

Out of the Closet: Narratives of Filipino Parents with Openly Self-identified LGBTQIA+ Youth

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the responses of Filipino parents toward their openly self-identified LGBTQIA+ youth in the modern context. At the current time, there has been an increasing acceptance of Filipino LGBTQIA+ individuals. As there has been a shift in literature towards understanding the protective factors of LGBTQIA+ youth health, family support, using response and behavior, is essentially the paramount factor in formatively influencing and promoting LGBTQIA+ well-being. Incorporating evidence from reviews of related literature and data collected, the study demonstrates how the family can be strengthened as a primary support system for LGBTQIA+ youth. It delves into the situations of Filipino families with LGBTQIA+ children and understands the different processes and factors involved in parental response and parent-child relationship conditions after identity disclosure. It has been found that Filipino families were generally accepting of their LGBTQIA+ children. Common factors affecting parental response include personal beliefs that stem from religious, cultural, and familial values. Parents know the importance of supporting and fulfilling their parental roles for their children.

Keywords: *LGBTQIA+, identity disclosure, parental behavior, parental response, parenting styles, parent-child relation*

INTRODUCTION

Similar to other countries in Asia, the LGBTQIA+ community in the Philippines has remained a sexual minority, experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. As the Philippines boasts of being the only predominantly Christian nation in Asia, with more than ninety-two percent (92%) of the general population being Roman Catholic (Bonifacio, 2018), it has grown to perpetuate ideal Christian constructs which also include a heteronormative social system thriving on the binary approaches to sex, gender, and sexuality. Societal heteronormativity and subscription to the male-female dichotomy have cultivated deprecation towards the lives of sexual minorities or LGBTQIA+ individuals, undermining the fact that they are also human beings with rights and needs of their own. Gender-based stereotypes and discrimination are manifested in various contexts (Garcia et al., 2022).

Despite the current strides of governing institutions to advance the state of non-discrimination mechanisms and equality among LGBTQIA+ in the country, little progress has been made. In the country, it is said that there is a considerable lack of local and national anti-discrimination laws protecting the rights of LGBTQIA+ Filipinos (Reyes et al., 2019). In the current time, LGBTQIA+ are continuously being deprived of their political, economic, cultural, and human rights in various ways. This includes the denial of access to public services, refusal of admission or expulsion from educational institutions, discriminatory treatment in workplaces, and accounts of violence or harassment (Reyes et al., 2019), especially at a time when there is limited literature on its constructs at a personal context (Guerrero, 2023). Disparities exist in all areas of their lives, from the denial of fundamental rights to employment, housing, and education to the inaccessibility of essential health and safety services. Considering the current societal landscape of the Philippines regarding LGBTQIA+, they, especially the non-conforming youth, can indeed possess an increased risk of poor mental and physical health as well as victimization across developmental stages compared to heterosexual or cisgender individuals (Katz-Wise et al., 2016).

To address this, UNDP, together with USAID (2014), proposed specific vital areas wherein the welfare of LGBTQIA+ needs to be upheld, particularly family affairs, health, education, employment, religion, community, media, and politics. The family, which is the primary focus of this study, has long been recognized as a crucial context for the welfare and development of individuals. In examining positive health outcomes among LGBTQIA+ youth, family support was found to be a particularly important confounding variable, according to studies (Canan et al., 2022).

Although it is undeniable that there is a practical need to address the risk factors that impact the LGBTQIA+, the fields of psychology and healthcare have, over the years, imposed a call for delving deeper into the strengths that exist within the LGBTQIA+ community and viewing them from the perspective of acceptance and normativity (Dente, 2018). This has consequently prompted a distinct shift in the literature towards focusing on protective factors instead of risk factors. According to Valido et al. (2022), protective factors are the key to comprehending how to build resilience across the LGBTQIA+ lifespan. CDC (2019) indicates that some protective factors that promote positive outcomes and health in LGBTQIA+ youth include positive attitudes about safe sex, positive self-esteem, increased peer group acceptance, gay-straight alliances, and most importantly, support from parents when it comes to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Nonetheless, among the protective factors mentioned above, reaffirming parental responses may have the most formative influence on the health and well-being of LGBTQIA+ youth (Johal, 2019).

