Framing LGBTQIA+ Identities: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender and Sexuality Representation in Student Publications

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Abstract

This study explores how LGBTQIA+ identities are framed in student publications from state colleges and universities in North Cotabato using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. It examines the linguistic choices, recurring narratives, and power structures that influence representation. Through textual analysis, the study identifies patterns in lexical choices, inclusive pronouns, poetic devices, and visual symbols that convey empowerment, struggles, exclusivity, and inclusivity. The discursive practice analysis reveals that, while some student publications actively promote LGBTQIA+ visibility through affirmative discourse and inclusive imagery, others exhibit restraint due to institutional and cultural constraints. Student publications from progressive institutions embrace themes of resilience and inclusivity, while those from conservative institutions demonstrate self-censorship and limited LGBTQIA+ discourse. This study also highlights the pedagogical role of student journalism in challenging heteronormative ideologies and bridging advocacy with education. Meanwhile, the social practice analysis suggests that student publications, despite restrictive frameworks, can shape narratives that foster diversity and acceptance. However, institutional and cultural biases continue to limit the depth and frequency of LGBTQIA+ representation. The study recommends strengthening editorial independence, leveraging digital platforms, and ensuring fair representation. Institutions should support these efforts by implementing gender-inclusive policies and providing training for student journalists.

1. INTRODUCTION

LGBTQIA+ is an abbreviation that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual, while the plus sign (+) represents other identities belonging to the community. This term also encapsulates discussions on gender and sexual identity, which

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are central to conversations about inclusion, equity, and human rights (Herek, 2016; Russell & Dorri, 2023).

In relation to that, the representation of the LGBTQIA+ community is important in breaking prejudice in society, promoting awareness, and creating spaces where people belonging to the community get respected and have a sense of safety and freedom. However, various research studies have indicated that the media and other platforms have adopted reductive stereotypes in depicting the members of the community, for example, using the terms "tragic queer," "flamboyant comic relief," and portrayals of community members being either deviant or marginal characters (Gudelunas, 2012; Villareal, 2018; Johnson, 2022). Thus, such representations of the community reinforced numerous narratives around stigmatization and inclusion that have affected both social attitudes and institutional spheres, including student publications (Meyer, 2010; Bauer & Trudell, 2019).

These stereotypes can permeate student publications, where institutional viewpoints toward gender and sexuality are mirrored and reproduced through writings, arts, and other materials (Capuzza & Spencer, 2017; Millward et al., 2017). Research studies indicate that, as microcosms of broader societal discourse, student publications reflect more significant cultural biases while advocating for inclusivity and challenging exclusionary narratives (Meyer, 2010; Tolliver, 2018; Clarke & Turner, 2020;).

In the context of higher academic institutions, the ideological orientation of an institution plays a significant role in shaping the narratives presented by the student publications. While more progressive institutions may encourage open discussions on LGBTQIA+ issues, conservative institutions exhibit more restrictive attitudes and policies toward LGBTQIA+ expression and representation. As a result of the prevailing cultural and institutional norms, the members of the community experience poor academic performance (Robinson, 2021), a sense of alienation within the educational environment (Hatchel et al., 2019), heightened minority stress and lower quality of life (Ferbežar, N. et al. 2024).

Although there is growing attention to LGBTQIA+ people in the mainstream media (Tolliver, 2018; O'Neill, 2020), how they are framed in student publications remains understudied. Consequently, there is a paucity of empirical support to explain the phenomenon and the representation of the LGBTQIA+ community in student publications at educational institutions. Traditional institutional frameworks often perpetuate established norms that stigmatize discussions on gender and sexuality (Capuzza & Spencer, 2017; King Peralta, 2019). Moreover, in conservative environments, student publication editorial policies are assumed to be restrictive, self-censorship is prevalent, and discourses about the LGBTQIA+ community are few (O'Neill, 2020; Capuzza Spencer, 2017; Millward et al., 2017; Hidalgo et al., 2021). Therefore, this showed a significant gap in understanding how student publications in educational colleges are subjected to a massive hurdle in opening up, equalizing, and incorporating inclusive discussion around LGBTQIA+ identities (Singh, 2017).

Therefore, to address the research gaps in this study, the Critical Discourse Analysis approach of Norman Fairclough was employed to analyze how state colleges and universities in North Cotabato frame LGBTQIA+ identities. The Critical Discourse Analysis provides a framework for examining how language choices reflect power relations and ideological structures (Fairclough, 1992). Furthermore, through this lens, the study examined the linguistic strategies used in student publications, the dominant narratives and intertextual references shaping LGBTQIA+ discourse, and the broader institutional and cultural implications of these

representations (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Simpson & Mayr, 2010). By critically analyzing these, this study contributed to the discussions on inclusivity in higher education and emphasizes the role of student publications in shaping public discourse on gender and sexuality.

