimes
I write and share my thoughts about same sex relationships.	2.80	Sometimes
I read comments (presenting views) on gender and the discourses found in various contents.	2.79	Sometimes
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>3.54</b>
		<b>Frequent</b>

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Always 3.50-4.49 Frequent 2.50-3.49 Sometimes 1.50-2.49 Rarely 1.0-1.49 Never

Furthermore, the respondents struggle with making the use of social media productive. This supports that the usage of social media for leisure is more evident as this also outpaces the use of social media for education as indicated. This is consistent with Brooks (2015) conclusion that high amounts of social media usage led to low performance in various tasks. It was noted that they also have a neutral stance on following artists who promote gender equality and on following personalities who have been portrayed in a male-male fiction.

**Table 4.**  
*Relationship between level of same-sex relationship acceptance and social media exposure*

		Level of SSR Acceptance
<b>Social Media Exposure</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.530
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.195
		100

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 presents the correlation between respondents' level of social media exposure and same sex relationship acceptance. At 0.05 level of significance, the respondent's social media exposure is significantly related to the level of same sex relationship acceptance ( $r=0.530$ ). Such correlation is adjudged to be moderately positive.

The  $r$  value of 0.530 implies that there is a link between social media exposure and the level of same sex relationship acceptance of the respondents. Therefore, social media exposure affects the same sex relationship acceptance of the respondents. This supports the findings of Roberts (2014) that social media has become a viable way for people to be involved in ongoing discourses concerning social and political issues. Inferring from this, their exposure to social media may explain their same sex relationship acceptance.

Furthermore, it reinforces the study of Tan (2022) that influence on individuals' perception and behaviors related to gender is attributed to social media contents. In essence, it also supports the analysis of Arias (2019) that media influences people's rejection of social norms, in which in her study, there was a test on the effect of social broadcast group treatment on rejecting violence.

However, the result contradicts studies of Chi and Hawk (2016) that students tend to have negative attitudes towards same-sex attraction and behavior and Elias & Gurbanova (2019) that the increased accessibility and social media use have promoted increasing forms of sexiest hate in the form of speech. This disparity can be explained by Russell & Fish (2020) which cited an improvement in youth in lieu of social inclusion and rights for LGBTQ brought by various policy shifts. The same result is contextually explained by Dayrit. et. al. (2022) in which it was argued that, in the Philippines, the state of social media political participation related to gender issues is ranging from low to moderate. But, it was noted that their exposure to social media can be a resource in facilitating such political participation.

Given the result that there is a link between social media exposure and same sex relationships acceptance, this gives way to the fifth research question: how social media exposure affects perceptions on same-sex relationship acceptance? Hence, qualitative measure through surveys was taken. Although there are 100 respondents, answers to these parts of the survey were delimited using an inclusion criteria of (a) it follows maxim of conversations (quality, relevance), and (b) their willingness to answer since this is an optional part of the survey. Hence, the Table 5 summarizes five respondent sources of subthemes, and eventually, the themes.

**Table 5.**  
*Breakdown of Identified Themes*

Themes	Subthemes	Sources (n = 5)
<b>Expands Knowledge and Ideas</b>	Social Validation and Strength	Respondent 14
	Wider Mindset	Respondent 80
<b>Appeals to Free Expression of Emotion</b>	Public Manifestation of Love	Respondent 9
	Normalization through Content	Respondent 60
	Empathetic Connection	Respondent 100

Following the data in Table 5, the following arousing themes from the inputs of the respondents were identified: (a) expands knowledge and ideas and (b) appeals to free expression of emotions.

**Theme 1: Expands Knowledge and Ideas**

Student’s exposure to social media serves like a digital library that fills information gaps regarding gender diversity. Respondents identified that their exposure to social media has been instrumental in knowing each other’s opinion concerning gender issues.

Respondent 14 said that:

*Social media serves as an instrument to know the opinion of everyone and I also see now that same sex is accepted in our country, although not that accepted but social media gave strength [to lovers] in announcing that there is nothing wrong with having a boyfriend of the same gender. Having social media is a privilege for us, especially LGBTQ people, because LGBTQ people are slowly being accepted.*

Furthermore, this knowledge transcends to easier acceptance as both identified from Respondent 14 and Respondent 80.