According to McCormick & Baldrige (2019), LGBTQIA+ youth in the present day are experiencing a heightened rate of acceptance and affirmation in their families compared to the previous generation. As more LGBTQIA+ youth disclose their non-conforming identities to

peers and family, higher societal acceptance is indicated. This consequently promotes the well-being of LGBTQIA+ youth, garnering fulfillment and an established sense of identity. Family rejection of their LGBTQIA+ youth, on the other hand, has been associated with several physical and psychological health risks, such as higher levels of depression, substance use, attempts of suicide, and confusion concerning identity Valido et al. (2022). Similarly, challenges to equality hinder an individual's capacity to achieve life aspirations amidst existing limits (Esguerra and Gasmen, 2022).

Family support in terms of reaffirming parental responses is observed to be quite profound, as individuals with little to no family support but with high levels of external social support were examined to have the same mental health outcomes as those without any form of support (McConnel et al., 2015). These arguments posit a considerable need for research on the importance of support garnered from one's family system, particularly in the context of families wherein LGBTQIA+ youth, in particular, are at the highest risk of experiencing adverse health outcomes such as higher rates of depression, suicidality, and substance use (Mongelli et al., 2019).

Aside from family support in terms of reaffirming parental response, this study further proposes ways in which parenting styles and behaviors can be utilized to promote LGBTQIA+ health. Mohta and Saha (2017) argue that parenting, particularly parenting styles and how it is performed, considerably affects a young individual's well-being and development, especially regarding mental and physical health and self-esteem. Parenting styles, further, have considerable potential in serving as buffers against psychological distress among LGBTQIA+ youth and productively enforce motivation for them to engage in health-promotive behaviors instead of health-impairing behaviors. Although it is evident that reaffirming parental response indeed serves as a necessary component in promoting the well-being of LGBTQIA+ youth, the actual impact of parenting styles and behaviors, which significantly and ultimately promote healthy growth and development among youth throughout their lifespan, has not yet been comprehensively articulated in the local context.

Health disparities and protective factors associated with LGBTQIA+ familial relationships have received greater focus (Valido et al., 2022); however, what remains sparse and scattered are the underlying factors in the process of parental response and coping behaviors, especially those in parents that are accepting of their LGBTQIA+ children. There is more opportunity to know how parental responses and behaviors can serve as protective factors in the lives of openly self-identified LGBTQIA+ individuals and parent-child relationships among families with out-of-the-closet LGBTQIA+ youth.

Objectives of the Study

The present determined Filipino parents' responses toward their openly self-identified LGBTQIA+ children in the modern Philippine context. It sought to utilize this information to explain better the processes and factors involved in parental response.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research approach that utilized a phenomenological research design. As the study focused on examining the lived experiences of families, specifically parents with LGBTQIA+ children, a qualitative research approach was deemed to be appropriate to gain a rich, detailed understanding of parental responses and coping behaviors employed by Filipino parents toward their out-of-the-closet LGBTQIA+ youth. Since there is also limited research regarding the knowledge of the parental responses of Filipino parents toward their out-of-the-closet LGBTQIA+ youth (Roe, 2017), the phenomenological research design has been chosen over qualitative designs.

Participants of the Study

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profiles of the participants.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of study participants

P	Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	House- hold Size
1	Carina	56	F	Married	4
2	Jocelyn	56	F	Married	3
3	Crisolda	53	F	Married	4
4	Janelyne	49	F	Widowed	5
5	Julita	57	F	Married	7
6	Emelita	62	F	Married	7
7	Marites	55	F	Widowed	5
8	Lota	58	F	Married	4
9	Sheila	47	F	Married	4
10	Rea	41	F	Married	4

To qualify for the study, the participants must meet specific criteria. The participant criteria include: 1) should be a Filipino parent, 2) should have at least one (1) child who is an openly self-identified LGBTQIA+ individual, 3) should have at least one (1) child who has "come

out" to one or both parents and 4) should be willing to discuss their experiences with their child's coming out process. The study included ten (10) Filipino parents with openly self-identified LGBTQIA+ children.

Research Instrument

The study used a semi-structured, in-depth interview guide. Using this kind of interview, the researchers pursued in-depth information around topics of interest by asking follow-up questions.