1.1. Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to determine how the official student publications of state colleges and universities in North Cotabato frame the LGBTQIA+ community. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. How is the LGBTQIA+ community linguistically represented in student publications from educational institutions?
2. What dominant narratives and intertextual references shape the discourse on LGBTQIA+ issues in these publications?
3. How do these discourses reflect, reinforce, and challenge the societal and institutional power structure regarding LGBTQIA+ identities?

2. THEORETICAL LENS

The Critical Discourse Analysis recognizes how language and discourse shape power, ideology, and society. In relation to Norman Fairclough, his relational-dialectic approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) explores the relationship between language, power, ideology, and society, emphasizing how discourse contributes to social change. In other words, the analysis focuses on language's role in maintaining social inequality. This methodological and theoretical framework offered a powerful method for considering how discourse represents, reproduces, and challenges the dominant power structures of society (Fairclough, 1992). Furthermore, this framework is especially suited for analyzing the representation of LGBTQIA+ in student publications, in which institutional and societal views towards gender and sexuality tend to be expressed in text and images.

Fairclough's model defines discourse as a representation of and a process of social change. It operates across three dimensions:

2.1. Textual Analysis

The analysis took place at the text level, particularly regarding the linguistic features (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, stylistic elements, and visual elements) used in posts about the LGBTQIA+ community. This was employed to identify the hidden meanings encoded in the text and examine how language creates, challenges, or reinforces narratives concerning the identities of those who are LGBTQIA+ in student content on social media.

2.2. Discursive Practice Analysis

In this level of analysis, the focus of the production, distribution, and consumption of texts is investigated in a social framework. It requires editorial policy, authorship, and audience

reception analysis to learn and understand how institutional and cultural policies shape LGBTQIA+ discourse in student journalism.

2.3. Social Practice Analysis:

The third dimension places discourse in the context of larger sociocultural and institutional contexts and explores how student publications interact with power structures to challenge or reinforce heteronormative ideologies. In this phase, the discourse in student publications will be analyzed to determine how it reflected and reshaped the social attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.

Norman Fairclough's framework serves as a tool to understand how language upholds or dismantles societal inequalities. In the context of this study, this paper sought to understand how student publications from state colleges and universities in North Cotabato shaped the LGBTQIA+ community. By applying this approach, this research provided an understanding of how cultural and institutional constraints influence student publications. Not only did this method reveal existing power structures as manifested in student publications, but it also showcased the power of student publications to challenge heteronormative ideologies. This study contributes to the broader objective of promoting equitable and just representation in student journalism by critically examining how discourse informs and influences societal understandings of LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1. Materials and Methods

A qualitative research design was utilized in this study to examine the emergence, subversion, or perpetuation of the narratives surrounding LGBTQIA+ identities through linguistic and discourse in student publication posts on Facebook. Furthermore, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Norman Fairclough was adopted as this paper aimed to examine how the social media content originating from student publications could affect perception, challenge stereotypical ideas, and campaign against exclusion in education.

The social media content on Facebook that features LGBTQIA+ content or related discussions published by official student publications served as the primary data of this study, focusing on those published over the past two years. These contents are chosen from official student publications of the state colleges and universities in North Cotabato. Furthermore, the researchers utilized descriptive purposive sampling to gather the data that addressed LGBTQIA+ topics explicitly or implicitly. These data may include feature articles, personal stories, advocacies, news updates, opinion pieces, creative works, campaigns, and other materials focusing on LGBTQIA+ issues in educational contexts.

3.2. Data Analysis

The gathered data were analyzed using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for CDA, which focuses on the dynamics between language, power, and social practice. Specifically, this framework permits multi-dimensional analysis that considers textual features, the process of discursive production, and the broader social context in which discourse occurs.

3.3. Textual Analysis:

The linguistic and visual elements found in the Facebook posts provided the focus of the analysis on the first dimension. These elements include poetic devices, lexical choices, narrative structures, and other visual elements. Then, the researchers identified how language represented LGBTQIA+ individuals, determining whether it reinforces stereotypes or promotes more inclusive, diverse, and positive representations. The description would incorporate the main factors such as tone, emotional cues, and symbolism.

3.4. Discursive Practice Analysis

The second level of analysis examined the production and reception of these Facebook posts. This involved analyzing how student publications produced these posts (editorial procedures, authorship, and decision-making) and the interaction between audiences and posts (likes, shares, comments). This part also analyzed the editorial choices that influenced the portrayal of LGBTQIA+ identities, considering whether the posts reflect broader institutional policies or cultural norms.