Respondent 80 provided that:

*[Through social media], knowledge is becoming more widespread and acceptance of same-sex relationships is becoming easier.*

Following MCT, the constant stream of information cultivates a new reality for learners. This theme is explained by the findings of Wang.et.al. (2021) that information (brought by the knowledge), from either positive or negative posts, has a strong influence in changing the attitudes of its users. Additionally, this attitude shifts has the following stages: from obedience, to resistance, to acceptance.

**Theme 2: Appeals to Free Expression of Emotion**

Social media provides a social laboratory where learners observe emotional sincerity of same-sex couples. This observational learning, a core tenet of SCT, allows learners to model their attitudes based on the happiness and love they witness alone.

It was highlighted that social media provided an avenue for expressing love publicly. This was evident from Respondent 9:

*I see people who are in love of the same sex and they describe or publicly express how much they love each other. Because of this, they show that not only men and women have [the right to] true love, it can also be experienced by those of the same sex.*

Respondent 100 shared a detailed testimony on how observing the lived experiences and emotional resilience of couples fosters acceptance:

*...by reading the testimonies of people in same-sex relationships...by reading and watching their sweet videos, sharing problems, and how they overcome them.... This has influenced me in accepting same-sex relationships. Which also made me realize that it is never wrong because they do not step on anyone, they just love and desire the love they give.*

Also, the manifestations of Respondent 60 provides that social media exposure invites openness to same sex relationships:

*I am open to situations faced by people within the [same sex] relationship. I don't even experience it personally but because of the contents on social media I got an idea.*

In essence, this theme is explained by Dillard and Peck (2000), where they have identified the effect of emotion on perceived message. Hence, the perceived appeal to free emotion expression from social media exposure is one of the reasons for same sex relationships acceptance.

With these results at hand, implications for inclusive education programs include: (1) Learners have been knowledgeable about diversity and change - and this knowledge has affected how they have perceived the sector; (2) The discourse on gender identity and diversity is a discourse of Critical Thinking, and (3) The Acceptance of Same Sex Relationships is not fully unearth. Education stakeholders need to deal with nuances from various contexts - not to mention it's both dynamic and emerging concept.

## CONCLUSION

The present study identified the relationship of social media exposure and same sex relationship acceptance among Senior High School students. It was found that there is a direct link between social media exposure and the level of same sex relationship acceptance among the Senior High School students. There were also frequent social media exposure and high level of same sex relationship acceptance among the respondents. Furthermore, the study identified master themes on how social media exposure affects same sex relationship acceptance. These are (a) expands knowledge and ideas and (b) appeals to free expression of emotions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the study may have provided the groundwork for understanding the phenomenon, the study embodies some limitations due to the depth of the topic. One of which is the still emerging parameters as to same sex relationships acceptance. Hence, further research that could focus on such determining factors are recommended. Also, it is recommended that these results be used for the enrichment of education programs; develop studies, policies, and paradigms focusing on the effects of social media exposure on same sex relationships acceptance.

Specific recommendations as entry points in Comprehensive Sexuality Education include (1) development of a module that teaches students how to critically analyze gender-related content on social media; (2) utilization of the findings on “appeals to free expression of emotions” to foster digital empathy. This means that lessons may include activities where students analyze social media posts depicting SSR, and (3) usage of the finding that social media expands knowledge and ideas regarding gender as case study on how digital platforms serve as tools for social movements.

## Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, informed consent was obtained scrupulously from all respondents. Everyone was thoroughly informed of the research's purpose, procedures, and their rights, ensuring voluntary participation and ethical engagement throughout the study.

The authors declare that they have no competing interests or personal relationships that could be perceived to influence the work reported in this study.

## Data Availability

The data supporting this study are available from the authors upon reasonable request. Due to ethical considerations, access is limited to ensure the privacy and intellectual ownership of the respondents and their contributions.

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