Data Gathering Procedure

The selected participants who qualified for the set criteria of this study were interviewed and encouraged to talk freely (Scanlan, 2020). In addition, the researchers and participants could delve deeply into the predetermined subjects (i.e., coming out process, parental response toward the process, coping mechanisms after the process, and perceived parenting styles effective for LGBTQIA+ youth) and refocus the subject as deemed necessary. Before the interviews were conducted, the research instrument and final interview questionnaire were prepared to guide the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, a systematic method for identifying and organizing important patterns across data obtained. Thematic analysis is deemed an acceptable and effective means of interpreting a collection of experiences, thoughts, and behaviors expressed in the collected data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Codes and themes were allowed to emerge from the data itself. Several themes have been derived from the data set corresponding to the study's research objectives. The study followed the most widely-accepted framework in conducting thematic analysis (Kiger & Varpio, 2020), involving six processes, namely: 1) familiarization with data (i.e., confirmation and review of transcripts), 2) generation of initial codes (assigning codes to data patterns without preconceptions or by inductive approach), 3) analysis of themes (i.e., analyzing patterns of codes in the data set by interpreting meanings of semantic content or latent-level analysis), 4) review of themes (i.e., reviewing themes to focus on critical aspects that relate to objectives), 5) naming and defining themes, and 6) producing the thematic analysis report. After referring to the transcripts of audio recordings, the researchers also emphasized salient features, subjects of inquiry, and participants' behaviors in the interview (Espiritu et al., 2022) to develop a much more comprehensive analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion of parental responses toward LGBTQIA+ youth entails understanding their children's coming out process or identity disclosure. During the individuals' early years, they indeed experienced compulsory heterosexuality institutionalized by cultural socialization. The characteristics expressed by LGBTQIA+ individuals entail their transition toward the self-exploration stage, which refers to their gradual experimentation with their sexual identity and preferences. Some of these characteristics also include the deepening and commitment stage, as they would possess a more significant commitment to their identified sexual orientation identity and preferences. In these stages, LGBTQIA+ individuals recognize that heterosexuality would not be the only appropriate orientation identity.

Immediate Parental Responses After Identity Disclosure

The study categorizes parental responses into immediate and gradual responses to further identify how the participants have adjusted after their children's identity disclosure and to observe whether the disclosure brought forth any significant changes in their relationships. All the study participants indicated that they accepted their LGBTQIA+ children. This implies that Filipino LGBTQIA+ youth of today are met with acceptance and affirmation more than ever. Given that most of the LGBTQIA+ youth in the study disclosed their identity to family and peers at young ages, societal acceptance is increasing (McCormick & Balridge, 2019), especially in the local context.

Supplementing this information, it was also found that the participants found it easier to accept bisexuals among other sexual identities or gender orientations (i.e., gay or lesbian). The parents would view the bisexual identity to be "a temporary phase" wherein their children would eventually break free from it. According to Nutter-Pridgen (2015) and Duffin (2016), bisexuality is often viewed as an "illegitimate" sexual orientation as it is insufficiently distinguished from a homosexual identity. Parents perceive bisexuals to have access to the heterosexual community in a means that gays or lesbians do not have. The parents indicated that bisexual individuals strongly resemble heterosexual lives, which was perceived to be less of a burden in terms of coping or adjustment. In addition, gay identity disclosures faced a higher possibility of parental hesitance or non-acceptance compared to lesbian identity disclosures. A study by Bettinsoli et al. (2020) indicated that lesbians are generally more accepted than gays around the world, as men are seen to be the likely targets of sexual prejudice. In the current time, local communities still reinforce the patriarchal status quo that celebrates and exemplifies masculinity for those who are born male (Ardivilla, 2017). Male individuals in the regional context are often expected by their parents, particularly fathers, to prove their masculinity by being heterosexual.

Full acceptance. This refers to the acceptance wherein parents fully embrace the identity of their children without objections or reservations. Some parents involved in this theme perceived their children's identities as "normal" and "blessings from God. "The parents also actively acknowledge the fact that LGBTQIA+ individuals are their children whom they should treat with unconditional acceptance. Also included in this theme is the appreciative response of the parents, wherein high regard is expressed towards their children for positive characteristics such as their remarkable neatness or orderliness. Some participants consider their sons' identities advantageous as they tend to perform some of the traditional gender roles expected of females, such as taking charge of household chores.