3.5. Social Practice Analysis

The third level places the discourse on the broader social, cultural, and institutional context. This dimension centered on how student publications' Facebook content could reinforce or undermine current power relations at the social and institutional levels. It also explored the role of Facebook as a social media platform and how its structure (e.g., comment sections, reach, and the like) could incorporate an LGBTQIA+-related discussion into student publications.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Textual Analysis

In Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), textual analysis is a crucial dimension that examines how language is used to reflect, maintain, and challenge social structures and power relations. Through this lens, the gathered posts about the LGBTQIA+ community from student-run publications served as corpora for analysis, mainly focusing on lexical choices, metaphors, cohesion, intertextuality, and visual elements, all of which contribute to the construction of meaning and the reinforcement or resistance to the societal norms.

4.2. Poetic Devices

The data analysis showed that poetic devices were used in the post on LGBTQIA+, creating an evocative narrative for readers. These devices included metaphor, paradox, alliteration, repetition, and imagery.

"We dwell in the dark, hiding our spark

Sliding through loops, caught in the tide" (P1)

"Fabrics choke and stuff my nose" (P4)

"Joy can only bloom when it's free…the presence of a rainbow feels better." (P10)

These lines from the posts showed a striking metaphor for the emotional toll of living in secrecy, and the imagery of suffocation symbolized the societal pressures to conform and the

liberation associated with personal growth and harmony. Through the use of words "dark" and "choke", the writers employed loaded language to construct a narrative of seclusion and suppression. This metaphor also reflected the weight of navigating societal expectations while trying to balance personal truths, paralleling the experiences of many LGBTQIA+ individuals.

"Set the Stage" (p4)

"Building Bridges, not walls" (P5)

Furthermore, the line "set the stage" metaphorically illustrates how drag serves as both a creative performance and a powerful form of protest. This shows that the convergence of art and activism can challenge the societal norms, promote advocacy, and amplify voices. Furthermore, the metaphorical expression in P5 strongly suggests that the advocacy of LGBTQIA+ should foster inclusivity and cooperation both within the community and in the society at large, rather than fostering division. This further emphasizes the importance of having dialogue, promoting understanding, and fostering unity through solidarity in creating an equitable and accepting world.

Similarly, the "closet" served as a central metaphor in the discourse that can be read in multiple corpora, which stood for hidden space where their true identity is confined and safe from any societal judgment:

"In the closet, we dwell in spark" (P1)

"For the closet is small, I wish to fit back in" (P4)

"…the police deserved the clap back for ruining a safe space for the gays, closeted, and allies." (P7)

However, by repeatedly referring to "closet", the idea of confinement is reinforced. It also served as a paradox for refuge, where individuals can temporarily escape the judgments of society while finding their true identity.

*"*Inside, we're neither sinners nor beasts,

No eyes of scorn, no mouths to feast." (P1)

The use of metaphor plays a crucial role in conveying the emotional and societal struggles faced by the members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Meanwhile, several posts also exhibit alliteration through the repetition of the "c" and "d" sounds.

"Click, Clack – the heels don't Crack" (P4)

"Dwell in the dark" (P1)

The repetition of the said sounds adds a lyrical quality to the narrative of the posts about the LGBTQIA+ community. This heightened the lines' emotional impact and enhanced the texts' overall aesthetics. This stylistic choice mirrors the poetic devices often employed in LGBTQIA+ advocacy to appeal emotionally to the audience. In a loaded message, alliterative phrases help in drawing attention to key issues and invoke emotional responses

Furthermore, repeated sounds are not the only common feature in the data. In order to emphasize the deliberate intent to fight for LGBTQIA+ advocacy and create an empowering narrative, the repetition of specific terminologies is also evident in the corpora, terms like "inclusivity," "freedom," "equality," "diversity," "pride," and "amplifying voices." Additionally, several phrases were also repeated in the first corpus about the LGBTQIA+ community to emphasize the message.

"In the closet…" (P1)

"We swallow…" (P1)

"Hoping for…" (P1)

These phrases stressed the recurring nature of societal judgment and the struggles of the LGBTQIA+ community in finding and expressing their true identity. In addition, these provided the readers a glimpse of the aspirations of LGBTQIA+ individuals, which is to live as they are and be free from any pressures or judgments of society. With all of these, it is evident that the repetition of sounds, terminologies, and phrases did not only reinforce the advocacy and the emotional weight of the discourse but also served as a rhythmic anchor.

The data revealed that the use of metaphor, paradox, alliteration, and repetition effectively encapsulates the struggles, successes, and advocacies of the LGBTQIA+ community. In relation to that, in a study conducted by Arcilla, F. (2024), he revealed that through poetic devices like metaphor, paradox, imagery, repetition, and alliteration, writers can provide multifaceted insights into the human condition or experiences.

4.3. Use of Inclusive Pronouns

The repeated use of inclusive pronouns, like *"we,"* creates a collective identity that often represents the very identity that has been marginalized, criticized, and outcasted by society.

