

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. 1 Background of the Research

The concept of heteronormativity delineates not just a standard sexual behavior but also a typical lifestyle (Jackson, S. 2006). The concept of norms usually relates to the meanings, values, beliefs, or taken-for-granted assumptions that influence human behavior. Therefore, we can consider the assumptions that support specific institutions and practices as normative. Additionally, because norms are typically seen as ingrained in everyday activities, in the way things are usually done, it is also possible to view practices as being influenced by norms in a heteronormative way. Norms can thus be seen as operating within various social dimensions. However, asserting that a phenomenon like heterosexuality or gender is normative does not fully analyze it and may be excessively deterministic (Jackson, S. 2006). During the 1950s and 1960s, "norms" were an essential part of sociology's language of explanation, seen as the cohesive force that held the social structure intact.

Heteronormativity encompasses a set of norms dictating the behavior, functioning, and construction of meaning in society as it pertains to sexual and gender identities. According to Chambers (2009), heteronormativity is a social and political force that establishes and upholds the social, political, and cultural realms through norms. This concept influences ideas, beliefs, institutions, laws, and everyday practices. Its impact is most apparent in matters of sexuality, and

according to Avila-Saavedra (2009), it also perpetuates the existing social order in terms of gender, class, and race. In addition, Herz and Johansson (2015) suggest that the idea of heteronormativity can be approached from two perspectives. The first approach involves examining how sexual behaviors are situated within social contexts and whether they adhere to or deviate from the conventional male-female gender and sex categories. The second approach involves considering how heteronormativity encompasses broader aspects of life, such as marital relationships and raising children (Ward and Schneider, 2009, as cited in Herz & Johansson, 2015).

Heterosexuality continues to be socially accepted despite recent shifts in the theoretical understanding and representation of sexuality (Johnson, P. 2007). The term 'heterosexuality' first showed up in the last part of the 1800s, with a few understandings. For instance, James G. Kiernan involved the term 'hetero' in 1892 to suggest something besides ordinariness (Katz, 2007), and the term 'hetero' was utilized to flag a person's differing 'affections' for the two genders (what we might call sexual openness today). This tendency was viewed as a corruption and connected to a mental sickness known as 'psychical hermaphroditism' (Katz, 2007). In his book *Psychopathia sexualis* (1886), the well-known sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing used the term "heterosexuality" in a very different way. As far as he

might be concerned, heterosexuality addressed a procreative, sex-separated, and erotic 'sexual impulse' that, albeit not continuously focusing on reproduction, was instinctually pushed by it. In this specific circumstance, heterosexuality was characterized as sex with the 'other gender', as well as 'ordinary' sex associated with fetishism and non-procreative depravity (Katz, 2007).

However, society also experiences many deviations in terms of sexual orientation. The story of the prophet Lut tells us that Allah told this new prophet to go to the city of Sodom. Sodom was a bustling city that was frequented by travelers, businesspeople, and merchants for trade. However, the city with the highest rate of criminal activity at the time, Sodom, was also the most corrupt. Explorers passing Sodom were frequently waylaid and denied their possessions, and at times they were brutally killed. However, the most infamous demonstration of underhanded that was committed by this bad country was homosexuality. The people of Lut introduced homosexuality to the world; before Sodom, no one in human history had ever experienced or practiced homosexuality. This despicable practice was the standard in this country, and the whole populace participated in it. They were extremely proud of their actions, discussed them openly, and openly engaged in these immoral acts (Explorer Quran, 2022).

Besides practicing sodomy against men, the Sodomites also had wives. This shows that the Sodomites were heterosexual people because they had wives, and homosexuals at the same time because of their inclination towards men. In other words, the Sodomites had two sexual orientations: heterosexual and homosexual. Since homosexuality is still "bent" from that which is "straight," it appears as a deviation from the norm. Homosexuality is still "other" than heterosexuality. What's more, social changes have not fundamentally modified the conviction that heterosexuality is 'normal' (Johnson, P. 2007).

