Navigating Boundaries of Affection: A Gendered Examination of Male and Female Students' Perceptions Towards Public Display of Affection (PDA) Inside the School Campus

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This study investigated the perceptions of male and female Grade 11 Senior High students at Biabas Trade High School regarding Public Displays of Affection (PDAs). The research focused on three main aspects: reasons for engaging in PDAs, the extent of PDAs, and potential solutions to the issue. The study also examined the significant differences in perception between male and female students concerning PDA. The findings showed that male students generally agreed with the reasons for engaging in PDA but disagreed with the extent of such displays. Female students, however, disagreed with the reasons and the extent of PDAs. Both male and female students agreed on the importance of educating students about PDA. Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference in perception between male and female students, indicating that gender plays a role in how PDAs are perceived. Additionally, the study found significant differences in perception across the three categories between male and female students. The findings suggest that educational institutions should focus on comprehensive relationship education, addressing gender differences, setting clear guidelines for PDA on campus, and fostering open dialogue to promote healthy and respectful behavior among students. These findings emphasize the need for a better understanding of gender differences in PDA perceptions and suggest the development of interventions and policies to create a respectful and inclusive school environment. The study concludes with recommendations for promoting proper behavior, implementing school policies, and organizing awareness programs to address the issue of PDAs and foster a respectful and disciplined learning environment.

Keywords
gender differences, interventions, PDA, perceptions, public displays of affection

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study
Public Display of Affection (PDA) refers to the act of expressing physical intimacy between two individuals in a public setting, extending beyond casual embraces. It encompasses a range of behaviors, from romantic gestures like kissing and hand-holding to comforting acts like hugging a friend (Johnson & Edwards, 1991). PDA serves as a means to convey love, care, comfort, and passion within a relationship. However, it evokes mixed reactions, with some finding it endearing while others perceive it as uncomfortable or inappropriate. Within a school context, students may view couples engaging in intimate behavior on school grounds as unacceptable for various reasons, including the potential annoyance or distraction it poses.

Research conducted by Carter (2012) suggests that the conservative attitudes of observers can create an intimidating environment for couples who wish to express their passion physically. Public displays of affection, such as holding hands or kissing, elicit emotional reactions from onlookers that vary from support to disgust. Ramos (2016) mentioned that empirical evidence regarding observer perceptions of different forms of PDA is scarce, and many cultures tend to criticize more intense, intimate, or overtly sexual displays of affection. Some students may find such displays insulting or inappropriate, interpreting them as overtly sexual. Consequently, PDAs have long been a contentious subject, with individuals exhibiting varying levels of acceptance or offense based on specific contexts or situations.

Despite the potential impact of physical affection on relationship quality, research on this topic remains limited. However, within our specific school context, the prevalence of PDA among students, particularly couples, has raised concerns that necessitate attention. Biabas Trade High School (BTHS) is characterized by a significant number of students engaging in affectionate behavior, prompting the researchers to conduct this study. Exploring the perceptions of male and female students at BTHS towards PDA is of great interest, aiming to understand whether they support or oppose such displays. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the perceptions of Grade 11 male and female students at Biabas Trade High School (BTHS) regarding Public Displays of Affection (PDA). By understanding the students’ attitudes, beliefs, and experiences concerning PDA within the school environment, the study can enhance awareness and address concerns about affectionate behaviors among students. The findings hold the promise of informing the school community about the impact of PDA on the learning environment and can potentially guide the development of effective strategies to promote healthy relationships and foster a respectful atmosphere within the school. Understanding students’ perceptions of Public Displays of Affection (PDA) is essential for creating a harmonious and conducive learning environment within schools. Educational institutions can address potential conflicts, discomfort, or distractions from such behaviors by comprehending how students view and react to PDAs. Additionally, students’ perceptions of PDA can impact their social interactions, emotional well-being, and overall cultural norms within the school community. Considering PDA’s potential implications and consequences, educators can develop appropriate guidelines and interventions to promote healthy relationships and maintain a focused learning environment.