"We swallow the pain, the truth we hide inside." (P1)

In contrast, "we" refers to the oneness of the community in their advocacy, fostering solidarity among readers. Notably, by embracing and asserting this fosters a sense of identity and solidarity, the community strengthens its internal bonds and confronts societal prejudices, which significantly helps reclaim its voice and advocate for change. The use of "we" helps counter isolation and marginalization by reinforcing the idea that members of the LGBTQIA+ community are not alone in their fight.

"We commemorate the struggles, triumphs, and ongoing fight for equality, let us explore the incredible journey and the kaleidoscope of emotions that Pride Month brings." (P6)

"We celebrate his remarkable journey as he blazes a trail, leaving an indelible mark on the LGBTQ+ community and beyond." (P8)

The strategic use of "we" aligns with discourse practices in progressive movements, where fostering inclusion and a shared identity is central to building unity and mobilizing action. It is a rhetorical tool that bridges gaps within the community and invites allies to

participate in their journey. By creating a narrative of oneness, the pronouns inspire collective agency and amplify the impact of their advocacy, making the shared identity a powerful force for societal transformation.

Plural inclusive pronouns, such as "we," create a sense of collective identity and belongingness to a group (Anchimbe, 2016); however, this inclusion often extends only to a specific group of people rather than everyone universally. In the context of this study, the inclusive pronoun "we" only refers to the members of the LGBTQIA+ community who experienced prejudice and struggled to express their own identities.

The reception of these pronouns, however, varies among audiences. As for the LGBTQIA+ readers, the use of the pronoun "we" fosters affirmation, solidarity, and empowerment, reinforcing a sense of belonging within a supportive community. This serves a reminder that they are not alone, that their struggles and triumphs are shared, and that they belong to a community that understands and supports them.

Contrastingly, the use of the pronoun may be interpreted differently by non-LGBTQIA+ readers. Some may perceive it as an invitation to stand in solidarity as allies, while others might perceive it as an exclusionary marker that distinguishes the community from the broader society. This difference in reception highlights how language shapes our understanding of identity and belonging. While inclusive pronouns strengthen the bonds within the community, they also spark conversations about who is included and how society defines togetherness.

4.4. Lexical Choices

It can be observed in the gathered data that the writers of the student publications had deliberately used empowering lexicons to support themes of resilience, pride, and liberation. The chosen words and phrases were carefully chosen in order to counteract the narratives of victimhood and suppression often associated with LGBTQIA+ experiences. As a result, this has inspired strength and positivity in all the members of the community. It can be assumed from the results of the data that the use of empowering lexicons not only elevates the tone of the discourse but also challenges the societal norms that marginalize LGBTQIA+ identities.

The use of specific terminologies like "free," "love," "laudable," "indomitable spirit," "shimmering," and "resilient" evokes social justice, challenges stereotypes, and promotes acceptance and uniqueness of the members of the LGBTQIA+ community. This style of writing has also helped emphasize empowerment, liberation, and commitment to activism, framing the contributions of some individuals from the LGBTQIA+ community, like Brenda Howard, as monumental for the movement.

Contrastingly, the lexical choices of the article on Jude Bacalso, a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, are emotionally charged terminologies like "shameful," "humiliation," and "power play," framing her actions negatively. However, such words were countered by the writer through the use of neutral or explanatory language, such as "misgendering" and "gender pronouns," in an attempt to balance critique and factual discussion in the published article.

As stated by Elyazale, N. (2014) in her study, the difference in lexical choice depends upon the underlying ideology, as the role of language is to inform and influence readers with a

preference to influence more.   Thus, in the context of this study, the lexical choice depends upon the student publication editors on how they could represent the members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Furthermore, Croteau and Hoynes (as cited in Aslani & Salmani, 2015) emphasized that publications often reflect and propagate the ideologies of the institutions that support them, aligning their content with institutional priorities and interests.

4.5.Visual Elements

The Text analysis includes the Analysis of visual elements in the data. These visual cues work in tandem with the texts to evoke emotions, convey ideas, and create a compelling representation of LGBTQIA+ struggles and triumphs. Below is an analysis of the visual elements, their symbolism, and their contribution to the overall message.
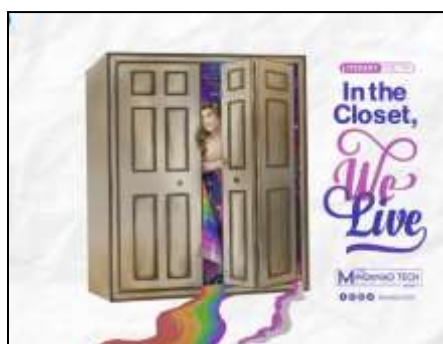

Figure 1. P1

The colors of the rainbow flag and LGBTQIA+ flag are a recurring element across all the photos, acting as a unifying symbol of the community's pride, diversity, and resilience. In Figure 1, the flag is draped around the human figure, which may symbolize empowerment and a unique identity. The vibrant rainbow trail flowing outward from the closet illustrates the overflowing talent and transformative journey from suppression to liberation, emphasizing the beauty, uniqueness, and vitality of embracing one's true self.

