2022 LGBTI Inclusion Online Discourse Report — Philippines

Social media intelligence on online Filipinos’ attitudes towards SOGIE, marriage equality, and hate crimes

June 2022
Syn & Strat Consulting Inc. is a social media intelligence and social media strategy firm. Our pioneering approach integrates data analytics and social science research methodologies to uncover and spread online messages that inform real-life attitudes and behaviors. We care about narratives, not just numbers.

Syn & Strat has worked extensively in studying human rights campaigns and political campaigns on social media. Our research has been presented at the Human Rights Summit 2020 and exhibited at the Human Rights Summit 2021. We have worked with Amnesty International Philippines, The Asia Foundation, BagoSphere, WiseOwl Management Consultancy, and YGOAL Inc., and we are a collaborator in the Philippine Linking and Learning project of VOICE, a grant facility managed by Hivos and Oxfam Novib.

We have also worked with partners from government, private sector, and development organizations, and executed social media strategy for national and regional election campaigns and political campaigns.

Syn & Strat’s independent and non-commissioned research is published on its website.

We can help you learn how your audience thinks about the issues that affect you.

Get in touch with us at contact@synandstrat.com.
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Content Warning:

The following report contains mentions and graphic stories to do with discrimination, violence, harassment, and hateful language against LGBTI people.
01 Context
We have seen more LGBTI+ personalities taking prominent positions in government, media, and even in the private sector. There have been many significant wins documented over the past few decades in liberalizing nations—landmark pro-LGBTI+ legislation like marriage equality, decriminalization of same-sex conduct, recognition and inclusion of trans identities in competitive sports, criminalization of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE). However, while LGBTI+ visibility is undoubtedly an integral part of building a culture of acceptance, genuine and meaningful recognition and treatment are the true markers of a society’s progression towards inclusivity. Beyond these moments of triumph for the LGBTI+ communities and advocates around the world, much work still has to be done.

In the Philippines, this gap is especially evident. While there are some segments of the LGBTI community that are broadly accepted by Philippine society, this acceptance has its limitations. Much of this acceptance appears to be reliant on stereotypes and does not include calls for broader civic and political recognition and participation of LGBTI people. In a nation where many beloved celebrities are openly LGBTI+ and where it is common to see straight and cisgender Filipinos have affinity for their LGBTI+ friends and family, legislative interventions protecting the LGBTI+ community come few and far between, and are often asymmetrically implemented not only across the archipelago’s 7,000+ islands but even in Metro Manila’s component cities.

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 Despite 73% of Filipinos claiming that homosexuality should be accepted by society, overall sentiment on key LGBTI+ issues say otherwise. Public policy is one area where this is most blatant. While most Filipinos claim support for the LGBTI+ community, they also oppose LGBTI+ receiving adequate legal recognition of their rights. Comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, such as the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression Equality Bill, have received constant pushback from religious organizations and politicians as early as the 1990s. As of writing, the Anti-Discrimination Bill continues to languish in the halls of our legislature. It is the longest-running bill under the Senate interpellation period in the country’s entire history and remains open for further deliberation in the upcoming 19th Congress. With Congress blocking progress on pro-LGBTI+ legislation, several local government units and regional offices of government departments have resorted to implementing their own anti-discrimination and gender recognition ordinances. However, resorting to these local ordinances means that only a small jurisdiction of people is covered in comparison to the fuller, broader scope of a national law.

This hesitation to provide particular protection for this vulnerable community even extends to the hypothetical. Along with contentious family-related topics like divorce, marriage equality is also a frequent key policy concern for national election debates, where aspiring presidential candidates are asked about their stances on whether or not same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. Majority of the candidates still answer no, including the top two frontrunners of the 2022 national elections.

That said, LGBTI+ advocacy goes beyond big-ticket issues like same-sex marriages and civil unions. It also encompasses reproductive healthcare, gender recognition, fair employment, and much more. Under-reported issues include the concerning rise of people living with HIV in the country, the continued discrimination of LGBTI+ students, and the routinized harassment of queer employees in workspaces.
The Philippines has the fastest growing HIV epidemic in the Asia-Pacific region, with cases of HIV doubling between 2010 and 2020. Additionally, we are seeing shifts in the demographic make-up of newer infections. New detected cases of HIV were becoming increasingly younger, majority of which were males who have sex with other males (90%).

Another pressing issue is the non-integration of LGBTI+ considerations and gender-sensitive training within the educational sector. Bullying, harassment, and strict enforcement of gender norms and stereotypes within high schools and universities have affected LGBTI+ students’ overall quality of education, which has been linked to rising cases of depression and suicide attempts among queer Filipino youth. However, harassment does not stop at educational institutions and continues to trail LGBTI+ individuals in workplaces. Aside from lack of employment diversity and gender discrimination, Philippine companies have been slow to adopt policies that safeguard employees from SOGIE-based discrimination. In a study by Enriques, 25% of LGBTI+ respondents reported that they have experienced harassment in the workplace while 60% were the target of derogatory jokes and slurs.

This precise lack of safeguards has enabled cultures of discrimination, abuse, and impunity to exist and to proliferate, within individuals and institutions, ultimately affecting the physical and mental well-being of LGBTI+ individuals. It is in the Philippines as well where hate crimes against trans women like Jennifer Laude occur. While the Philippines’ vibrant human rights sector condemned the hate crime and called for justice and media allies brought the issue to headline status, Laude’s assailant was ultimately granted absolute pardon by no less than the President of the Philippines.

All of this exists against a background of superficial acceptance—blockbuster support for media that features LGBTI+ personalities prominently, brands adopting rainbow branding come Pride Month, and Filipinos assimilating beki language and beki humor into the vernacular. It is the hope of this report that we are able to outline ways to rectify these contradictions in attitudes towards the LGBTI+ community, identify specific topics that comms interventions should amplify and concentrate on, and build congruence between our social norms and meaningful inclusion.

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Executive Summary
We analyzed over 400 stories about LGBTI issues and people that were published from May 2021 to 2022, as well as the discourse around the stories that generated the most social media engagements. We then evaluated these using the UNDP LGBTI Inclusion Index as a basis, to see how these stories and the audience discourse around them fared when it came to tackling issues that were most urgent and important for the inclusion of LGBTI people: political and civic participation, personal security and violence, education, health, and economic well-being.

Our findings show that the narrative landscape of LGBTI issues for online Filipinos tends to be limited and often brings out negative commentary. While media coverage tends to be positive, it also tends to be superficial, often not addressing issues and topics that are impactful for the full inclusion of LGBTI people. We also found that despite the positive media coverage, online Filipinos tended to react negatively to the coverage. There is low awareness of the nuances of sexual identity, gender, and sexual orientation. Additionally, there is a general attitude that acknowledging these nuances or addressing the needs of LGBTI people is optional, to the extent that many identities—especially those of trans people—are denied.

With our extensive mapping of this narrative landscape, we hope to aid advocates, communicators, and policymakers in understanding the terrain that needs to be navigated to create and disseminate more resonant messages.

**Recommendations in brief**

Given our findings and the landscape of prominent messages about and attitudes towards SOGIE and LGBTI issues, we have found communication opportunities for anti-discrimination advocacy and building a broader base of support. Here are our recommendations, summarized:

- Create more meaningful stories about LGBTI issues about health, education, and economic well-being. These stories can highlight issues and solutions that are specific to the community so the general audience can understand these issues with an LGBTI lens and hopefully understand why they should be a protected class.
- Highlight personal stories that show the common struggles of LGBTI people in the workplace, school, or community. These will cultivate entry points for empathy. The discourse also moves away from merely recognizing and respecting the identities of LGBTI people and shows the multifaceted nature of the issues they face. But these stories should end on a hopeful note, giving some pointers for the path forward about how individuals or our society can help LGBTI people win against these struggles.
- Tell more stories about LGBTI people participating in nation building and community building. The lack of these stories in mainstream and alternative media make it seem that the LGBTI sector’s contribution to society is mostly through entertainment or pageantry.
- Distribute LGBTI stories with coordination and intentionality. If we are to tell more varied stories about LGBTI issues, we also need to actively engage with and share these stories so that they may reach audiences outside LGBTI advocacy groups.
- Participate in comments sections with proactive messages of inclusion and acceptance. By using public neutral spaces such as media comment sections to spread inclusive messages, these messages will be seen by more people who may not encounter these ideas in their everyday lives.
- Create guides for the media about how to discuss sensitive LGBTI topics and how to use essentially terminology. By having terminology and coverage guides that are easy to refer to, more media practitioners and bloggers can make their coverage of LGBTI issues more inclusive.
03 Purpose
To make better inroads for LGBTI advocacies in the country, we need to find and address the narratives that persist against LGBTI people, as well as push narratives that will drive people towards attitudes of greater acceptance and inclusion.