Several hypotheses exist about how or why disadvantaged group members rationalize the status quo by judging likely events as more desirable than unlikely events, regardless of whether the events are initially defined as attractive or unattractive (Kay et al., 2002). In addition, Haines and Jost (2000) state that members of a marginalized group are likely to rationalize the status quo by providing pseudo-explanations for power differences between groups that will 1) increase the use of stereotypes to rationalize differences and 2) lead members of disadvantaged groups to express more positive affect concerning their situation. This hypothesis stresses that system justification serves as a way for members of disadvantaged groups to cope with and feel better about their social standing. Similarly, others have demonstrated the role of perceived powerlessness as a factor underlying the system, justifying beliefs among the disadvantaged (Van der Toorn et al., 2015).

"There was no problem with me. I was fine with whatever his identity was. My child is a blessing from God whom I should accept as a parent." (Participant 1)

Delayed acceptance. This refers to the acceptance of parents who were initially reluctant or rejecting their children's identities. The parents who had a delayed acceptance of their children typically expressed anger and indifference toward their children's disclosure. This indicates that they may have appraised the disclosure to be more of a challenge to their beliefs, values, and ability to cope with the situation. However, a remarkable characteristic of this theme is that gradually, the parents have learned to accept their children after assessing that the relationship strains or consequences caused by not accepting their child are much greater than that of meeting them with acceptance. Some parents also recognize that changing their children's identities is not within their capacity and responsibility. In this theme, participants indicated that it took a while to come to terms with their children's identity disclosure (i.e., a few months to a year).

"I was angry because I could not accept it." ... "I believed that same-sex relationships do not last long. It is easier for them to separate than the traditional male-female

relationship." ... "I cannot do anything about it anymore. Despite our misunderstandings, I accept her." (Participant 6)

Acceptance with disaccord. This refers to acceptance involving only one parent. In this theme, LGBTQIA+ children experience a combination of approval and rejection from their parents. Additionally, this type of discordance between the parents would likely affect their relationship, bringing instability and threats to the order of their family (Mills-Koonce, Rehder, & McCurdy, 2018). Some participants reported that their spouses would threaten to physically abuse their children once they expressed themselves as LGBTQIA+ individuals. The participants perceive their spouse's behavior as stemming from the idea that having LGBTQIA+ children challenges their family's reputation and poses further challenges to their children's future. However, this also caused a strained relationship between them and their children as they did not feel safe or comfortable to express themselves. Non-acceptance of their parent, specifically their fathers, is significantly linked with their experiences of psychological distress (Jadwin-Cakmak et al., 2015).

"My husband would threaten to beat him if he ever grew up to be gay." ... "My husband would occasionally threaten to drown him in a water container drum." ... "This caused our child to be afraid of him. He did not open up to him." (Participant 4)

Acceptance with reservations. Lastly, this refers to the acceptance of parents who impose conditions or restrictions on their LGBTQIA+ children. These parents accept their children but impose limitations on expressing themselves and presenting themselves in public. This theme also includes parents who are expectant that their children will later change their minds regarding their identities and partner preferences. This can additionally be linked to parental tolerance, wherein parents would simply deal with the sexual identities and existence of their children (McGuire, 2017) without ultimately honoring their wants and needs as LGBTQIA+ individuals. They do not view the identity and existence of their LGBTQIA+ children as a valued gift to their family or community.

"I was not too angry with him. He was my child; I accepted him. I just wished that he would respect himself. That he would not make a joke out of himself." ... "I told him that I did not want to see him wear any feminine clothes." (Participant 10)

The hesitant and non-accepting parental responses involved in acceptance with disaccord and acceptance with reservations, generally, were hindrances to the children's ability to express themselves fully. Family reactions to violence and rejection inhibited the LGBTQIA+ children's development of sexual identity due to the parents' heteronormative

expectations. This kind of response ultimately silences the process of 'coming out of the closet' among LGBTQIA+ youth (Braga et al., 2018). One child mainly refrained from expressing his identity due to the threats he received from his father. Until his father passed away, he suppressed his sexual identity to avoid discrimination and violence during his adolescent years. While this has been a reasonable option, without a doubt, it still negatively impacts LGBTQIA+ youth due to psychological burdens brought forth by the attempt to suppress one's true identity (Jones, 2017).