Thus, the study’s main objective was to explore Grade 11 male and female students’ perceptions of Public Displays of Affection (PDA) within Biabas Trade High School. The specific goals included understanding the perceived reasons for students engaging in PDA, evaluating the extent of PDA based on various intimate gestures, and examining students’ perceptions of education about PDA prevalence. Additionally, the research aimed to identify significant differences in perceptions between male and female students and assess variations across three categories: Reasons for Engaging with PDA, The Extent of PDA, and Ways to Educate about PDA. By achieving these objectives, the study aimed to provide comprehensive insights into students’ attitudes toward PDA, informing potential interventions and policies within the school community.

Literature Review
Public Display of Affection (PDA) has been a subject of significant interest and discussion across various academic disciplines, including sociology, psychology, and cultural studies. Researchers and scholars have conducted extensive investigations to explore the complex dynamics, social implications, and perceptions surrounding PDA, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of public intimacy.

One crucial aspect examined in the literature is the influence of societal and cultural factors on attitudes toward PDA. Cultural norms, values, and beliefs play a pivotal role in shaping the acceptability of PDA in public spaces. Cross-cultural studies have revealed substantial variations in attitudes toward PDA, with some cultures displaying higher levels of tolerance and acceptance, while others view such behavior as inappropriate or offensive (Gulledge et al., 2003). These cultural variations highlight the need to consider diverse perspectives and societal norms when examining PDA within different contexts. Psychological research has explored the emotional and cognitive responses evoked by witnessing PDA. Studies have indicated that individuals’ reactions to PDA can range from positive emotions, such as joy and support, to negative emotions, such as discomfort, jealousy, or disgust (Carter, 2012). Various factors influence these responses, including personal experiences, individual values, and broader societal norms. Additionally, the perception of PDA is shaped by social comparisons and the development of relationship expectations among onlookers (Gibson, 1966). Understanding these reactions and their underlying psychological processes can provide valuable insights into the effects of PDA on individuals and the broader social context.

The impact of PDA on bystanders and observers has been a significant area of research interest. Scholars have examined how PDA shapes perceptions of relationships, influences social interactions, and contributes to forming social norms within a community. Witnessing PDA in public spaces may lead to social comparisons, where individuals gauge their relationships and intimacy levels based on observed displays of affection (Furman, 2002). These social comparisons can influence individuals’ relationship aspirations, expectations, and self-perceptions.
Moreover, PDA can also affect social dynamics, social inclusion, and social norms within a given community or social group. Furthermore, the perception of PDA is influenced by various individual and contextual factors. Gender dynamics and societal expectations have historically played a central role in shaping perceptions of PDA. Traditional gender roles and norms have often resulted in different expectations for male and female behavior regarding PDA (Vauquera, 2005). Women have frequently faced double standards and criticism for engaging in PDA, being perceived as more susceptible to judgment or scrutiny, while men may be viewed as assertive or dominant in their displays of affection. However, it is essential to note that societal attitudes toward PDA have been evolving, and there has been a growing acceptance of diverse expressions of affection and love (Stammwitz, 2021). This shift in attitudes highlights the need to consider the intersectionality of factors such as gender, culture, and sexual orientation when examining the perceptions and experiences of individuals regarding PDA.

Despite the extensive discussions and research on PDA, the school context remains a vital yet relatively understudied area. Educational institutions often implement policies and regulations regarding PDA, considering it a potential distraction or disruption to the learning environment (Ranchez, 2018). Understanding students' perceptions of PDA within the school setting is crucial for creating a conducive and respectful educational environment. Research focusing on students' experiences, attitudes, and the impact of PDA within schools can provide insights into students' social dynamics, psychological well-being, and educational outcomes.