In this report, we share actionable insights and recommendations addressing the online discourse on LGBTI issues in the country. As you’ll see from our findings—and likely, your own experience—a lot of work has to be done in communicating the rights and needs of LGBTI people in the Philippines. We hope our research can inform policy and advocacy communication through helping readers develop more effective communication strategies.

This report presents independent research that has not been commissioned by any entity.
04 Framework
In this study, Syn & Strat used the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) LGBTI Inclusion Index as a basis of evaluating inclusive and exclusionary attitudes. The index itself is “a set of proposed indicators to measure the inclusion of LGBTI people,” and it follows the UNDP and the World Bank’s definition of inclusion:

Access to opportunities and achievement of outcomes for LGBTI people, as captured in an LGBTI Inclusion Index, as well as human development and other relevant indices, including for those who experience multiple forms of stigma and discrimination. An LGBTI Inclusion Index should measure the extent to which these opportunities and outcomes exist in each country, both universally and with respect to certain groups within a country.¹³

The Index seeks to provide benchmarks for:

- Comparing the overall degree of inclusion across countries;
- Measuring progress toward inclusion over time within countries, regions, or globally;
- Setting benchmarks for countries to achieve new levels of inclusion; and
- Demonstrating where resources are most needed to enable and support sustainable human development for LGBTI people, as shown through outcome measures in the index.¹⁴

Fig 1. The UNDP LGBTI Inclusion Index

The Index is composed of what the UNDP deems the “five most important dimensions for human freedom,” which are: health, economic well-being, education, political and civic participation, and personal security and violence.

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¹⁴ Ibid, 5.
Table 1. Summary of UNDP LGBTI Inclusion Index and sample indicators

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Aspects of inclusion and sample indicators</th>
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| Health                         | • SOGIE inclusive health legislation and policies, as indicated by the presence of patient non-discrimination protections, protection of medical records, and informed consent  
  • Access to SOGIE sensitive healthcare, as indicated by low incidence of LGBTI patients feeling discriminated against in healthcare settings based on SOGIE  
  • Sexual and reproductive health and rights, as indicated by the presence of gender-affirming care, acceptance that variations in SOGIE is deemed healthy, low prevalence of HIV infections, absence of coercive sterilazation  
  • Health status, as indicated by low incidence of depression among LGBTI people and high self-rated health                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Economic well-being            | • Access to jobs, as indicated by existence and implementation of employment non-discrimination laws, low incidence of discrimination in the workplace, relative unemployment rate  
  • Adequate income, as indicated by relative poverty rate and relative individual earnings  
  • Social security, as indicated by equal benefits (such as pension systems' provisions of the same benefits to same-sex partners and different-sex spouses)  
  • Business climate, as indicated by presence of LGBTI-owned and LGBTI-led businesses                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Education                      | • Safe learning environments, as indicated by rate of SOGIE-based bullying, and presence and implementation of anti-bullying policies that specifically mention SOGIE-based bullying  
  • Access to education, as indicated by presence and implementation of policy that prohibits discrimination against LGBTI students in educational settings, and ratio of LGBTI students who complete primary and secondary levels of education  
  • Inclusion in knowledge, as indicated by diversity-inclusive school curricula that includes information on SOGIE                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Political and civic participation | • Recognition, as indicated by decriminalization of same-sex conduct and gender expression, existence of legal gender recognition and centralized protocols for updating gender in official certifications, and inclusion in statistical reporting systems  
  • Freedom of expression and association, as indicated by absence of restrictive laws and by presence and legal recognition of LGBTI advocacy-focused orgs  
  • Political representation, as indicated by percentage of national, elected representative body who are openly LGBTI  
  • Public opinion, as indicated by measures of social acceptability of variations in SOGIE                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Personal security and violence  | • Bodily, physical and psychological integrity, as indicated by the existence of laws, regulations, and judicial regulations protecting LGBTI people against conversion therapy and other “normalizing medical interventions”  
  • Hate crimes and incitement to violence, as indicated by legal recognition of that hate based on SOGIE can motivate hate crimes  
  • SOGIE-related violence, as indicated by incidence of hate crimes based on real or perceived SOGIE and of violence against SOGIE activists and human rights defenders  
  • Presence of SOGIE asylum  
  • Access to justice for LGBTI people, as indicated by implementation of justice sector training on human rights and protection from violence related to LGBTI and SOGIE, trust of LGBTI people in the justice sector, and existence of official policy protections on SOGIE in detention settings, among others |
Of course, this Index does not exhaust all the aspects of inclusion that will enable advocates to get a holistic, comprehensive view of LGBTI inclusion. Because this Index is focused on national- or state-level inclusion indicators, it focuses on broad policy and institutional actions. These are also the five dimensions that the UNDP considered to be the “highest priorities,” as they significantly impact the quality of life and life horizons of LGBTI people.

Considering this, Syn & Strat gathered media stories that represented each of the five dimensions to get a sense of how online Filipinos responded to various aspects of LGBTI inclusion, especially on these high priority, urgent and immediate issues that the LGBTI community faces.

Syn & Strat also employed Urie Bronfrenbrenner’s socioecological model as a framework for deciding what type of other stories to study so we can capture sentiments on broader social and cultural phenomena.

Frequently used as a framework in social and behavior change communications, this framework considers various spheres of influence, and recognizes that policies and institutions exist within cultural values and belief systems. These intangibles permeate all actions and artifacts—including media and pop culture. Because of this, Syn & Strat also added another aspect of inclusion that we wanted to study: Visibility.

Visibility points to an aspect of social acceptability of LGBTI that the UNDP’s articulation (which focused on empirical measures of society’s acceptability of LGBTI) does not quite cover. In this report, visibility is indicated by the prominence of openly LGBTI personalities in media and pop culture. It is to do with media representation, pageantry, and other pop culture phenomena that introduces or presents LGBTI personalities to a large presumably cisgender, heterosexual audience.
Narrative landscape of LGBTI issues on social media
Applying the UNDP LGBTI Inclusion Index, Syn & Strat gleaned online Filipinos’ general discourses on some issues related to the key dimensions of LGBTI inclusion. To do this, we gathered top engagement-generating media stories and categorized them according to the key dimensions of our framework: political and civic participation, personal security and violence, health, education, economic well-being, and visibility. In our analysis, we found media stories on political and civic participation, personal security and violence, and visibility generated the most Facebook engagements. There were very few Philippines-based stories on LGBTI economic well-being, health, and education published during the scope of time we studied (May 2021 to May 2022), and the few that were published fetched very minimal to no Facebook engagement.

In this section, we will tackle the prominent media messages relevant to the inclusion dimensions as revealed in the headlines of the stories, their social media post captions, and the text or video content of their coverage. We will also provide our findings on audience responses based on the sentiment and discourse analysis we conducted on each of these stories. All in all, this section gives us a view of the landscape of prominent messages about LGBTI issues that online Filipinos are exposed to and not exposed to.