It is also worth noting that a particular LGBTQIA+ individual who 'came out of the closet' or identified herself as a lesbian during her adolescent years was observed to engage in a heterosexual relationship that led to marriage eventually. The numerous development tasks attributed to an individual's adolescence may have been caused by a premature conception of self-identity (Branje, 2022). Branje (2022) argues that an individual's identity development during adolescence is still within the process of maturation and stability. This brings about occurrences of identity crisis as LGBTQIA+ youth have the additional duty to comprehend who they are compared to heterosexual peers (Murphy & Hardaway, 2017). In addition, gender fluidity can be stressed in this case, as sexual orientations or gender identities may shift across short-term and long-term periods (Diamond, 2016).

Gradual Parental Responses and Relationship Changes After Identity Disclosure

A thematic analysis was also conducted to understand further the long-term effects of parent-child relationship changes brought about by children's disclosure of their identities. The study also encompasses the coping behaviors of the parents after learning about their children's identities. The themes generated in the gradual parental responses and relationship changes after identity disclosure include 1) no significant relationship changes, 2) positive relationship changes, and 3) negative relationship changes.

No significant relationship changes. This pertains to parent-child relationships that display no difference in the pre-disclosure and post-disclosure stages. Results show that the majority of the participants indicated that there were no significant relationship changes between them and their children. One participant notably stated that it was "just natural" and that how they treated their children before their identity disclosure was the same way they would treat their children now. Some of the participants who indicated no significant relationship changes reported that they maintained the same openness and expressiveness in their relationships and prioritized the happiness of their children. Another participant reported buying makeup products for her son to utilize the behavioral approach as a coping mechanism.

"Nothing changed, we are still open and expressive with one another. We talk things out." (Participant 3)

Positive relationship changes. This pertains to parent-child relationships that experienced improvements after the children's identity disclosure. This is a primary characteristic of the behavioral approach in parental coping mechanisms, as parents and children use the disclosure to improve their relationship further. Some positive relationship changes reported by the participants include increased closeness and a deeper understanding of each other. The disclosure of their children prompted an improvement in openness and transparency within their relationships. Relating to this, a participant reported that they talked "like friends or siblings" and were more comfortable opening up with each other. Another participant reported that they "grew to understand each other more" after their child's disclosure. In addition, studies have shown that his particular kind of positive and proactive parental behavior and the acceptance of their children are closely linked to LGBTQIA+ positive outcomes, including life satisfaction, self-esteem, and LGBTQIA+ esteem (Snapp et al., 2015).

"My child and I actually became closer to each other. At times, we are like friends or siblings. I even call him 'Day', a term we would use to refer to our friends and neighbors. He always opened up about his life events." (Participant 1)

Negative relationship changes. This refers to parent-child relationships that weakened following the children's identity disclosure. This includes both cognitive and behavioral avoidances in terms of parental coping behaviors. In this theme, the parents have reported coping difficulties in their relationship with their children and have set arrangements (i.e., trying to engage their child in forming a relationship with a partner from the opposite sex) to adjust their sexual preferences. Although they gradually developed a more vital acceptance of their children over time, there were challenges in acknowledging their identities. One participant reported that they have not adjusted to the situation as their child emotionally drifted apart from their relationship and would refuse to confide in any personal matters due to their initial non-acceptance towards the disclosure. The participant observed her initial negative response to be the cause of the misunderstanding between them and their child, as they would no longer talk frequently and understand each other. Another participant reported that, although accepting of their child, they set arrangements by introducing their son to "a potential female partner" to whom he should have been married. Nonetheless, the individual has been adamant about his identity, and the arrangement has not been fruitful. Consequently, this convinced the participant to accept their child instead fully.

"I tried introducing my son to a potential female partner. However, he was adamant that he was gay." ... "I was no longer worried that he would not be able to have a child of his own. I just fully accepted it." (Participant 10)

Factors that Contribute to Parental Responses

Personal Beliefs from Religious, Cultural, and Familial Value Systems that Affect Parental Response

The factors that contribute to parental response toward their children's identity disclosure are further categorized into personal beliefs attributed to religious, cultural, and familial value systems and other perceived factors that go beyond the influence of their religion, culture, and family. Although the participants generally accepted their children, they were able to provide insights regarding the possible factors that contributed to negative and combined parental responses. Hence, both categories generated in factors contributing to parental responses were sub-categorized into factors contributing to acceptance, hesitation, or non-acceptance. In discussing the factors associated with religious, cultural, and family values that contribute to parental acceptance, three (3) primary themes have been identified. These themes are 1) religious considerations, 2) the nature of the community, and 3) family function and structure.