Figure 2. P2

Figure 3. P3

The photo in Figure 2 shows the iconic rainbow flag appearing in various forms, like handheld banners and capes, which turned the public spaces into vibrant celebrations of inclusivity. The flag visually unites diverse participants, symbolizing solidarity and collective advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights. Similarly, Figure 3 shows a photo of the mayor holding an

Executive Order with the rainbow flag forming a backdrop, which signifies the institutional progress and the integration of LGBTQIA+ values into governance. This image reinforces the importance of the government's support in advancing LGBTQIA+ rights and inclusivity.

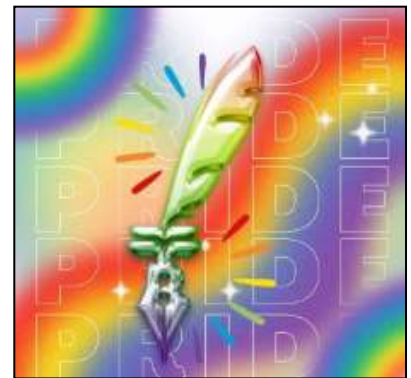*Figure 4. P4*   *Figure 5. P6*   *Figure 6. P9*

The colors of the rainbow, as noted, are central to the visual narrative. Figure 4 presents a photo of a drag queen with a vibrant look and makeup, encapsulating themes of individuality, defiance, and self-expression. Meanwhile, it can be observed in Figures 5 and 6 that the pictures being utilized echo the LGBTQIA+ flag's hues, which symbolize unity, equality, and the community's advocacies.

Figure 7. P7   *Figure 8. P8*

However, the Pride March photo in Figure 7, featuring a crowd holding posters and waving rainbow flags, showed the solidarity and the collective strength and effort of the LGBTQIA+ community in celebrating their visibility and fighting for their advocacy**.** Additionally, the photo evoked feelings of pride and gratitude for the contributions of a prominent figure, Brenda Howard, and honored the historical roots of LGBTQIA+ advocacy**.**

Similarly, Figure 8 served as a powerful and empowering advocacy tool, highlighting the transition and spectrum of gender identity and sexual orientation. The publication's attempt to localize and personalize its depiction of the LGBTQIA+ representation is evident through the editorial decision of featuring the story of an LGBTQIA+ member from their campus. The three different images of Jick Roy Edar feature in the photo symbolized the deep and seasonal process of self-discovery, alignment, and authenticity, serving as a source of inspiration for other members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Together, the image of Brenda Howard with

symbols of activism and the image of Jick Roy Edar bridge the contemporary LGBTQIA+ movement with its roots, emphasizing the community's resilience and the significant progress it has achieved over the years.

The colors of the rainbow and the flag of the LGBTQIA+ community served as the central motifs across the visual elements in the gathered data. Such elements have effectively illustrated the plights of the members of the community and amplified the texts' message of inclusivity and liberation. (Martel, 2018; Bitterman & Hess, 2021). Although the flag of the LGBTQIA+ community has long been seen and considered as a mere colorful banner, it has become a powerful symbol for pride, inclusivity, and the community's advocacy throughout the passing of time (Bitterman & Hess, 2016b; Bitterman, 2021)**.** It evokes strong emotions of joy, hope, and unity. The visual and textual elements together create a cohesive narrative that critiques societal constraints while uplifting and empowering LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Table 1. Textual Analysis of the posts about LGBTQIA+ Community

Move 1. Textual Analysis		
Features		Sample Occurrence in the posts about LGBTQIA+ Community
1. Poetic Devices	Metaphor	"We dwell in the dark, hiding our spark" (P1)
		"Fabrics choke and stuff my nose" (P4)
		"Joy can only bloom when it's free…the presence of a rainbow feels better." (P10)
		"Set the Stage" (p4)
		"Building Bridges, not walls" (P5)
		"In the closet, we dwell in spark" (P1)
		"For the closet is small, I wish to fit back in" (P4)
		"closet" as prison
		"…the police deserved the clap back for ruining a safe space for the gays, closeted, and allies." (P7)
	Paradox	"closet" as refuge
		"Inside, we're neither sinners nor beasts, No eyes of scorn, no mouths to feast."
	Alliteration	Click, Clack – the heels don't Crack" (P4)
		"Dwell in the dark" (P1)
	Repetition	"In the closet…"
		"We swallow…"
		"Hoping for…"
2. Use of Inclusive Pronouns (we)		"We swallow the pain, the truth we hide inside." (P1)
		"We commemorate the struggles, triumphs, and ongoing fight for equality, let us explore the incredible journey and the kaleidoscope of emotions that Pride Month brings." (P6)