In summary, the existing literature on PDA highlights the diverse nature of perceptions, cultural influences, and social dynamics surrounding public displays of affection. Extensive research has focused on the impact of PDA on individuals and relationships, the role of gender expectations, and the evolving societal attitudes towards PDA. However, further comprehensive investigations are needed to understand PDA better within the school context, including its implications for students' psychological well-being, social dynamics, and educational experiences. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the perception of PDA among Grade 11 male and female students at Biabas Trade High School (BHSH) in the school year 2022-2023, providing valuable insights into the complexities of PDA within educational settings and its implications for students' social and emotional well-being.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Social Norms Theory, which was developed by Sherif (1935). This theory provided a valuable lens for understanding public display of affection (PDA) in the school context. Social Norms Theory posits that the perceived social norms within a particular group or society influence individuals' behavior. It suggests that individuals are motivated to conform to these perceived norms to gain social acceptance and avoid disapproval. In the case of PDA, social norms regarding acceptable levels of affection and appropriate behavior play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes and actions. Various factors, including cultural norms, media portrayals, peer influence, and parental attitudes, influence students' perceptions of these norms. These factors shape their understanding of what is considered normal or acceptable behavior among their peers. By anchoring the study to Social Norms Theory, researchers can examine how students' perceptions of PDA norms influence their behavior and the behavior of others. It allows for an exploration of the social dynamics surrounding PDA within the school context, including factors that may have contributed to the normalization or stigmatization of PDA.

The theory also highlights the importance of understanding the misperception of norms. Students' perceptions of PDA norms may not always align with their peers' actual behaviors and attitudes. This disconnect could lead to misperceptions and potential misconceptions about what is considered normal or acceptable behavior, potentially influencing the prevalence and consequences of PDA within the school setting. By considering the influence of social norms on students' attitudes and behavior towards PDA, researchers can gain insights into the underlying factors that shape students' actions. This theoretical framework provides a foundation for examining the impact of perceived norms on PDA and how these norms could have been influenced or modified through interventions or educational programs aimed at promoting healthy relationships and respectful behavior within the school environment. Therefore, anchoring the study on Social Norms Theory offers a comprehensive understanding of the role of social norms in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors regarding PDA. It provides a theoretical lens to analyze the social dynamics surrounding PDA within the school context and offers insights into potential avenues for promoting positive social norms and healthy student relationship behaviors.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of the Study
The figure provides an overview of the data input, process, and output related to understanding students’ perceptions of PDA. It emphasizes the importance of collecting student perceptions through survey questionnaires, applying statistical treatment to analyze the data, and ultimately using the findings to generate awareness and promote understanding of PDA through a public symposium.

Statement of the Problem
The goal of this study was to conduct an in-depth exploration of the perceptions of Grade 11 male and female Senior High students at Biabas Trade High School regarding public displays of affection inside the school campus. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the perceived reasons by the respondents for those students engaging in PDA?
2. What are the respondents’ perceptions of the extent of PDA in terms of the following intimate gestures:
   a. touching;
   b. kissing;
   c. hugging;
   d. holding hands; and
   e. cuddling?
3. What are the perceptions of the respondents in terms of ways to educate the students about the prevalence of PDA?
4. Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of Grade 11 male and female students toward public displays of affection inside the school campus?
5. Is there a significant difference between the three categories (Reasons for Engaging with PDA, The Extent of PDA, and Ways to Educate about PDA) in the perception of male and female students toward public displays of affection inside the school campus?
6. What proposed program can be implemented to raise awareness of public displays of affection (PDA) inside school premises?

Methods

Research Design
This study employed a descriptive survey methodology, which entailed the objective observation and description of a subject without exerting any form of influence. The researchers selected a representative sample from the population of interest and administered a standardized questionnaire to collect data for subsequent analysis. The decision to adopt this methodology was driven by the study’s aim to gather information about existing conditions. The primary focus of this investigation centered on exploring the perceptions of male and female Grade 11 Senior High students regarding public displays of affection (PDAs) within the premises of Biabas Trade High School. Specifically, the study aimed to determine the profile of Grade 11 Senior High students in terms of sex, grade level, and academic strand. Additionally, the research considered the students’ perceptions toward PDA, encompassing their reasons for engaging in PDA, the extent to which PDA occurred, and potential strategies to address this matter. The collected data were subjected to thorough analysis and interpretation. The researchers then presented the findings of the study, discussed their implications, and proposed recommendations based on the obtained results. These recommendations were designed to address the identified perceptions and provide potential strategies for managing and effectively addressing public displays of affection among Grade 11 students at Biabas Trade High School.