Political and Civic Participation

Political and civic participation refers to the recognition, freedom of expression and association, and the political representation of LGBTI people. These stories took up 15.2% of the mainstream and alternative media coverage of LGBTI issues. Under this dimension, these were the key issues and stories that came out from May 2021 to May 2022:

- **2022 Philippine national elections and campaign season**, encompassing:
  - Presidential candidate Sen. Manny Pacquiao clarifying his stance on LGBTI people and same-sex marriage (previously, Pacquiao stated that LGBTI people are “worse than animals.”)
  - Candidates declaring their stances on LGBTI issues like marriage equality
  - LGBTI organizations and figures declaring support for specific political candidates
  - Vice Presidential candidate Mayor Sara Duterte declaring that she is a member of the LGBTI community
  - Actor Mark Anthony Fernandez going viral for stating that he would not want to have a gay president

- **Specific LGBTI Filipino couples getting married**, particularly LGBTI marriages in Laguna and Misamis, and a Filipino trans woman marrying an Australian man
With these key events and stories, the following narratives emerged:

**Table 2.** Prominent messages online Filipinos are exposed to when it comes to political and civic participation of LGBTI Filipinos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Story Messages</th>
<th>Responses from Online Filipinos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gay and lesbian couple in Laguna get married</td>
<td>An LGBTI couple got married in Laguna. One is a gay man and another is a lesbian woman. The gay man wore a gown, while the lesbian wore a suit. Their families are supportive of their marriage.</td>
<td>Most online Filipinos state this marriage is acceptable because they are still “man and woman.” Many online Filipinos also referenced the couple’s ability to have children, that this couple can “go forth and multiply,” invoking religious doctrine in justifying this what would otherwise be a morally wrong marriage. Inclusive comments typically congratulated the couple, saying their marriage is not wrong or just let the couple be. Many inclusive comments also called out the bigotry in the comments section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential candidate Manny Pacquiao clarifying his stance on LGBTI people and same-sex marriage</td>
<td>Manny Pacquiao changed his stance on the LGBT community, he says he loves them and cannot judge them. He is still against same-sex marriage because of his Christian faith. He claims he has a lot of LGBT supporters. He described LGBT people as hardworking (“masisipag”) and smart (“magaling mag-isip”).</td>
<td>Most comments did not talk about LGBTI issues per se but instead about whether or not they supported Pacquiao’s bid for the presidency. The few comments that addressed his statements stated he was playing it safe because of his candidacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor Mark Anthony Fernandez going viral for stating that he would not want to have a gay president</td>
<td>Actor Mark Anthony Fernandez stated that he won’t allow the country to have a gay president, but he is fine with having a gay mayor or vice mayor. He said he would not accept a gay president to lead the military and police. He also stated that he has no problems with gay people but doesn’t want to be mistaken for one.</td>
<td>Most comments tried to guess whom Fernandez may have been referring to, such as presidential candidates Sen. Ping Lacson and Mayor Isko Moreno, or former president Benigno Aquino III. Commenters did not state whether they agreed or disagreed with him. 18% of the comments agreed with Mark Anthony, stating having a gay president would cause chaos (“magkakagulo”). Some also mentioned that gay people are too soft. Only 4% of the comments disagreed with Fernandez. It’s also worth noting that this story was run only by blogs and not mainstream media, and that the Facebook Page that brought the story the most engagements was a fanpage for Senator Ronald Dela Rosa.</td>
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These stories and audience responses show us the prominent messages online Filipinos are exposed to when it comes to political and civic participation of LGBTI Filipinos.
Political and Civic Participation

- **Stories that are actually about positive LGBTI political participation did not make the top engagement-generating stories.** Despite the presence of openly LGBTI figures in government and other civil offices, there was an absence of prominent messages about the positive impact that LGBTI officials make on Philippine politics and society or that LGBTI civil society organizations have done for Filipinos as well.

- **A religious perspective seems to permeate the discussion of LGBTI people’s civic participation,** ascribing “right” and “wrong” judgment based on Christian doctrine rather than human rights parameters. Because religious discourses dominate online discussions about marriage equality in the Philippines, negative attitudes toward the issue may condition politically unengaged online Filipinos’ opinions about marriage equality and persuade them towards exclusionary attitudes before getting a balanced view of the issue.

- **Relatedly, the Christian discourse on marriage equality often emphasizes the reproduction aspect of marriage,** fixating on same-sex couples’ lack of biological function to do this. This has made it a common talk point against marriage equality in the Philippines, implicitly privileging ‘natural’ birth and the concept of a traditional nuclear family over care through methods like adoption or surrogacy. This perpetuates the notion that a married same-sex couple can’t be effective, nurturing parents.

- **The actual LGBTI perspective is underrepresented.** Discussions relating to the political and civic participation of LGBTI people happens primarily through the lens of straight cisgender people. Even top media stories related to this inclusion dimension are mostly about public figures’ negative exclusionary stances on LGBTI issues.

- **Stereotypical perceptions of what gay people are like persist,** such as in the case of Ferndandez’s insistence that gays are unfit to lead the country because they are “too soft.”
Personal Security and Violence

Personal security and violence is the dimension that refers to SOGIE-related crimes and violence, LGBTI people’s physical and psychological integrity, and LGBTI people’s access to justice. Of the stories covering LGBTI issues, 16.1% were stories about personal security and violence. These were the relevant stories that came out from May 2021 to May 2022:

- Actor Baron Geisler goes viral for a public apology he made to gays he slapped in the face for no reason
- A transgender woman was found stabbed to death in Tawi-tawi
- A resort filed complaints after a trans woman publicly called them “homophobic” and “transphobic” after denying her access to their female restroom
- A Maguindanao community shaved heads of lesbian women as “punishment”
- A member of the LGBTI community was robbed and murdered in Zamboanga
- Suspects were arrested for the rape-slay of trans man Ebeng Mayor in Quezon City
- Malabon and Pasig City passed ordinances upholding the rights for LGBTI people, including anti-discrimination and protection from violence
- Various political candidates stating their plans for protecting LGBTI people (ex. Senatorial candidate Gov. Chiz Escudero stated that he wants to establish shelters for homeless LGBTI people in every municipality, Sen. Risa Hontiveros urged people to keep the SOGIE Equality Bill in public discussion)
With these key events and stories, the following narratives emerged:

**Table 3.** Prominent messages online Filipinos are exposed to when it comes to personal security LGBTI Filipinos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Story Messages</th>
<th>Responses from Online Filipinos</th>
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</table>
| Actor Baron Geisler goes viral for a public apology he made to gays he slapped in the face for no reason | Geisler publicly apologized to gays he slapped for no reason. This apology came via a virtual media conference where he was promoting his latest movie, *Barumbadings*, a black comedy about gay gangsters.  
He said he may have slapped not more than five gay men in the face after merely seeing them.  
He stated that it was wrong to hurt anyone physically or psychologically, and that he was a drug and alcohol user during these incidents | Most of the commentary was irrelevant to LGBTI issues, often merely referring to Baron's drug use (“adik”).  
Comments relevant to LGBTI issues were mostly exclusionary or prejudiced, stating that the gays deserved being slapped for being “malandi (flirty)” or hinting that they enjoyed getting slapped.  
Inclusive comments commended Geisler for apologizing and reiterated that the victims deserved respect |
| A transgender woman was found stabbed to death in Tawi-tawi         | A trans woman student was found stabbed to death in Tawi-tawi.  
She was a student who worked as a part-time event organizer. The last time she was seen was with her friend for this side hustle.  
The police are looking at jealousy as a motive, stating that the perpetrator may also be LGBTI. They also thought that the motive may be relevant to their work as event organizers.  
The Commission on Human Rights also said that it would investigate.  
Members of the LGBTI community called this a “hate crime,” but the police stated that they eliminated this as a possible motive. | Online Filipinos were sympathetic to the victim.  
Nearly all sympathetic comments were referring to death penalty as a solution to crimes like these, saying that perpetrators should be given the death penalty when caught. |
| A resort filed complaints after a trans woman publicly called them “homophobic” and “transphobic” after denying her access to their female restroom | Management of the resort claims that they have LGBTI employees and that the trans woman guest was treated with respect.  
The resort’s policy is that there are no trans women who will be allowed in restrooms for cis women.  
The resort owner said that they protect cis women more than “gays” (as in trans women) because when cisgender women are raped, they may get pregnant. If men (trans women, in this case) are raped, “nothing will happen.”  
The resort said that they will no longer accept transgender guests, since they have no facilities for them. | Majority of the comments were exclusionary, emphasizing that the trans woman is still male.  
They also stated that trans women’s trying to use (presumably) cisgender women’s restrooms is asking for too much. Some online Filipinos also commended LGBTI people who do not ask for similar rights, such as trans men who do not use men’s bathrooms. |

These stories and audience responses show us the prominent messages online Filipinos are exposed to when it comes to the personal security of LGBTI Filipinos.
Personal Security and Violence

- Stories of violent crimes against members of the LGBTI community are usually among the headlining media stories about the community. The online landscape is saturated with LGBTI individuals experiencing violence, presenting the narrative that LGBTI people are often victims. Without headlining, viral stories that also present LGBTI people's successes and joys, a disempowering victim narrative persists unchallenged.