"We celebrate his remarkable journey as he blazes a trail, leaving an indelible mark on the LGBTQ+ community and beyond." (P8)

3. Lexical Choices		*"love,"* *"free,"* *"laudable,"* "indomitable spirit," "shimmering," *"resilient,"* "shameful," "humiliation," "power play," "misgendering," and "gender pronouns,"
4. Visual Elements		The colors of the rainbow, LGBTQIA+ flag, protesters, and crowned figure

4.6. Discourse Practice Analysis

4.6.1. Production

The production of these texts demonstrated a deliberate effort to amplify marginalized voices, particularly those of the LGBTQIA+ community, by utilizing visual and textual elements that deeply resonate with this group. This approach was made to provide visibility and give the opportunity to the underrepresented or misrepresented community in mainstream discourse. In the case of this study, the community refers to the group of LGBTQIA+ individuals who are still crucified to this day for who and what they are. Furthermore, the language used in the corpora was both symbolic and affirming, which signified solidarity and provided a sense of empowerment, affirmation, and belongingness for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Concurrently, the corpora of this study have employed a pedagogical approach or tone. The writers from the student publications have produced texts that aimed to educate diverse readers who may be unfamiliar with or unaccepting of the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community. With this, it is significant to integrate the community's advocacy with textual and visual elements to bridge the knowledge gap (Miller & Blackburn, 2024). Moreover, the texts serve as a tool for affirmation and a means of raising awareness in society, which means that they should ensure that the message is relatable and transformative for all readers. For non-accepting individuals, these articles are vital for education and awareness. Through factual and real-life stories and educational content, misconceptions and stereotypes about LGBTQIA+ are corrected and challenged. As a result, the writers of the two most followed student publications in North Cotabato have created a cohesive narrative that empowers, unites, and uplifts the LGBTQIA+ community, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and understanding.

4.6.2. Distribution

All the data used in this qualitative study were sourced from educational institutions' official student publication page on Facebook. The platform was chosen as the primary channel for distribution mainly because of its popularity (Young, 2017), extensive user base, and a large following of the students on the pages. Compared to other social media platforms, Facebook has a broader reach due to the billions of active users and thousands of followers engaging with the page. Aside from that, hashtags (#) have further increased the visibility of posts and pages,

and they have been an effective method to disseminate information and mobilize supporters during campaigns (Guo & Saxton, 2014). Furthermore, this style has effectively fostered engagement with both local and international audiences.

Media advocacy is a practical approach to mobilizing supporters (Guo & Saxton, 2014). Facebook is the social media platform that works well for this approach due to its interactive and decentralized nature. However, one of the selected student publications has not effectively utilized Facebook as a platform for distributing content relevant to the LGBTQIA+ community, with their page containing only a single post on the subject. The dearth of LGBTQIA+ content of this student publication reveals its possible resistance and detachment about the topic. Similarly, this can be attributed to the institution's conservative cultural influences that have discouraged discussions of LGBTQIA+ topics. It can also be noted that this student publication has fewer reach and engagement compared to the other two publications with multiple posts on LGBTQIA+ issues.

4.6.3. Consumption

The consumption of these texts on the LGBTQIA+ community is shaped by the readers' social, cultural, and political perspectives. For many LGBTQIA+ readers, the texts relevant to LGBTQIA+ advocacy are not just informational content but also ways readers could validate their experiences and acknowledge their struggles and triumphs. This validation fosters a sense of belongingness and solidarity, reinforcing the idea that their existence and voices matter in their society.

Figure 9.

"My Magna Cum Laude is very pretty."
Figure 10.

In a Facebook post featuring Jick Roy Edar's story, there were several comments of admiration and support from numerous individuals, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These responses show the post's role as a space for representation and as a source of encouragement and support. Beyond the validation, many readers have interpreted the narrative as a meaningful endorsement of LGBTQIA+ advocacy, inspiring them to continue their pursuit of equality and inclusion.

The posts on the LGBTQIA+ community garnered numerous reactions, such as like, hearts, wow, and care emojis. These reactions imply the audiences' solidarity and support for the community's advocacy. Each reaction serves as a virtual expression of encouragement, and every comment celebrates the individuality, bravery, and authenticity shown in the post.

The texts provided an opportunity for reconsideration and dialogue by employing neutral tones, integrating emotive language, and grounding arguments in factual language. Instead of employing a confrontation approach, the language seeks to educate and provoke thought that encourages conservative audiences to engage with the materials in a way that will not prompt defensive reactions. This method has allowed others to change their perspectives and be open to more informed and compassionate viewpoints. An interesting lens was provided

by Macagno (2014) and Hinton (2019) in order to understand the approach. They argued that emotional, neutral, and evaluative language functions as implicit and condensed arguments. With this, language has a rhetorical effect in arousing emotions and conveying logical content.