Religious considerations. This pertains to the religious-value-based factors contributing to parental response, such as religious fundamentalism and parental sanctification. Results have shown that most participants did not see their religious values as causing hesitation or non-acceptance towards their children. Given that the Philippines is a predominantly Christian country, religion is seen to be a commanding influence, especially when it comes to recognizing and accepting LGBTQIA+ in the community and family (Tang & Poudel, 2018). The country, in general, is infused with Christian ideology that facilitates tension between LGBTQIA+'s gender identities and the response their parents employ toward their disclosure (Del Castillo et al., 2021). However, the study's results demonstrate beyond doubt that religion has no significant effect on parental response. Some LGBTQIA+ individuals discussed in the interviews were committed to serving religious roles in their church and would actively participate in church activities and programs. One participant stated that being an LGBTQIA+ individual does not harm their religion and that their identity as an LGBTQIA+ was "a blessing from God." Another participant, in addition, also stated that sexuality does not affect their ability to serve God. Some parents believe that spirituality can co-exist with being an LGBTQIA+ individual. Essentially, they perceive that their identities would not hinder their ability to decide and act based on what is morally upright to society, which is more important.

"Beyond my religion, I respect his wants and needs as an LGBTQIA+ individual. As long as he does not harm other people." (Participant 10)

Nature of community. This corresponds to the community or culture-based factors that influence parental response. Results show that the participants' community was a considerable factor in influencing their acceptance of their children. All of the participants in the study indicated that their community was indeed welcoming and accepting of LGBTQIA+ individuals. In addition, it was also reported that organizations that support the well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the province were also established. The participants perceive that this prompted the LGBTQIA+ youth to explore their sexual identity with more ease further and encouraged them to be more open toward their families and community. Some participants stated that there were already a lot of LGBTQIA+ individuals in their community, and the concept of LGBTQIA+ itself has already been normalized among the people more than ever. This indicates that their community generally serves as a source of support for their LGBTQIA+ children as their larger social environment considerably affects their well-being (Higa et al., 2014). Furthermore, the participants perceived their children as valued for their remarkable skills and talents in community events. They are observed to be adept at organizing these events as well as performing different activities conducted by the community.

“LGBTQIA+ individuals are widely accepted in our community. In fact, they have founded an LGBTQIA+ organization here.” (Participant 4)

“They are all seen equally. It depends on each individual what kind of personality they choose to show around other people.” (Participant 10)

Family function and structure. This corresponds to the family or family value-based factors that influence parental response. This theme includes the prevalence of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the participants' own families and the perceptions of their beliefs and priorities as a family. One participant indicated that her trust in her child was a factor in "accepting him better." She believed that despite her child being LGBTQIA+, her child was an honest and good individual. It can be seen that the participant had confidence in how her child would present himself in society and interact with others; being an LGBTQIA+ per se had no bearing on his moral judgments.

Additionally, the participant indicated confidence in her child's upbringing and perceived it to be more important than dealing with his identity. Another participant stated that the upbringing or the well-being of an LGBTQIA+ child "largely depends on the parents" and that "parents are the primary source of providing for the children's needs. "These perceptions entail an awareness of the importance of fulfilling parental roles in the family, especially their children. As a primary social institution, the family is indeed an essential part of the sexual identity formation of LGBTQIA+ individuals as well as their personal growth (Pastrana, 2016). This theme also considers the prevalence of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the

participants' families. Some participants reported that they had numerous relatives who were also LGBTQIA+. Hence, it became a regular occurrence to have an LGBTQIA+ child.

"I believe my child is good and honest; it drove me to accept him better." ... "The well-being of an LGBTQIA+ child largely depends on the parents." ... "Parents are the primary source of providing for their children's needs." (Participant 5)

In discussing the factors associated with religious, cultural, and family values that contribute to hesitance or non-acceptance, two (2) specific themes have been identified. These themes are 1) contradicting values and 2) misunderstanding between parent and child. Due to the majority of the participants accepting their child, inputs regarding the possible factors facilitating a negative parental response are limited. Some inputs are considered to be the participants' perceived factors that influence non-acceptance and perceived factors considered by their non-accepting spouses.