- Despite the volume of stories about LGBTI individuals experiencing SOGIE-based violence, the overall impression that media coverage and online responses have is that they are all isolated incidents. There is a lack of mainstream discussion of these incidents as part of a pattern of SOGIE-based violence towards a community that has to constantly navigate this hostility. Because of this, online Filipinos’ awareness of systemic violence as an aspect of the LGBTI experience may be low.

- The dominant narrative on trans identities is denial. To majority of online Filipinos in our data, one’s gender will always be their sex assigned at birth. This indicates low appreciation of SOGIE and a strong belief that primacy should be put on biological markers of sex and gender, specifically one’s genitals.

- Online Filipinos tend to conflate of gay men and trans women, having the impression that all gay men are trans women or all trans women are gay men, again pointing to a low awareness of the nuances of SOGIE.

- In audience responses to instances of violence against gay men, there is also an impression victims are sometimes “asking for” violence because they are flirty or because they are asking for it, believing that gay men deserve violence sometimes because of their actions.

- There is an emphasis on a call for punitive measures against SOGIE-based violence. These interventions are inconsistent with human rights, showing that although there is sympathy for LGBTI individuals when it comes to violence, it does not come from a human rights framework but from a framework of punitive justice.
Visibility in media and pop culture

We also tracked stories about showbiz and pop culture, which provide more visibility to LGBTI people. This included stories about celebrities coming out, LGBTI characters being portrayed in film or TV, and other inspirational stories featuring LGBTI people.

Although LGBTI visibility in pop culture is not one of the dimensions deemed an urgent priority by the UNDP LGBTI Inclusion Index, visibility was actually the most dominant category of stories relevant to LGBTI people in the Philippines. 62.5% of stories relevant to LGBTI people were stories that were primarily about pop culture, media, and celebrities. Ignoring the narratives about and around these stories would lead to an incomplete picture of the prevalent narratives about LGBTI people in the country.

Here are the stories that generated the highest engagements:

- Miss Trans Global PH finalist made an anti-Martial Law statement in her regional costume
- Comedian Vice Ganda explained that she is non-binary
- Actor Raymond Gutierrez officially came out
- Singer Sheryn Regis came out as lesbian
- Singer Jake Zyrus posted a shirtless selfie to inspire other trans men
- Some Miss Philippines Earth 2021 candidates stated that they were not in favor of trans women joining pageants that were traditionally for cisgender women
- Gay construction worker went viral wearing make up at work
With these key events and stories, the following narratives emerged:

Table 4. Prominent messages online Filipinos are exposed to when it comes to visibility of LGBTI Filipinos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Story Messages</th>
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| Comedian Vice Ganda explained that she is non-binary | Vice Ganda won’t be offended if called either ma’am or sir, or he or she.  
Vice Ganda’s gender is non-binary, and that the words she uses do not represent the entire LGBTI community.  
She also stated that we should not call trans women “he” or “sir.”  
If people are not sure which words to use, it’s best to ask the person. | 32% of the comments were exclusionary. Online Filipinos implied or stated that gender is based exclusively on one’s genitalia or birth certificate and that these things can’t be changed.  
15% of the comments were inclusive. Most of these comments were supportive towards the LGBTI community, respecting how they want to be called.  
Across mixed and exclusionary comments, online Filipinos didn’t seem to understand the difference between sexual orientation and gender, with many users asking what their being non-binary means since Vice’s partner is male. |
| Actor Raymond Gutierrez officially came out | Gutierrez said he never denied his sexual orientation to the public.  
Gutierrez also said that he used to be angry with himself and was afraid to come out. He also said that the public did not know of these struggles.  
He also shared that he was bullied in the entertainment industry for his sexual orientation.  
Now he is proud to be an LGBTI member.  
He was supported by his fans and other celebrities who admired his bravery for coming out. | Most comments relevant to the issue were people saying they already knew Gutierrez was gay, while saying his being gay was a waste (“sayang”). Some comments also said that coming out was his way to be relevant in showbiz again.  
Only 9% of the comments were explicitly positive and inclusive, congratulating him for coming out. |
| Singer Jake Zyrus posted a shirtless selfie to inspire other trans men | Zyrus wants to inspire other trans men with his shirtless photo.  
He is happy with his transition and more confident with his body, even though this wasn’t always the case. | At 53%, more than half of the comments were exclusionary, with many referring to Zyrus’ genitalia as the basis of his real gender, often said crudely, calling for him to show it.  
Another common sentiment is that he tampered with his body, which the commenters deemed wrong because the body is created or given by God (and shouldn’t be altered).  
Other exclusionary comments were negative comments about Zyrus’ body, especially his chest (he had top surgery).  
Only 9% of the comments were inclusive, mostly comments commending his confidence in sharing his photo. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Story Messages</th>
<th>Responses from Online Filipinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some Miss Philippines Earth 2021 candidates stated that they were not in favor of trans women joining pageants that were traditionally for cisgender women</td>
<td>Two Miss Philippines Earth candidates are not in favor of trans women joining pageants for “natural-born women.” Transgender beauty queen Kevin Balot also agreed with them. According to the candidates, they respect the trans community, which is why their beauty should be celebrated separately, in a pageant for trans women only</td>
<td>Comments were mostly exclusionary or of mixed sentiment, with most of these comments agreeing with the Miss Philippines Earth candidates that pageants for traditionally cisgender women should stay that way. People also suggested that if trans women wanted visibility, they should just form their own beauty pageants. People in the comments still defined gender according to “biological” markers, mostly genitalia. Only 6% of comments were inclusive, often calling out the inconsistency of other commenters who claimed to respect trans women but did not want to include them in pageants for women. Other inclusive comments also referred to trans women joining other pageants for cisgender women as evidence that it’s possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay construction worker went viral wearing make up at work</td>
<td>An LGBTI community member (or “beki,” which was also used) is proud of being a construction worker. This worker wears makeup to work as part of their gender expression. They¹⁵ are described as “umaawra” (acting like a model as if on a fashion runway). Usually strong, muscular men do this type of work. They were fired from other jobs for no reason and joined their siblings at work, who are also construction workers. Sometimes they are teased by co-workers, but they fight for themselves and tell their co-workers that they are not doing anything wrong by wearing makeup and all of them should just focus on work.</td>
<td>The discourse was overwhelmingly positive, praising the worker for pursuing diligent and honest work to support themselves and their family. It’s also important to note that gender, although brought up a few times, was not central to defining their capacity to work as a construction worker. Exclusionary remarks had a gendered notion of work and labor, arguing that although this person identified as gay and wore makeup, they were still a biological man, naturally making them built for a job in construction (“lalaki pa rin yan;” he’s still a man).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁵ The article was in Filipino. Preferred pronouns were not clear.

These stories and audience responses show us the prominent messages online Filipinos are exposed to when it comes to the visibility of LGBTI Filipinos.
Visibility in media and pop culture

- In online Filipinos’ commentary on these stories that take up 62.5% of the total stories that are relevant to these inclusion dimensions, there is an emphasis on sex assigned at birth and on physical features when it comes to talking about trans identities. The dominant narrative for trans identities is still denial.

- Online Filipinos say there should still be separate spaces for cis and trans people. Like in the case of the beauty pageants strictly for cis women and for trans women, online Filipinos seem to think that creating these separate spaces is the most harmonious way for everyone to get along, revealing a hesitation to be genuinely and meaningfully inclusive towards the trans community.
Online Filipinos' attitudes and behaviors towards LGBTI issues
For online Filipinos, respect for LGBTI people is earned, not inherent.

While we found that most stories about LGBTI people generate negative or exclusionary comments and reactions, there are some stories where positive and inclusive comments are predominant. This is the case for stories where LGBTI people experience physical violence, such as the story about the trans woman who was murdered in Tawi-tawi, the forced shaving of lesbians’ heads in Maguindanao, and the high profile rape-slay case of trans man Ebeng Mayor. In these specific cases—where an abstract issue like SOGIE-based violence is given a face and anchored on a concrete story with clear victims and bad guys—the audience was quick to empathize. This parallels a phenomenon that we’ve also observed in our other social media research on online Filipinos’ attitudes and behaviors towards human rights. In previous research, we found that content that broadly discusses the issues faced by a marginalized group (such as women) tends to generate negative comments, while stories about a specific case or individual (such as a victim of violence against women) tend to generate more empathy and calls for justice from the audience.