Sample and Sampling Technique
The study was conducted within the premises of Biabas Trade High School, a reputable educational institution located in Purok-3, Biabas, Ubay, Bohol. Biabas Trade High School is known for its commitment to providing quality education to its students. The study took place during the academic year from 2022 to 2023, under the capable leadership of Mrs. Ma. Delilah C. Atup, who serves as the school’s current head. The selection of Biabas Trade High School as the research site was driven by its relevance and suitability for investigating the perceptions of Grade 11 male and female Senior High students toward public displays of affection (PDAs). The school’s vibrant and dynamic setting, along with its diverse student population, provided a valuable context for exploring the students’ perspectives on this matter.

The study focused on the Grade 11 Senior High students of Biabas Trade High School as the respondents. The researchers employed a random sampling technique to select participants from the population of Grade 11 students. In order to gather comprehensive insights into the students’ perceptions of public displays of affection (PDAs), a total of 30 female and 30 male students were randomly chosen from all the Grade 11 sections. The use of random sampling ensured that each Grade 11 student had an equal chance of being selected as a participant in the study. This approach helped to minimize any potential bias and ensure that the sample was representative of the larger population. By including both female and male students, the study aimed to capture a diverse range of perspectives on PDAs within the Grade 11 student body. The selection of 30 female and 30 male students allowed for a balanced representation of both genders and facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of Grade 11 students toward PDAs. Through their responses, the researchers aimed to gain valuable insights into the students’ attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives on public displays of affection within the school context.
Research Instrument

The measurement of the perception of male and female students toward public displays of affection (PDA) within the school campus was carried out using a modified Likert scale. The Likert scale, a unidimensional scaling method, was utilized to assess the degree of approval or disapproval of behaviors associated with PDA. The questionnaires comprised a total of 15 items divided into three subcategories: reasons for engaging in PDA, extent of PDA, and ways to educate students about PDA. Each subcategory consisted of five questions. To evaluate a student’s perception, the scores from all the items were aggregated. To gather specific information pertaining to the research problem, the questionnaire was administered to a sample of 60 students. The development and administration of the survey were conducted directly by the researchers, ensuring a consistent and standardized approach to data collection.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure began with the researchers constructing and sending a letter of consent to the school principal and subject teachers, seeking legal permission to conduct the study. Once the researchers obtained permission to proceed, a letter of consent was sent to the respondents, inviting them to participate in the study by answering the survey questionnaire. Before proceeding to the survey proper, a short discussion was held to ensure that the respondents had a clear understanding of the study’s goals. Subsequently, the respondents completed the survey questionnaire. The researchers diligently tallied and kept the respondents’ responses confidential to maintain privacy. Strict measures were implemented to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants’ data throughout the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The researchers conducted a data analysis to examine the perceptions of male and female students regarding the public display of affection within Biabas Trade High School. It utilized two statistical treatments: weighted mean and ANOVA with a Two-Factor design and replication. The weighted mean was employed to determine the overall perception of students. The researchers calculated a weighted mean by assigning scale values to responses and considering their frequencies. This mean was interpreted using a scale that ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Additionally, the researchers used ANOVA to investigate if there was a significant difference in perceptions between male and female students. This analysis involved comparing means and assessing statistical significance. By collecting data from multiple participants within each gender category, the researchers aimed to identify any notable variations in perceptions. Overall, the research sought to gain insights into the perceptions of male and female students regarding the public display of affection at Biabas Trade High School and determine whether significant differences existed between the two groups.