This makes the reading of these texts an active process, as readers can shift their initial responses with the passage of time. By intertwining advocacy with education, the text amplifies the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community. It encourages understanding and empathy for those who have looked the other way or failed to support all matters of the community.

4.7. Social Practice Analysis

4.7.1. Institutional Dynamics

In conservative state academic institutions, the advocacy of the LGBTQIA+ community encounters resistance shaped by the prevailing institutional and cultural norms. The corpora used in this study were sourced from the top student publications of state college and universities in North Cotabato. Despite the challenges, such student publications have been significant platforms for promoting narratives on inclusions and awareness. These student media outlets also practice balance in a way that respects their institutions' conservative structure while maintaining the integrity and aim of their message. This method, even in more restrictive environments, demonstrated how student journalism is influential in offering spaces for dialogue with a mind toward stopping changes that preserve the institutional and cultural status quo while promoting inclusion.

Despite the awareness and advocacy, it was found that LGBTQIA+ students at conservative institutions encounter bias, discrimination, and insufficient support (Coleman, 2019). Therefore, this highlights the importance of student publications in contributing to the discourse, encouraging inclusivity, and sparking change within their restrictive institutional environments. Through the initiatives of the student publications, they provided a platform to amplify the voices of the members of the LGBTQIA+ community and nurture a culture of solidarity and transparency by bridging gaps through education, fostering dialogue, and cultivating empathy.

4.7.2. Cultural Context and Resonance

Although the chosen student publications from educational state institutions were located in a predominantly Catholic and Islamic societies, the texts nonetheless engage with the cultural intricacies surrounding LGBTQIA+ advocacy. The student publications employed linguistic and visual elements that align with deeply ingrained Filipino values, like *bayanihan* (community spirit), *pakikiramay* (empathy), and *pakikipagkapwa* (shared identity) in order to promote understanding and establish connections between traditional and progressive audiences. As a result, this would create constructive dialogue and spaces for shared reflection across members and non-members of the LGBTQIA+ community (Labor & San Pascual, 2023)

Furthermore, each of the stories and unique struggles of those in the LGBTQIA+ community contained within them themes of "pride," "inclusivity," and "resilience." Such themes made the texts relatable and poignant, resonating across generational and ideological divides. Because Filipino identity has a rich cultural heritage and is equally the product of assimilation, the article's message balanced the need to inculcate an understanding of cultural

and religious traditions while promoting this message of inclusion that fosters understanding and acceptance to all citizens.

4.7.3. Power and Resistance

Underlying these works is a subtle but powerful challenge to entrenched heteronormative ideologies. These student-run publications challenge long-held power dynamics, which have typically silenced or pushed out marginalized voices, by providing a platform for them and celebrating the diversity of LGBTQIA+ experiences. Furthermore, the language used is calmer, more inclusive, and more hopeful that radical change may be possible without confrontation so that even more 'reactionary' readers are not put off (Labor & San Pascual, 2023). It helps to create a respectful and compassionate space for dialogue and reflection   while providing a more profound message of systemic change (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

The resistance presented in these texts is more than just an opposition to the exclusive and unequal norms; it envisions a reimagined society where LGBTQIA+ individuals are seen not as outcasts or different but as active participants in shaping positive change (Cambridge University Press, 2021). Their numerous stories of triumph and overcoming adversities of the members of LGBTQIA+ individuals have upended the constricting narratives that have defined them since time immemorial. Furthermore, the texts question the oppressive structures in society and challenge the readers, regardless of their views, to engage and participate in a broader and more inclusive vision of community and belonging.

4.7.4. Global and Local Integration

The texts show how local LGBTQIA+ advocacy is connected to global human rights movements to help readers see local struggles as part of something larger: a transnational struggle   for equity and equality. By adopting universal symbols, like the rainbow flag, and invoking key figures,   such as Brenda Howard, who helped launch the Pride movement, the texts show how the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights cannot be only understood in the narrative of a specific location, but rather in the context   of a worldwide narrative. With this, readers   can see and realize that the advancements made in other nations can also happen in the place they live in and impact change on their own. In the context of the Philippines, Filipinos would realize the importance of discussing such matters and begin to accept the differences in society.

As mentioned, the texts emphasize how LGBTQIA+ issues are interconnected   across the globe, highlighting that the struggles experienced by people in one place are also experienced in many other places. Making the connection creates solidarity among the readers as they, too, feel they are not alone in their pursuit   of fair rights. Mixing global ideas with local stories that people can relate to, according to Bosia, McEvoy, and Rahman (2020), makes the text clear and the LGBTQIA+ movement relevant to everyone, no matter where they   live. By demonstrating how local activism is part of a global   movement, the texts motivate readers to participate and aid LGBTQIA+ communities across the globe.