In these specific cases—where an abstract issue like SOGIE-based violence is given a face and anchored on a concrete story with clear victims and bad guys—the audience was quick to empathize. Online Filipinos had sympathetic responses to these stories, and even mostly avoided misgendering trans people in these cases. However, this suggests that people may empathize with the individuals as victims of a common sense crime—but not with the plight of the marginalized community in general.
Comments and reactions about LGBTI people also tended to be more positive and inclusive in stories where LGBTI individuals are shown as actively contributing members of society, such as the story about the gay construction worker who shows up to work wearing make-up. Almost half (49%) of the comments were positive, praising the worker for being responsible and pursuing honest work (“marangal na trabaho”) rather than resorting to crime (“yung iba holdaper” (other people are armed thieves)) or relying on others (“kesa iasa mo sa iba” (better than relying on others)).

**Fig. 3.** Word pair map of comments to “LGBTQ community member, proud sa pagiging construction worker” (GMA News)

Most comments were positive, praising the worker for “marangal na trabaho” (honest work). Exclusionary comments had a gendered notion of work and focused on the worker’s gender, stating “lalaki parin/padin yan” (he’s still a man), which is why he could do construction work.

Syn & Strat typically uses word pair maps to synthesize how social media posts and comments talk about specific topics. These maps show us what words commenters commonly associate —and not associate—with a topic. These maps represent the words commonly used and their relationships to each other.

Words are represented by circles. The larger the circle, the more frequently a word is mentioned. Words connected by lines are often next to each other in comments. The colors represent word groups. If words tend to appear in the same sentence or phrase together, they belong to the same word group and have the same colors.
Online Filipinos appear to be averse to adjusting their language and environment to accommodate the needs and identities of LGBTI people. “Respect” given to LGBTI people by using the right name, pronouns, and other terms is seen as optional. Goodwill (and the absence of negative attitudes from violence to microaggressions) is given to LGBTI people who passively accept exclusionary behavior. There is also an impression that it’s possible for a cisgender heterosexual person to respect an LGBTI person without accommodating their identities and needs.

Many online Filipinos praise LGBTI people who do not push for inclusion or accommodation of their needs. Online Filipinos appreciate LGBTI people who accept the use of any gendered pronouns and words because they are glad the LGBTI person won’t be offended regardless of what words are used, giving people the freedom not to consciously unlearn the habit of using one’s deadname or wrong pronouns.

In the data studied, online Filipinos also praised other similar displays of LGBTI people’s acceptance of exclusionary attitudes. They praised trans masc people who do not use men’s bathrooms and trans women who opt not to join beauty pageants typically for cisgender women and instead join or create pageants for trans women specifically.
Comments in a story about a transwoman being denied access to a women’s bathroom in a resort

Nirerespeto ko din po mga trans at gays pero sana naman po alam din natin kung hanggang san lang tayo.. nakaka offend din naman po samin mga babae na andun kau sa rest room namen.. we respect you sana respect nyo din kami.

i dont discriminate real life lgbt..i respect them and their rights but there is still a boundary..we need to know our limitations..i hope you can show the same respect.


Comments on a story about Vice Ganda stating she is non-binary

Tama lang yan na kayo ang mag adjust at hindi kami.. Pahihirapan nyo pa mga tao at pipilitan nyo pa sakyan kayo sa mga delusions nyo.

Nakakalito para saming straight kung mam or sir,kuya o ate ang itawag sa lgbtq..kea wagi to sakin haha
It was apparent that many online Filipinos think trans identities are not real.

There is a common narrative across many stories that trans identities are not real and should not be recognized. For many online Filipinos, one’s gender is fixed from when it is assigned at birth. For them, “biological” markers like genitalia or physique determine one’s gender identity. Many users also refer to one’s body as being “from God” ("nilikha/binigay ng Diyos"), and therefore should not be changed. There also seems to be the impression that trans identities are optional, with many people saying trans people chose to be the way they are ("ginusto/pinili niyo yan"), implying they could simply un-choose being trans and, consequently, escape the prejudice and discrimination they experience.
Comments on a story about Vice Ganda stating she is non-binary

Tanga bading ka
Basta may buntot sa harap, sir yan. Kasi kahit sa birth cert. mo ay 'male' ang kasarian.

kahit magpatangal kpa ng burat..
LALAKI kapa rin dahil lalaki kang binuhay ng Diyos


Comment on a story about Miss Earth Philippines contestants stating they are not in favor of transwomen joining traditionally cisgender pageants

Lalaki parin sila, binago lang sila ng teknolohiya para sa kagustuhan nila ...

Comment on story about Jake Zyrus sharing a shirtless selfie

Babae kang ginawa ng diyos bat nagkaganyan ka!! Pinakialaman mo katawang binigay sayo
Although most stories covering LGBTI issues are positive in their coverage, most comments and reactions to them are not.

We found that most stories\textsuperscript{16} (64.4\%) published in the past year were inclusive or portrayed LGBTI people positively. Despite this, Facebook users predominantly had negative comments and Reactions towards these stories.

“Haha” was the most common Reaction used by Facebook users to stories about LGBTI issues. While “Haha” is often an ambiguous Reaction to read, it was often used to mock or make fun of the people or issues featured in stories.

\textsuperscript{16} From mainstream media publications online, as well as alternative media such as blogs or online-only publications.
For example, GMA News published a story about Jake Zyrus posting a shirtless selfie. The story mostly included quotes from a social media post from Zyrus, which talked about his joy in his transition and encouraged other trans men to leave their insecurities behind. Despite the story’s inspiring message, it had the highest number of “Haha” Reactions among other LGBTI stories in the past year.

More than half the comments were negative as well, and only 9% were inclusive or respectful. There is a similar trend to be seen in the other LGBTI stories we studied, and we found that exclusionary comments were the most common overall.

**Fig. 5.** Sentiment of comments in stories about LGBTI issues and people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment Slant</th>
<th>Percentage of total comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most comments on LGBTI-related stories published from May 2021 to 2022 were negative or exclusionary.

**Examples of negative comments on stories about LGBTI issues**

- boy and girl pa rin so wlang problema.. ang masama ay yung babae sa babae at lalaki sa lalaki!!!"
- Yan ang mahirap pinili nilang maging transformers tapos mag dedemand kayo
- Gender neutral calling is shit. Like excuse me shit, how u doing shit, goodmorning shit.. Shortcut for bullshit.. Yahahhah
- Baliktarin man nten ang mundo kht beki yan may TT pdn nsa dugo pdn nya ang pgkalalake..
- Insulto po yan! LGBT-QRSTUVWXYZ!!! Lumugar kayo may bagay para sa inyo!!! Ambisyoso
- Magppasalamat cla cguro dhill nagng kasangkapan c Baron pra tlga magng tunay clang lalake dhill yon tlga an kasarian nla.
In the story about Zyrus’ shirtless selfie, most of the negative comments had religious references, expressing that his body was “binigay-nilikha ng Dios (given/created by God)” and that what he was doing was “kasalanan/bawal sa Diyos (a sin against God).”

In our word pair analysis, we saw the relationships between the most common words used by commenters on the Jake Zyrus story. This tells us that the word “babae” is the most frequently used word in the comments, often used to say that Zyrus is “babae parin/padin (sic) (still a woman).” Additionally, there are many references to God and negative descriptors of parts of Zyrus’ chest, and many incidents of online Filipinos’ deadnaming Zyrus, saying he wasted (“sayang”) his opportunities.

**Fig. 6.** Word pair map of comments to “Jake Zyrus shares shirtless selfie: ‘Para ito sa mga kapwa ko transgender’” (GMA News)

*This word pair map shows that “babae parin/padin” is one of the most common word pairs used by commenters in this story.*

From this, we can see that positive media coverage of LGBTI may not be enough to move our cultural narrative on LGBTI issues. Other stakeholders such as advocacy groups, communities, the academe, and religious groups have to be more involved in changing our cultural narratives and responses to be more inclusive towards LGBTI people.
Mainstream and alternative media provided some visibility for the LGBTI community, but their stories addressed LGBTI issues and people superficially.