Statistical Treatment

The researchers used weighted mean to determine the perceptions of male and female students towards public display of affection inside the school campus in Biabas Trade High School. The following formula was used: Weighted Mean = \( \frac{\sum (\text{Frequency of Scale Value } x) \times x}{n} \) where: \( \sum \) = summation of frequency of scale value \( x \), \( n \) = number of cases. The computed weighted mean was interpreted using the following scale, as shown in Figure 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.25-4.00</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.50-3.24</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.75-2.49</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00-1.74</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers used ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to investigate if there was a significant difference in perceptions between male and female students. This analysis involved comparing means and assessing statistical significance. By collecting data from multiple participants within each gender category, the researchers aimed to identify any notable variations in perceptions.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers prioritize ethical standards, maintaining integrity, and protecting participants’ confidentiality. The researchers used the data responsibly to promote social exchange and understanding of PDA, avoid bias, and objectively approach the data. Participants’ anonymity and consent are respected and they are treated as respected partners. The researchers firmly commit to ethics, ensuring a collaborative and inclusive research process. The researchers assured the parents and the respondents that the safety of the respondents is the researchers’ priority and that parents’ consent will be distributed to minor respondents. The researchers assured the parents and the respondents that no harm would fall upon the respondents during the study and that this was purely voluntary.
Results and Discussion

Perception of Students Toward Public Display of Affection

Table 1 presents the perceptions of male and female students toward Public Display of Affection (PDA). For Part I, the perceived reasons for engaging in PDA, both genders agree that being in a relationship is normal and it’s part of growing up, with females strongly agreeing on this point. Both genders also agree that students engage in PDA because they lack discipline and moral values. However, male students tend to agree that couples being intimate inside the school campus is alright because some of them are doing it, and that students show their intimacy in public because it’s a trend, whereas female students disagree with these statements. This suggests a difference in the level of acceptance of PDA in school settings between genders, with males being more accepting.

Table 1
Perception of Students Toward Public Display of Affection (PDA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean (Male)</th>
<th>Description (Male)</th>
<th>Mean (Female)</th>
<th>Description (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Perceived Reasons for Engaging in PDA</td>
<td>Being in a relationship is normal and it is part of growing up.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students engage in PDA because they lack discipline and moral values.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couples being intimate inside the school campus is alright because some of them are doing it.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some students show their intimacy in public because it is a trend and everyone is doing it.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PDAs are rampant in school because students are given freedom to express their feelings even if it is not formal.</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Weighted Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Perception on The Extent of PDA in Terms of the Following Intimate Gestures</td>
<td>Couples touching each other’s body intimately.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couples kissing with each other inside the campus.</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couples hugging inside the school campus.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couples holding each other’s hands inside the school campus.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couples cuddling inside the school campus.</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Weighted Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Perception on Ways to Educate Students About PDA</td>
<td>PDA should be discussed among teenagers.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents must guide their children.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organize symposiums about relationship to raise awareness.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage them to get involved in church activities and organizations.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make them busy so that they wouldn’t have time to entertain suitors.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Weighted Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Part II, the perception of the extent of PDA in terms of intimate gestures, male students agree on touching and hugging inside the campus, but they disagree on kissing and cuddling. On the contrary, female students strongly disagree with all the intimate gestures presented, suggesting they perceive the display of these intimate gestures in public, particularly on campus, as inappropriate. For Part III, ways to educate students about PDA, both male and female students agree that the topic should be discussed among teenagers. There’s strong agreement from both genders that parents should guide their children and that there should be organized symposiums to raise awareness. Both genders also strongly agree that involvement in church activities and organizations might help, suggesting a perceived link between moral guidance from religious institutions and responsible behavior regarding PDA. There’s also an agreement on the idea of keeping students busy to prevent them from entertaining suitors. In general, the weighted means suggest that male students are more permissive towards PDA and see it as a common part of student life, while female students appear to hold more conservative views about PDA, especially regarding the public display of intimate gestures. Both genders, however, strongly agree on the importance of educating students about PDA through discussions, parental guidance, organized symposiums, and involvement in church activities.
Relationship Between the Perception of Male and Female Students Toward Public Display of Affection

Table 2 presents the main relationships concerning the perception of male and female students towards Public Display of Affection (PDA) that were statistically evaluated. Both of these relationships showed statistically significant differences, suggesting that there are considerable variances in how male and female students perceive PDA and the aspects associated with it.

Table 2
Relationship Between the Perception of Male and Female Students Toward Public Display of Affection (PDA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Computed Value</th>
<th>Tabular Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Male and Female students toward PDA</td>
<td>26.46</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Reject the Null Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Male and Female students in the three categories</td>
<td>24.80</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Reject the Null Hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first relationship examines the general perception of male and female students toward PDA. The computed value of 26.46 significantly surpasses the tabular value of 3.9, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that male and female students exhibit significantly different perspectives towards PDA in general. The disparity in perceptions may be attributed to distinct social and cultural expectations and norms tied to gender.