The phenomenon of homosexuality occurs on almost all continents, During the Spanish colonial period, the status and acceptance of homosexuals underwent significant changes compared to the pre-colonial era. Over 300 years, as the societal roles of women deteriorated, homosexuals faced increased ridicule and scorn, viewed as contravening Catholic teachings. Despite this decline from their esteemed status in precolonial times, Garcia (2004) underscores that the impact of homosexuality during the Spanish era continues to resonate today. The subsequent American colonization brought heightened awareness among Filipinos regarding concepts such as gay marriage and homosexuality in general. Through colonial influence, Americans introduced psychosexual frameworks that have since become deeply embedded within Filipino culture (Manalastas, 1996).

In 1993, following extensive study, debate, and political contention, Congress passed and President Clinton signed legislation that established a revised policy regarding homosexuality in the United States military. This legislation represented a compromise on how the military would handle members who engage in homosexual conduct. This compromise, commonly regarded as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT)," stipulated that the presence of individuals with a tendency or intention to be homosexual acts was deemed detrimental to the military's high morale, discipline, and unit cohesion standards readiness. Service members were forbidden from openly discussing their sexual orientation or being questioned about it under DADT (Feder, J. 2013). However, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Repeal Act of 2010 was signed into law by President Obama on December 22, 2010. This legislative measure was consistent with public sentiment at the time, as evidenced by a Gallup poll conducted in December 2010 that found 67% of respondents supported openly gay or lesbian military personnel. (Bailey, M. B., Lee, K., & Williams, L. R. 2013). DADT is also in line with the culture of silence in the Philippines, where Filipinos refrain from openly talking about homosexuality, despite how it is portrayed in the mainstream media (De Leon, J. A., & Jintalan, J. 2018).

As a symbol of the nation's inability to reproduce itself, homosexuality is depicted as sterility. By employing a narrative approach, it is possible to conclude that restricting the freedom of speech of sexual minorities is not matter of

violating their rights but rather of ensuring the nation's survival. Feminist research (Yuval-Davis 2011; Mosse 1997) shows that women's and men's bodies are frequently incorporated into national projects, given symbolic status as "border guards" or special responsibilities to reproduce (for women) or defend the nation (for men). According to Lemke (2011), biopolitical scholars have investigated how sexualized and gendered bodies are mobilized in the governing of life itself, making the regulation of women's and men's bodies a matter of life or death. Countries consequently rest upon a hetero lattice as per which the fate of the country is conveyed in the bellies of ladies, impregnated areas of strength for by rich men. Lesbians, gays, and transgender people are left out of such projects of belonging.

This resulted in both international and interpersonal conflicts as well as massive pro- and anti-homosexuality demonstrations over several decades in Europe. The demand for more all-encompassing policies was prompted by the shifting political structure of Europe, which now favors closer cooperation. While homosexuals enjoy the same civil rights as heterosexuals in most Western European nations, there is strong political and sociocultural opposition to gay and lesbian rights in several Central and Eastern European nations (such as Lithuania, Poland, and Romania) (Stulhofer & Rimac, 2009). The phenomenon does not only occur in European countries, but almost all over the world, and the Asian continent is no exception.

Courts in Asia have been instrumental in advancing LGBT rights. For instance, Taiwan's highest court ruled in 2017 that it violated the Constitution to authorize same-sex couples from getting married (J.Y. Interpretation, 2017). This decision led Taiwan to become the first nation in Asia to officially recognize same-sex marriage in 2019 (Kuo, 2019). Meanwhile, in India, the Supreme Court's 2014 ruling in National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India recognized transgender persons' right to self-determine their gender identity and mandated government support through affirmative action programs. These court decisions not only marked significant progress for LGBT rights in Asia but also set important precedents globally (Lau, H. 2020). Although LGBT rights advocates have celebrated court victories in some parts of Asia, litigation aimed at advancing LGBT rights has faced setbacks in other regions. LGBT subordination has been bolstered in some Asian regions. This is evident in countries like the Philippines, as will be further examined in this study (Lau, H. 2020).

The Philippines has seen successful legal challenges concerning LGBT rights, although it has not been at the forefront of these changes. The Philippines Elections Commission was found to have violated rights to freedom of expression, association, and equality by the Supreme Court of the Philippines in 2010 when it refused to accredit Ang Ladlad (Out of the Closet), a political party comprising openly LGBT individuals. The court determined that the denial failed

to meet even the minimal standard of "rational basis" review, which typically defers to legislative judgment (*Ang Ladlad LGBT Party v. Commission on Elections*, 2010). The court did not address whether discrimination based on sexual orientation could warrant more stringent judicial scrutiny, akin to scrutiny applied to discrimination based on race or sex (Zaugg 2019).