Media covers many stories relevant to the LGBTI community, bringing more visibility. However, most of these stories tend to be superficial and are rarely about LGBTI rights or issues. They are typically about coming out (or about gossip about closeted celebrities), beauty pageants, LGBTI characters or actors in films and TV, or inspiring LGBTI human interest stories.
While these types of stories are plentiful and may bring visibility to the LGBTI community, they do not discuss issues that are relevant to the UNDP LGBTI Inclusion Index, whose dimensions cover what the UNDP deems most urgent and impactful for the inclusion of LGBTI people.

Some of the stories that increased LGBTI visibility:

- Spotted: Miss Trans Global PH finalist make statement in regional costume (Philstar.com)
- Vice Ganda: Pag tinawag mo akong ma‘am o sir hindi ako mao-offend, non-binary ang gender ko (Inquirer.net)
- Raymond Gutierrez says he never denied his true identity (GMA Network.com)
- Beatrice Luigi Gomez not the first lesbian pageant winner (Pep.ph)
- Gabbi Garcia naiyak sa muling pagpirma ng kontrata sa GMA; type sumabak sa LGBTQ project (Inquirer.net)
- How this dad raised an empowered trans daughter (Inquirer.net)

Fig. 7. Story Categories from May 2021 to May 2022

This chart shows the different categories of media stories that focused on the LGBTI community. Media stories on LGBTI issues typically only increase visibility, leaving more urgent issues such as LGBTI health and education underdiscussed.
Even in instances when economic well-being (3.3%), health (1.8% of LGBTI-focused stories) and education (1.2%) are discussed, most of these stories are about other countries’ efforts that were written about by local media. The few published stories about LGBTI economic well-being, health, and education also did not get distributed to audiences as much. They generated the lowest number of average social media engagements, indicating low audience interest from online Filipinos, especially compared to the engagements that lifestyle- and showbiz-related stories generated.17

Fig. 8 Average social media engagements, per story category

Stories about health, education, and economic well-being have less than 10% of the average engagements of stories about political and civic participation.

17 Social media engagements from Twitter and Facebook. On Twitter, this counts as likes and Retweets. On Facebook, this counts Likes, Reactions, shares, and comments.
Nearly all the stories that are about pro-LGBTI policy did not even make it to the top 100 LGBTI stories with the most social media engagements. The story about the SOGIE Equality Bill that fetched the highest engagements (1,249 engagements) was about beauty queen Beatrice Luigi Gomez’s opinion on it, while actual stories about the progress of the SOGIE Bill had fewer than 400 engagements. Even stories about local government units’ pro-LGBTI ordinances fetched only typically had 100 engagements or fewer, with one story about an anti-harassment ordinance in Malabon being the exception (1108 engagements.) These indicate that while there may be stories about these legislative efforts, these stories typically don’t spread far enough to become part of the mainstream narrative.

This limited lens on LGBTI narratives prevents more online Filipinos from being more familiar with other aspects of the LGBTI experience, such as the challenges they face in school, the workplace, or their communities, as well as how they actively contribute to society. These narratives are only represented by the few human interest stories such as a GMA Balitambayan story about a gay construction worker who shows up to work wearing make-up, or a trans woman defying discrimination in competitive surfing. However, such representations are more the exception rather than the rule. Additionally, more urgent issues on LGBTI inclusion are left out of the discourse, such as income disparities and poverty levels of LGBTI people, disparities in health access and outcomes, or how educational systems are meeting the needs of LGBTI people.
Many mainstream media stories mentioning LGBTI people (15%) were announcements of celebrities coming out, or are blind item stories about actors who may be secretly gay or who have engaged in homosexual activity.

Stories about celebrities coming out or beingouted tend to have the highest engagements, with four out of the top twenty highest engagement LGBTI stories being about outing. Apart from being among the most engaging posts overall, stories about outings performed slightly higher than average in terms of engagement.

These findings may indicate to those outside the LGBTI advocacy community that majority of the LGBTI experience is about coming out or being closeted, which limits the narrative possibilities about the lives of prominent LGBTI people in the country.

Examples of story headlines about celebrities coming out or being ousted:

- Raymond Gutierrez says he never denied his true identity (gmanetwork.com)
- Raymond galit na galit noon sa sarili; natakot umaming beki: You never knew my story and my struggles... (inquirer.net)
- American singer-actor David Archuleta proud na ibinandera ang pagiging member ng LGBTQ (inquirer.net)
- Sheryn Regis on coming out as lesbian to ex-partner, daughter: 'I'm living a lie' (inquirer.net)
- BL actor na mahilig mag-post ng mamahaling gamit sa socmed, dyowa ng mayamang beki (inquirer.net)
- Cristy Fermin, umalma sa mga tsismis na beki si Tom Rodriguez at nahuli ni Carla Abellana (kami.com.ph)
- Popular male actor na sanay sa beki, hirap maglabas ng datung! (philstar.com)
Both media and audiences lack clarity on the different nuances between sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity.

There appears to be a lack of clarity and consistency in how both the media and online Filipino audiences distinguish between sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity (SOGIE). Media and online Filipinos seem to use these terms interchangeably, which may not describe an LGBTI person's identity accurately. Worse, it may lead to undue conflation of distinct identities and orientations—and, worst, to the denial that such identities exist. For example, in stories about singer Sheryn Regis' coming out, many comments compare her to trans man singer Jake Zyrus while deadnaming him. In Regis' coming out statement, it appears that she identifies as a cisgender lesbian woman, while Jake Zyrus is a straight trans man. Knowledge of SOGIE tells us that these two orientations and genders are not the same or interchangeable.

Additionally, in many cases where a subject's orientation or gender is unclear, they would be called simply “miyembro ng LGBTQ community (member of the LGBTQ community),” which may technically be correct but lacks the proper context and nuance.

A striking example of this is GMA Balitambayan's story about marriage between two trans people. It ran a story with the headline “Pagmamahalan ng LGBTQ couple, sinelyuhan ng kasal” (“Love between an LGBTQ couple, sealed with a wedding”). Although the headline appears to be inclusive since it includes many identities, it is unclear which of these identities are relevant to the couple. The story first describes the couple as “isang lesbian at isang gay” (“one lesbian and one gay”), but later in the story when their identities are explained further, the author appears to be describing trans identities:

Si RB o Rose Bella ay babae nang isilang pero naging pusong lalaki nang siya ay lumaki. Lalaki naman nang ipanganak si Jake o Jacky, pero may pusong babae. (RB or Rose Bella was born a girl, but had the heart of a man as they were growing up. Jake or Jacky was born a boy, but has the heart of a woman.)
The comments demonstrate a similar attitude, where some people approve of the marriage because they believe the couple is still a cisgender man and a cisgender woman ("babae at lalaki pa rin"), while denying their trans identities. There are also many references to the couple’s ability to have children as a criteria that validates their marriage ("pwede ‘yan kasi magkakaanak sila"). Still, these people usually imply or explicitly state that they would not approve of same-sex marriage. A few users still explicitly invoke religious doctrine in rejecting this marriage, seemingly assuming that it was a same-sex marriage, even though this particular wedding is between a man and a woman.

All in all, these reactions show the different shades of aggression online Filipinos can show to the trans community—some online Filipinos approved of this marriage because it was between “babae and lalaki pa rin;” other people will reject this marriage because it looked like a same-sex marriage. In all cases, the homophobic rejection of same-sex marriage and the transphobic rejection of non-cis identities uphold their sentiments. But had the media coverage been clearer, it would have been a good opportunity to provide additional visibility and recognition of trans partnerships and identities.

Example comments from “Pagmamahalan ng LGBTQ couple, sinelyuhan ng kasal” (GMA Balitambayan):

- Ok yan babae parin at lalake kaysa pareho ang kasarian. Congrats sa inyong dalawa pagpalain kau sa ating poong may kapal
- the important is they are not the same gender! lalaki at babae parin.It is not against the law of Philippines and most of all the law of God
- Good partners magkakaanak pa din sila
- Baliktad yan..ung lalaki na ang manganganak kc cya ang may kuan😂😂😂😂 tapos ung babae nman ang bibira kc cya nman ang may talim✌️✌️✌️
- Puede ba yan dito sa Pilipinas?
- Mas ok Yan,opposite gender prin yan. kesa Yung PAREHAS Ang gender pilitin nio ipaglaban na ipakasal.
- Impiero ang parusa nang inyong mga kaluluwa sa salita nang Dios yan lalaki sa lalaki ay mag Asawa
Hate crimes against LGBTI people elicit responses of empathy and inclusion— but calls to action emphasize harsh punishment for the criminal and no SOGIE-related interventions.