The second relationship is more specific, exploring the perceptions of male and female students in three key aspects related to PDA: the reasons for engaging in PDA, the extent of PDA, and ways to educate students about PDA. Again, the computed value of 24.80 is significantly higher than the tabular value of 3.05, leading to a rejection of the null hypothesis. This provides strong evidence that male and female students differ in their understanding and appraisal of these three aspects. It indicates that the students’ gender significantly influences their beliefs on the causes and appropriateness of PDA, as well as effective strategies for PDA education.

These results underscore the importance of considering gender differences when discussing and forming policies or interventions related to PDA. This could be particularly relevant for educators and policymakers in schools where PDA is a concern. Further studies may be conducted to understand the specific nuances of these differences and to develop more effective, gender-sensitive approaches for managing and educating about PDA.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of male and female Grade 11 Senior High students on Public Displays of Affection (PDAs) at Biabas Trade High School. The study focused on three categories: reasons for engaging in PDAs, the extent of PDAs, and ways to address the issue. Additionally, it examined the significant difference in the perception of male and female students toward PDA. The findings revealed that male students generally agreed with the reasons for engaging in PDA, with a weighted mean of 3.03. However, they disagreed with the extent of PDA, with a weighted mean of 2.44. Male students also agreed on the need to educate students about PDA, with a weighted mean of 3.22. On the other hand, female students disagreed with the reasons for engaging in PDA, with a weighted mean of 2.47. They strongly disagreed with the extent of PDA, with a weighted mean of 1.52. However, they strongly agreed on the importance of educating students about PDA, with a weighted mean of 3.45.

Furthermore, the analysis using ANOVA indicated a significant difference between the perception of male and female students toward PDA. The computed F-value (26.46) exceeded the tabular value (3.9), rejecting the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is a significant distinction between the perceptions of male and female students regarding PDA. Additionally, the study found a significant difference in the three categories of perception between male and female students. The computed F-value (24.80) exceeded the tabular value (3.05), rejecting the null hypothesis. This indicates that the three categories of perception receive different levels of agreement from male and female students. These findings highlight the need for further understanding and consideration of gender differences in perceptions of PDA. They have implications for developing interventions and policies that address varying viewpoints and promote a respectful and inclusive school environment regarding PDA.

Scope and Limitations

There were 60 respondents in this study. In identifying respondents, the inclusion criteria include 30 grade 11 male students and 30 grade 11 female students in Biabas Trade High School. Using random sampling ensured that each Grade 11 student had an equal chance of being selected as a participant in the study. This approach helped minimize potential bias and ensure that the sample was representative of the larger population. By including female and male students, the study aimed to capture diverse perspectives on PDAs within the Grade 11 student body.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion
The perceived reasons for engaging in PDA, as reported by the respondents, include the notion that being in a relationship is a normal part of growing up. They also agree that students engage in PDA due to a lack of discipline and moral values. However, females disagree with the idea that students engage in PDA because they are influenced by others or because it is a trend that everyone is following. They also oppose the notion that students engage in PDA simply because they have the freedom to do so. In contrast, males have agreed with all the reasons for engaging in PDA. Both male and female respondents disagreed on the extent of PDA in terms of intimate gestures such as kissing and cuddling inside the school campus. However, males agreed about couples touching, hugging, and holding hands inside the school campus, while females strongly disagreed. The respondents agreed on several methods of educating students about PDA, including encouraging parents to guide their children in relationships, organizing symposiums to raise awareness, keeping students busy to prevent them from entertaining suitors, and encouraging participation in church activities. The perceptions of male and female students toward PDA inside the school campus were not aligned with each other. Consequently, the three categories of PDA (Reasons for Engaging in PDA, The Extent of PDA, and Ways to Educate Students about PDA) received different levels of agreement from male and female students.