By dismissing a case regarding same-sex marriage on procedural grounds in 2019, the Supreme Court avoided a ruling on the constitutionality of excluding same-sex couples from marriage (Zaugg, 2019). In doing so, the Court avoided another significant issue (Zaugg, 2019). A setback for transgender rights occurred in 2007 at the Supreme Court of the Philippines. According to *Silverio v. United States*, it was determined that neither the civil code nor the principles of equity guaranteed a transwoman's right to alter her birth certificate to reflect her gender identity following surgery. 2007 (Republic of the Philippines) In this case, the court did not consider any constitutional arguments. In a subsequent case, the Supreme Court decided differently for an intersex person in 2008, affirming the right to change gender markers from female to male due to natural physiological changes ("simply letting nature take its course"). (2008, Jennifer Cagandahan) According to the UNDP & Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (2018), the court distinguished this case by noting that the intersex applicant's circumstance was distinct from that of transgender individuals who have elective surgery to transition.

The Philippines is one of the several countries that oppose homosexuality when viewed from the perspective of religion and government. Here are some facts about the Philippines, where it has been almost two decades since the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Equality (SOGIE) Bill, intended to legalize anti-discrimination, was first submitted to the Philippine political body. The debate regarding the ratification of this bill has also taken almost two decades, and there is no visible resolution. The queer community may be able to exist in this country as a tolerable population, but they are in no way protected from discrimination in the workplace, school, or everyday life. Most politicians and the public oppose their existence vehemently. One of the many nations that oppose homosexuality is the Philippines. Here are a few realities about the Philippines, where it has been very nearly twenty years since the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression Equality (SOGIE) Bill, intended to sanction hostility to segregation, was first submitted to the Philippine political body. Additionally, the debate regarding the bill's ratification has gone on for almost two decades with no apparent conclusion. The queer community may be able to live in this country as a population that can be tolerated, but they are still subject to discrimination at work, in school, and in everyday life. The public and most politicians strongly oppose their existence (Masilungan, J. M. A., & Golfo-Barcelona, M. G. 2020).

One of the most contentious issues in the ongoing struggle for equal rights and opportunities for homosexuals is same-sex marriage. Along with issues

like divorce, euthanasia, abortion, and contraception, the position of the Church and certain conservative Christian factions, which view homosexual relationships as immoral and detrimental to Filipino family values, has hampered progress toward legalizing same-sex marriage. This is in addition to the explicit provision in the Philippine Family Code that defines marriage as between a man and a woman (Lim, 2011).

Despite the LGBT community's efforts to promote equal rights, the Catholic Church has become a significant obstacle, opposing any progress towards legalizing same-sex marriage and pushing for amendments to ban it in the country explicitly. Furthermore, there has been resistance to including sex education and safer sex education in schools (Conde, 2017). The Catholic Church wields considerable influence over Filipino society, molding public perceptions of homosexuality through its teachings and religious doctrines, often depicting it as unnatural or morally wrong.

The existence of homosexuals in the Philippines is not just quietly accepting all forms of rejection from society and the government, they try to fight for their human rights. Even when their sexual orientation is against the government, they still fight for their rights as homosexuals. One of them is represented in the advertisements there that the researcher took as data for this study. The data are from two advertisements entitled "Be Proud. Be You" and "How Long Can You Keep a Secret?".

The first advertisement entitled "Be Proud. Be You," which later will be referred to as **ad 1** was published on June 19, 2021, on the Lazada Philippines e-commerce YouTube account. The second ad, "How Long Can You Keep a Secret?" that will be referred to as **ad 2**, was published on February 19, 2018, on the YouTube account of the BENCH/ fashion brand. The ads show or bring homosexuality or gayness into their delivery.