Contradicting values. This indicates the personal beliefs of the parents stemming from religious, cultural, and familial values that oppose or are challenged by the identity disclosure of their children's LGBTQIA+ identities. Spiritual values play a role in causing hesitance or non-acceptance among parents. One participant who accepted her child with reservations stated that she would regularly bring her daughter along to attend *El Shaddai* services with her as she hoped to develop her spirituality more. The said participant implied that religion might serve as an instrument in possibly changing her child's identity to be able to have a family of her own in the future. Religious fundamentalism may have served as a sub-factor in this kind of response as it negatively influences the parents' attitude towards LGBTQIA+ individuals (Arlı, Badejo, & Sutanto, 2020). Likely, the participant perceived the LGBTQIA+ to be an immoral group. Parental sanctification, or the perspective that parent-child relationships should be modeled from one's images, beliefs, or experiences according to God, may have served as an additional sub-factor in this response.

"I would always let her come with me to our *El Shaddai* services in Manila. That way, I was hopeful that she would understand and develop her spirituality." (Participant 7)

Contradicting values may also occur in the family sphere as some parents possibly view LGBTQIA+ children to be a disgrace in the family, causing them to respond to and treat their children negatively. This implies that prejudice towards LGBTQIA+ in the community, especially in families, still exists to some extent. Cultural influences were also taken into account in this theme. One participant notably stated that older people have difficulty understanding LGBTQIA+ individuals. This implies that individuals from older generations may

still subscribe to heteronormative culture and ideology. Heteronormative culture in Filipino families prevails as well to some extent and is described by Van der Toorn et al. (2020) as pervasive, persistent, and having negative consequences.

“Perhaps, for parents who do not accept their child, they see them as a disgrace to the family. The parents dislike that.” (Participant 5)

Misunderstanding between parent and child. This refers to the internal conflicts in the parent-child relationship. This considers the experience of one participant who was initially non-accepting of her LGBTQIA+ child. The participant recalled that her anger towards her daughter stemmed from displeasure regarding her manner of confession. Perhaps an assumption the participant had was that her child chose to hide her identity from her parents while growing up in their home. However, an important consideration would be that the child may have been in the self-exploration stage (Dillon et al., 2011), wherein she may not have yet reached the synthesis of her identity at the time.

“My anger stemmed from my displeasure as a parent regarding her manner of confession.” ... “She only confessed when she was no longer here and was abroad. She did not disclose anything to me while she was growing up with us.” (Participant 5)

CONCLUSIONS

Although the study found that Filipino families are generally much more accepting of LGBTQIA+ youth, there are more opportunities for action to be taken. It is essential to understand that parental acceptance, support, and involvement with their children are considerable predictors of favorable health outcomes and well-being for LGBTQIA+ youth (Mills-Koonce et al., 2018). In addition, studying the protective factors surrounding LGBTQIA+ youth can also be as crucial as studying their risk factors. As the family serves as the most effective support system for LGBTQIA+ youth’s adjustment and development, the study calls for a shift from family rejection, discrimination, and abuse towards family acceptance, care, and love for LGBTQIA+ youth. The study additionally calls for addressing forms of acceptance that may also serve as risk factors for LGBTQIA+ youth, particularly those with delay, discord, or reservations. LGBTQIA+ youth face not only the struggles of normative development tasks but also the challenges of navigating their sexual identities, parental invalidation, as well as active attempts to alter who they are and how they think may be detrimental to their establishment of self-identity and promotion of overall health.

In addition, the results found in the study may be deemed helpful by counselors or family counselors, or therapists, as well as social workers who operate with LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families. It can also inform other LGBTQIA+ youth support systems, such as their community, of further ways to foster safe and affirming environments for LGBTQIA+ youth while reducing discrimination and stigma. Through positive responses and coping behaviors, the well-being and resilience of LGBTQIA+ individuals and communities may be promoted. It can further inform educational and workplace settings of practical strategies that dispel discrimination, stigma, and prejudice from deep cultural beliefs about gender roles (Barry, 2019). Lastly, the study findings promote the inclusion and celebration of LGBTQIA+ individuals across various contexts, especially in the family.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

Given that the identity disclosure process of children and parental attitudes, responses, and behaviors that emerged from the process might be relatively sensitive topics for the parents to tackle, the researchers ensured that each participant would provide informed consent. The informed consent form was read out and distributed to the participants. This made them aware of further information regarding the research and the researchers' ethical measures. As the participants were the primary focus of the study, the researchers ensured their safety and privacy. Data authenticity was upheld by the researchers, who described the participants' experiences in the most faithful way possible.

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