There are cases when inclusive messages are predominant in the comments of a news story, such as in mainstream media reports where LGBTI people are physically harmed because of their SOGIE. In these comments sections, people are typically expressing anger towards perpetrators or sympathizing with the victims.
In a story where a trans woman was found brutally stabbed to death in Tawi-tawi, the comments expressed condolences to the victim, people being appalled by the violence of the crime, or people calling for justice or harsher punishments against violent crime. Notably, the comments only had few instances of misgendering.

Fig. 9 Comment Slant distribution

Comments on this violent hate crime were usually sympathetic to the victim, called for justice or vengeance against the perpetrators, and avoided misgendering.

Example comments from “Transgender woman found stabbed to death in Tawi-tawi” (GMA News):

Dami na patay kapwa nila. hindi nabigyan hustisya asan na ba ang hustisya dito?

Justice for this young lady

Kahit ano pa man ang kasarian ng isang tao, dapat i-respeto niyo pa din sila kasi tao po din naman sila, tsaka tingin niyo nabigyan kayo ng pwes mo ng pwesto sa langit o nagung bawal na tao? Para may hustisya.

Criminal Human Rights (CHR) pasokkkkk....
However, even for comments that were sympathetic to the trans victim in Tawi-tawi, online Filipinos mostly called for extreme punitive solutions such as death penalty or martial law—attitudes that are not consistent with human rights, even if they are sympathetic to LGBTI issues in this specific case.

Fig. 10 Word pair map of comments to “Transgender woman found stabbed to death in Tawi-tawi.

“Dapat ibalik ang death penalty” was the strongest message in the comments section of this story. This is typical of what we’ve seen in stories about violent crime. There are also mentions of CHR (the Commission on Human Rights) and “human rights”, but these were sarcastic and critical of the organization, with the audience implying they are not able to bring justice to victims of crimes like these.
Similar trends were seen in the story announcing that the suspects for the rape-slay of a trans man in Quezon City have been arrested. The most common reaction was “Sad” (195 reactions), followed by “Angry” (97 reactions), and comments again talked about justice and death penalty:

Example comments from “3 suspects arrested in rape-slay of transgender man in QC” (GMA News):

Buti nga nahuli na iyung pumatay sa wakas makakamit na niya ang hustisya😁😔

Dapat bitay ang parusa death penalty

Put your beliefs and negative thoughts about him aside, he is still a human who deserves justice and to be respected by being referred to his pronouns. It’s basic human decency to refer to someone as he, her, or they, depending on what they want to be referred as.

it’s not who about the victim or the suspects....but it is about the justice... karapatan nang biktima na mabigyan siya nang hustisya sa nangyari sa kanya, weather transgender man yan, or what so called tomboy... at obligasyon at responsibilidad na pagbayaran nang mga suspects ginawa nila kun sila ay mapapatunayang nagkasala... kasehodang bitay ang ipataw sa kanila.

Gawarang ng death penalty if proven guilty.]

Comments for hate crimes tend to be less sympathetic in cases where it’s believed that the victim elicited a violent reaction themselves, such as in the case of a gay man who was murdered by a construction worker he had inappropriately touched. While many users felt that the perpetrator’s actions were extreme, comments were more mixed because there was a lot of victim blaming, containing phrases such as “bakit kasi hinipuan” (why did he even touch him) or “ilugar ang kabaklaan” (there’s a time and place for being gay).
Male-presenting online Filipinos tend to leave more exclusionary comments than other genders do.

Male-presenting online Filipinos left more comments that are negative towards LGBTI people or exclusionary of their rights twice more than female-presenting online Filipinos did. For inclusive comments, there was no statistically significant difference between the rate male and female online Filipinos commented—meaning their attitude of inclusion cannot be attributed to their gender.

There are rare exceptions to this, however, especially in stories where trans women are calling for representation in spaces that are traditionally dominated by cisgender women. For example, in a story about Ms. Earth Philippines candidates stating they’re not in favor of trans women joining pageants, 53% of exclusionary comments were from female-presenting users while 32% were from male-presenting ones.¹⁸

¹⁸ The rest of the commenters either had no gender information on their profile (12%), or were not cisgender (3%).
There is a lack of strong, inclusive pro-LGBTI messages in Facebook comments sections.

While there are inclusive and supportive messages in the Facebook comments sections, there is a lack of strong, proactive messages that push for the acceptance of LGBTI rights. Often, positive or inclusive messages are limited to congratulating individuals for coming/being out or getting married, expressing sympathy for victims of hate crimes against LGBTI, or thanking LGBTI public figures for being an inspiration to others. These messages still tend to be individualistic and rarely address the broader, systemic issues that LGBTI people face or the solutions to these issues.

At times, however, pro-LGBTI commenters also call out those who are anti-LGBTI, often by appealing to their sense of respect and telling them not to judge. Still, these instances are few. There needs to be more encouraging appeals by LGBTI allies to treat LGBTI persons with respect and to allow them the same rights and opportunities as cisgender straight people.
Application to advocacy strategies

Given this landscape of prominent messages about and attitudes towards SOGIE and LGBTI issues, Syn & Strat identified opportunities that may be strategic in pushing for LGBTI inclusion and anti-discrimination advocacy and building a broader base of support.

While these recommendations focus on communication strategies, they can also be adopted across many fields and disciplines, as the fight for broader and more meaningful inclusion will necessitate the best effort of all advocates.
Create more meaningful stories about LGBTI issues about health, education, and economic well-being.

Given that issues of health, education, and economic well-being are among the most urgent for LGBTI inclusion, according to the UNDP, LGBTI advocates are encouraged to create and distribute more stories about these issues since they appear to be underrepresented in media coverage. Even the few stories about these issues tend to be about policy and efforts from other countries, or in the case of economic well-being, press releases and stories from local companies about their efforts in hiring and cultivating their LGBTI staff. Creating more stories about the Philippine context can highlight issues and solutions that are specific to the community so the general audience can understand these issues with an LGBTI lens and hopefully understand why they should be a protected class.
Highlight personal stories that show the common struggles of LGBTI people in the workplace, school, or community.

With Filipino Facebook users showing more empathy towards LGBTI individuals who are victims of crime, one possible entry point is to talk about LGBTI struggles through human interest stories about individuals. However, these stories should go beyond struggles of personal security and violence. They may include stories about the personal economic consequences of facing discrimination at work, the bullying faced by LGBTI children in school, or the lack of widespread understanding of LGBTI reproductive health by medical professionals. Examples of stories like these include the story written by a father about raising his trans daughter or this listicle of successful LGBTI esports players.

By giving the audience a deeper look at the problems LGBTI people face in their everyday lives, we’ll be creating entry points for empathy. The discourse also moves away from merely recognizing and respecting the identities of LGBTI people and shows the multifaceted nature of the issues they face.

These stories should also end on a hopeful note, giving some pointers for the path forward about how individuals or our society can help LGBTI people win against these struggles.
Additionally, people need to know about LGBTI persons and organizations contributing to their communities and the nation. The lack of these stories in mainstream and alternative media make it seem that the LGBTI sector’s contribution to society is mostly through entertainment or pageantry which still tend to attract negative social media engagements. Filipinos have a sense of “ambag” (“contribution”), judging one’s value through how much they contribute to society at large. These contributions may be through the workplace, or through projects that they decide to take on.

One example is the Inquirer story about an LGBTQ organization in Quezon conducting a mangrove planting project. This story wasn’t widely shared, but it was still the story about an LGBTI advocacy organization’s project that generated the highest engagements. We need more stories like this to show the vast and varied contributions of LGBTI individuals and groups.
Distribute LGBTI stories with coordination and intentionality.

Judging by which media stories about LGBTI issues “naturally” go viral for Filipinos on Facebook, the average user will be limited to seeing stories about showbiz personalities, pageants, same-sex marriage, and violent crimes. If we are to tell more varied stories about LGBTI issues, we also need to actively engage with and share these stories so that they may reach audiences outside LGBTI advocacy groups.

This means sharing these stories on our social media feeds, sharing them in Facebook groups where they are likely to be seen by non-LGBTI people, as well as sharing them or talking about them across different platforms.
Participate in comments sections with proactive messages of inclusion and acceptance.