This topic is worth analyzing, because of previous research conducted by De Leon, J. A., & Jintalan, J. (2018) entitled *"Accepted or Not: Homosexuality, Media, and the Culture of Silence in the Philippine Society"*, which investigated how Filipino society seems to have a culture of silence towards issues of homosexuality on social media despite their presence in mainstream media. Due to its status as a predominantly Catholic nation with a long colonial history with the Spaniards, the Filipino people appear to be losing acceptance of homosexuality in terms of human rights like the right to marry and legally wed and the research by Barrera, K. I. (2024) entitled *"Narratives of Compulsory Heterosexuality Struggles of Filipino in the Selected Poems from tingle: Anthology of Pinay Lesbian Writing"* that explains the term "compulsory heterosexuality", coined by Adrienne Rich, describing how heterosexuality is enforced as the norm in society while other sexual identities are often marginalized or suppressed. The poems selected for the study reveal the deep impact of these prevalent social norms and touch on the psychological, financial, and even legal repercussions of challenging authority. Meanwhile, this research is different from previous

research, because it will focus on homosexual acceptance in ad 1 and ad 2.

A. 2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background research explained by the researcher, this research proposes that the main problem is based on the background research, the problem of this research is: how do the two advertisements represent the acceptance of homosexuals in the Philippines?

A. 3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the research problem, the purpose of this study is to explain the representation of acceptance of homosexuality in the Philippines through advertisements.

A. 4 Significance of the Research

In this section, the researcher will explain the theoretical and practical relevant to this research:

A. 4. 1 Theoretically

Theoretically, this research still refers to existing theories of homosexuality. In this case, researchers will refer to Michel Foucault's theory of homosexuality. This research was conducted through an advertisement. So, the researcher wants to see if Michel Foucault's theory is relevant to the socio-cultural context in Asia.

A. 4. 2 Practically

Practically, this research can be used as a source of learning for scholars about homosexual issues in society. Through this research, it is hoped that people will be able to understand and empathize.

A. 5 Limitation of the Research

Like most studies, the current research design has limitations. Two main limitations in this study can be addressed in future research. First, this study focuses on the heteronormativity present in the characters. Second, this study only discusses two advertisements that have a non-heterosexual sexual orientation. This research uses Michel Foucault's sexuality theory approach.

A. 6 Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding about the use of the terms, the researcher needs to give the suitable meaning of the key terms; some terms are defined as follows:

Heteronormativity : sex/gender/desire regulation that alters or sometimes sets the conditions for gender intelligibility's possibility and impossibility (Chambers, S. A. 2007).

Homosexual : a term used to describe or refer to a person who identifies as homosexual and is emotionally and sexually attracted to someone of the same sex (Germond & De Gruchy, 1997; Trippo, 1977).

Gay : a person who is emotionally and/or physically drawn to someone of the same gender (Annie. E, 2021).

Lesbian : identifies a woman who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to other women (Annie. E, 2021)

Transgender : a person whose generational identity and/or generational expression do not correspond to their assigned sex at birth (Annie. E, 2021).

“Be Proud. Be You” : This is a 1:36 commercial that airs on the Lazada Philippines YouTube account. Tells the story of 3 characters who have a sexual orientation direction that does not match their gender from birth (non-heterosexual).

“How Long Can You Keep a Secret?” : A perfume advertisement that has a duration of 2:14 minutes, in the advertisement tells the story of a man who has an orientation towards the same sex (gay) which airs on the BENCH/YouTube account.

A. 7 Organization of the Research Report

The researcher provides the following chapter-by-chapter explanations:

A. 7. 1 Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter of this paper consists of the background of the research, the problem of the research, the objectives of the research, the significance of the research, limitation of the research, definition of the research, and the organization of the research. The first chapter will be a guide in doing the thesis and reading the paper.

A. 7. 2 Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The first chapter of this paper consists of the background of the research, the problem of the research, objectives of the research, the significance of the research, the limitations of the research, the definition of the research, and the organization of the research. The first chapter will be a guide in doing the thesis and reading the paper.

A. 7. 3 Chapter 3: Research Methods

The third chapter discusses the research method in conducting this research. This relates to each step taken in making the analysis. Starting from selecting data, collecting data, and analyzing data. This chapter explains the research methods.

A. 7. 4 Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The fourth chapter will focus on the analysis to answer the problem formulation given in the first chapter.

A. 7. 5 Chapter 5: Conclusion and Suggestion

Chapter five will conclude and summarize the entire research.