Recommendations
Promote Proper Behavior - It is essential for the school to emphasize the importance of appropriate behavior within the campus. Students should understand that while being in a relationship is a normal part of growing up, they need to exhibit proper behavior and avoid excessive public displays of affection. Students should serve as role models for their peers, demonstrating respect and consideration for others. Implement School Policies - To address the issue of public displays of affection, the school should establish clear policies that explicitly prohibit inappropriate behavior. These policies should outline the expectations for students regarding PDA and the consequences for violating these guidelines. This will provide a framework for maintaining a respectful and disciplined school environment. Organize Awareness Programs - Considering the prevalence of PDAs at Biabas Trade High School, it is crucial to organize symposiums and awareness programs. These initiatives can educate students about the importance of values, self-control, and appropriate conduct. By raising awareness about the impact of PDAs and fostering a sense of responsibility, students can make informed decisions and understand the consequences of their actions. These recommendations aim to promote a respectful and conducive learning environment within the school. By encouraging proper behavior, implementing school policies, and organizing awareness programs, the school can foster a culture of respect and discipline among students, while also effectively addressing the issue of public displays of affection.

IMPLICATIONS
These results suggest that male students have a different perspective on public displays of affection than female students. Therefore, there should be an emphasis on developing different intervention programs to correct this behavior, especially when it occurs inside the school campus. Researchers should collaborate with the school's policymakers, such as the school administration, to address this issue effectively.

REFERENCES


Author(s)’ Statements on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

**Ethics Statement**

The author/s hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. The author/s take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

**Originality and Plagiarism Assessment**

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Appendix A
Proposed Program for Public Display of Affection Among Students’ Awareness Symposium

Proposed Program for Public Display of Affection Among Students’ Awareness Symposium

**Objectives**
1. Raise awareness among students about the prevalence of Public Display of Affection (PDA) inside school premises.
2. Educate students about the consequences of exceeding their limitations, particularly in engaging in romantic relationships.
3. Mitigate the issue of displaying inappropriate behavior among students within the school campus.

**Evaluative Measures**
The proposed program should include regular assessments to identify any weaknesses and make necessary improvements. This will ensure the effectiveness of the program and enhance its impact.

**Schedule of Implementation**
The program will be implemented before the opening of the school year 2023-2024 to create awareness about public displays of affection among students. The specific dates and duration of the symposium will be determined based on the availability of resources and scheduling considerations.

**Program Components**

1. **Opening Session**
   a. Introduction and overview of the program
   b. Importance of addressing public displays of affection in the school setting
   c. Acknowledgment of key stakeholders and participants

2. **Keynote Speaker**
   a. Invite a speaker who is knowledgeable about relationships, values, and appropriate behavior in public settings.
   b. The speaker should provide insights, real-life examples, and practical advice related to PDAs.

3. **Interactive Workshops and Activities**
   a. Conduct interactive sessions where students can openly discuss their thoughts, experiences, and concerns about PDAs.
   b. Facilitate group activities that promote critical thinking, decision-making, and empathy towards others’ perspectives.

4. **Expert Panel Discussion**
   a. Invite a panel of experts, such as psychologists, educators, and counselors, to discuss the impact of PDAs on personal development, relationships, and school environment.
   b. Encourage students to ask questions and seek guidance from the panelists.

5. **Information Dissemination**
   a. Provide informational materials, such as brochures, posters, and infographics, highlighting appropriate behavior and the consequences of excessive PDAs.
   b. Ensure that the information is accessible to all students, including those who may have limited access to resources.

6. **Closing Session**
   a. Recapitulate key learnings and insights from the symposium.
   b. Encourage students to reflect on their personal behavior and commit to fostering a respectful and inclusive school environment.
   c. Express gratitude to participants, speakers, and organizers for their contributions.

7. **Follow-up and Evaluation**
   a. Conduct follow-up sessions or surveys to assess the impact of the symposium on students’ perceptions and behaviors regarding PDAs.
   b. Gather feedback from students, teachers, and parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and identify areas for improvement.

The school aims to create a culture of respect, appropriate behavior, and sensitivity among students by implementing this proposed program. It provides a platform for students to learn, discuss, and reflect on the issue of PDAs, fostering a healthy and conducive learning environment for all.