Given that we found a lack of strong, inclusive pro-LGBTI voices in mainstream media comments sections, LGBTI advocates can be intentional about leaving pro-LGBTI comments in these spaces. These comments should be specific and meaningful. It’s not enough to congratulate a queer couple for their marriage or an out trans person for their courage, we should also state why these people being free to live their lives is important to society at large. To increase the readability of these comments, the language should be colloquial, the voice approachable, and messages straightforward.

By using public neutral spaces such as media comment sections to spread inclusive messages, these messages will be seen by more people who may not encounter these ideas in their everyday lives.
Create guides for the media about how to discuss sensitive LGBTI topics and how to use essentially terminology.

Both mainstream and alternative media, as well as their audiences, appear to be confused about the differences between sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity. There also seems to be confusion about when to use the terms lesbian, gay, or transgender.

Apart from inconsistencies and vagueness around the use of these terms, there also needs to be “best practices” that are encouraged when covering LGBTI issues. For example, mainstream media should be mindful of how LGBTI individuals describe themselves and to use those words in their reporting. In a Bandera article about Vice Ganda explaining her non-binary gender identity, the reporter pulled many exact quotes from Vice Ganda, and emphasized that Vice Ganda’s experience does not speak for the experiences of other LGBTI+ people. In stories that aren’t fully inclusive in their coverage, some trans or gender non-conforming people are either misgendered, or are described as born as one gender but believe they are another.

By having terminology and coverage guides that are easy to refer to, more media practitioners can make their coverage of LGBTI issues more inclusive.


References


Appendix A: Methodology

We looked for web mentions (articles, blog posts, and other web pages) for mentions of terms relevant to LGBTI people and issues in the Philippines. Of those web mentions, we studied the ones with more than 100 social media engagements and classified them according to different inclusion dimensions as defined by the UNDP LGBTI Inclusion Index, such as: political and civic participation, economic well-being, personal security and violence, health, and education. We also added “visibility” as a category because upon analysis, it was the most common approach to covering LGBTI issues in the country.

We then gathered and analyzed Facebook engagement data on these web mentions, including Facebook reactions, shares, and comments. For the comments, we conducted random sampling on the comments and performed sentiment and discourse analysis on the sampled comments themselves, as well as demographic analysis of the users making these comments.
## Appendix B: Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>Encompassing members or nonmembers of the LGBTI+ community, allies are people who actively support LGBTI+ people, committed towards social justice and gender equality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>Asexuality refers to a partial or complete lack of sexual interest or attraction towards other people. Asexuality occurs in a spectrum, manifesting in partial, total, or conditional sexual attraction. This is not to be confused with aromanticism; asexual people can still pursue romantic relationships with other people. Often called “ace” for short.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to both men and women or to more than one particular gender. Often shortened to “bi.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cisgender</td>
<td>A term for someone whose gender identity and expression generally aligns with their biological sex assigned at birth. In other words, someone who does not identify themselves as transgender.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closeted</td>
<td>A slang term for someone who has chosen not to publicly share their sexual orientation or gender identity, continuing to live in an outwardly heterosexual, cisgender life. Comes from the idiom “in the closet.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming out</td>
<td>The individual process of coming to terms with one’s own sexual orientation or gender identity and voluntarily disclosing it to other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadnaming</td>
<td>A deadname is a trans person’s given name at birth that they no longer wish to use after transitioning; deadnaming is the act of using a trans person’s deadname rather than their preferred name. Although deadnaming someone can be accidental, intentional deadnaming can be taken as a deliberate attempt to undermine and invalidate someone’s gender identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>Denial someone access to or to bar or limit someone’s rights and privileges. In this report, comments tagged as “Exclusion” are online sentiments that reject the rights and privileges of LGBTI+ people and/or confine them inside unflattering stereotypes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Often refers to a man who is romantically or sexually attracted to other men. However, it could also be used as a catch-all term for all people, regardless of gender, who are primarily attracted to people of the same gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>A socially constructed system used to classify men, women, and other identities in relation to broad, socially agreed-upon norms, conventions, and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender expression</strong></td>
<td>Refers to how one expresses their gender identity externally, either through clothing, speech, mannerisms, behavior, etc. A person's gender expression may or may not conform to typical norms and stereotypes of masculinity/femininity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender identity</strong></td>
<td>Refers to how a person perceives themselves and what they wish to call themselves as. Gender identity can be aligned or unaligned with a person's assigned sex at birth - as male, female, blends of either, or neither at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender non-conforming</strong></td>
<td>A person who does not follow or subscribe to socially accepted gender expressions, roles, norms, and conventions that are expected of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hate crime</strong></td>
<td>A crime, typically involving violence, primarily rooted and motivated from a person's prejudice towards a certain race, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heterosexual</strong></td>
<td>Also known as a ‘straight’ person; someone who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of a different sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homophobia</strong></td>
<td>Fear of, hatred of, or discomfort with people who are romantically and sexually attracted to people of the same sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homosexual</strong></td>
<td>Someone who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of the same sex. However, it has fallen in use, being an outdated term used to previously pathologize gay and lesbian people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>To provide equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. In this report, comments tagged as “Inclusion” are online sentiments that are accepting of LGBTI+ people and their rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intersex</strong></td>
<td>A general term for people born with medical conditions where a person’s chromosomes, genitalia, and/or secondary sexual characteristics do not align with social conventions of a male/female body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesbian</strong></td>
<td>A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LGBTI+</strong></td>
<td>An acronym which stands for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex” with a “+” sign, recognizing the many other sexual orientations and gender identities people identify themselves as. Many versions of this acronym exist, such as LGBTQIA+ to underscore queer and asexual people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marriage equality</strong></td>
<td>Socio-political status where same-sex marriages and opposite-sex marriages are recognized equally by national law, according both with the same rights, responsibilities, and privileges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Misgender</strong></td>
<td>This refers to the act of incorrectly assuming and identifying someone else's gender identity. This often refers to the intentional or unintentional use of language that does not reflect the gender identity of another person, such as using incorrect pronouns and honorifics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Non-binary**
An umbrella term for people who do not identify themselves within the traditional gender dichotomy between man and woman. Non-binary people may identify themselves as both man and woman, somewhere in between, or somewhere beyond these two categories.

**Queer**
A term people use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations outside the status quo. Formerly used as a slur, the term ‘queer’ has been slowly reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTI+ movement.

**Reactions**
A form of online engagement on social media platforms, usually indicated by an emoticon. Examples of reactions include Facebook’s Like, Love, Care, Wow, Sad, and Angry.

**Sex**
A biological and medical constructed category, often assigned based on the appearance of one’s genitalia, either through ultrasound or birth. Terms to describe sex include male, female, and intersex.

**Sexual orientation**
An enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. It is important to note that a person’s sexual orientation is independent from their gender identity.

**Social listening**
Also known as social media listening, social listening is the process of monitoring online conversations from various social media platforms in relation to a particular topic, brand, or industry. This involves identifying ‘what’ is being said about a particular topic and assessing ‘why’ it is being said.

**Social media intelligence**
A broad array of methodologies and tools individuals/organizations develop, which involves monitoring and analyzing conversations, trends, and human behavior on social media, with the goal of coming up with more informed business decisions.

**SOGIE**
An acronym that stands for “sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.” SOGIE is not limited to people within the LGBTI+ community; every person has a sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

**Top surgery**
A general term for medical operations altering the physical appearance of one’s chest to match one’s gender identity. This usually refers to transgender men and non-binary people who undergo through surgery to have most of their breast tissue removed in order to achieve a more conventionally masculine appearance.

**Transgender**
Often shortened to “trans,” this is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression does not match with their assigned physical sex. Referring to anyone whose behavior or identity falls outside of stereotypical expectations for their gender, transgender people may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc.
**Transitioning**
A series of processes that some transgender people undergo through to live more fully as their true gender. Transitioning typically includes: social transition (changing name and pronouns), medical transition (hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgery), and legal transition (changing their legal name and sex on official documents). It is important to note that not all transgender people go through transitioning and if they do, may choose to go through all or only some of these processes.

**Transphobia**
Fear of, hatred of, or discomfort with people who identify and/or present as transgender or as gender non-conforming.

**UNDP**
United Nations Development Programme, the United Nation's global development network, linking the initiatives, expertise, and resources of various individual countries towards the reduction of social inequities and promotion of sustainable development.