4.7.5. Empowerment and Visibility

A constant theme that runs through the texts is the written word's reflections on empowerment and visibility in the context of LGBTQIA+ people. Drawn from personal stories and inclusive imagery, the texts create a powerful space that allows people to feel seen and validated in their identities. These narratives track the significance of representation, shedding light on historically marginalized or suppressed voices. The texts tell people to be themselves, as putting these experiences out there can reinforce your authenticity and empower others to do the same. A research study executed by Riggle, Rostosky, and Horne (2017) further sheds light on the fact that visibility and positive representations profoundly impact the psychological well-being of individuals coming from the rainbow family of LGBTQIA+.

On what it means to be visible, the visibility used in these texts is redefined, again, as being an act of strength and pride, emphasizing that being open about one's identity is something that is not to be ashamed of, but something to celebrate. These unique achievements emerge purely from a willingness to share personal life experiences and dismantle harmful stereotypes and ways of thinking, thereby reducing ideations and misconceptions that create barriers. Inclusive media narratives and representation contribute to problematizing biases and stereotypes used in society (Levasseur & Gomes, 2021).

In relation to the inclusion or integration of LGBTQIA+ narratives into the public and educational discourse, this approach is beneficial to potentially contribute to the process of changing the social schema towards the community in the long term (Meyer & Dean, 2020; Craig, Eaton, and Pascoe, 2021). As a result, the society would be a safer, more inclusive, and more equitable environment.

4.8. Challenges and Limitations

Though the texts are transformative in purpose and execution, they do not come without inherent challenges. A significant concern could follow backlash within the institution, especially in conservative environments where advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights can be misunderstood as an act of defiance. In this regard, Flores and Barclay (2020) reported that such advocacy is often resisted in communities steeped in a conservative culture, which leads to regression protective measures of the LGBTQIA+ community and seized social progress. This would mean that pushing for inclusivity could be seen as challenging established norms or questioning authority, and so would invite opposition from its institutions and stakeholders.

A related challenge is the reliance on personal stories. Though these narratives are impactful and promote compassion, they also sometimes distract from more important systemic issues, such as the need for anti-discrimination laws. Much of the outrage over Jude Bacalso's issue was centered around Bacalso's reaction to being misgendered rather than on the deeper issue of ignorance over gender identities. Although personal stories like hers are important, they need to urge conversations about broader solutions and systemic actions such as better education and stronger legal protections (Craig, Eaton, and Pascoe, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored how the LGBTQIA+ community is framed in the student publications of state college and universities in North Cotabato. It was revealed that student publications face many challenges but still play an important role in contributing to the discourse and making the LGBTQIA+ community more visible and accepted by society. These

publications, especially the two most followed ones in North Cotabato, utilized powerful narratives, creative language, and strong visual elements to help avid readers understand the struggles and triumphs of LGBTQIA+ individuals. However, institutional and cultural norms have influenced the production and distribution of content related to the topic. Aside from that, the over-reliance on individual stories has also constrained the efforts that shifted the focus away from necessary reforms, like anti-discrimination laws and sensitivity education. Furthermore, this tension was exemplified by the personal actions of certain individuals, like the case of Jude Bacalso, where their personal stories became the center of discourse rather than systemic ignorance, contributing to discrimination and misgendering.

The textual analysis of the corpora revealed the publications' heavy use of poetic devices, inclusive pronouns, and empowering lexical choices that have positively contributed to what the texts have tried to convey about the community's resilience, struggles, and triumphs. In addition, the linguistic features in the narratives have helped prompt emotions, build empathy and understanding, and dispel common stereotypes and misconceptions about the community. In contrast, the visual details in corpora, e.g., rainbow flag and other symbolic imagery, have effectively amplified inclusiveness, pride, and the beauty of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

As for the discursive analysis, the results showed that the complexity in the representation of LGBTQIA identities within conservative institutions reflected the production, distribution, and reception of the texts. The editorial board of the student publications made a conscious attempt to push for their advocacy but kept it culture-sensitive to cater their message to the audience. However, one student publication was strongly influenced by the institutional and cultural norms, which resulted in a limited number of posts on the subject. This only implied that the institution where the said publication belongs to has a conservative ideological orientation, as evident on the results. Furthermore, the use of social media platforms like Facebook has been effective in promoting widespread visibility and engagement, as compared to traditional journalism. In addition to, integrating advocacy into the pedagogical approach has effectively educated, stimulated thought, and mobilized readers.

Situated within broader sociocultural and institutional contexts, the texts revealed a nuanced engagement with power dynamics. Firmly grounded in core Filipino values like pakikiramay (empathy), bayanihan (communal spirit) and kapwa (shared identity), the publications weaved traditional narratives with progressive interpretations. These above stories not only defy the usual heteronormative narratives but also create a new world in which LGBTQIA+ individuals are important in creating a better society. Furthermore, these texts resist oppressive norms and foster inclusivity and collective empowerment against instances of prejudice in society.

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