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PARENTING STYLES IN RAINBOW FAMILIES: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Parenting has always been seen as important for child development, though most studies on parenting styles have come from heteronormative and Western cultures. This research explores the way LGBTQ+ parents who have 'rainbow families' face challenges in parenting in the Philippines. The research investigates how these parenting styles influence children's roles in the household, emotional development, and overall well-being by interviewing three LGBTQ+ individuals in Laguna.

The research employed a multiple case study as a research design under a qualitative approach. To gather the needed, a self-made questionnaire and face-to-face interview were made. Participants were referred according to their qualifications.

The findings of this study reveal that LGBTQ+ families in the Philippines are redefining what it means to be a family through emotional intimacy, shared responsibility, and non-traditional but highly functional household structures. Participants described small, closely-knit family units composed of partners and children, emphasizing mutual support over legal or biological ties. Household roles were not determined by gender but were negotiated based on love, care, and capability. These families highlighted how emotional cohesion and day-to-day cooperation form the foundation of their domestic lives, offering a modern, inclusive view of kinship that challenges conventional norms.

Research affirms that the strength of a family lies not in its conformity to traditional structures but in its capacity for love, care, and shared growth. LGBTQ+ families in the Philippines exemplify these qualities, offering both a mirror and a model for inclusive and compassionate parenting in the 21st century.

KEYWORDS: *LGBTQ+ Parenting, Rainbow Families, Parenting Styles, Queer Theory, Filipino Family, Child Development, Authoritative Parenting, Non-Traditional Households, Family Resilience*

Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Parents in rainbow families influence their children by providing a distinctive example of raising kids in a non-traditional family. Many experts categorize these families alongside single-parent, blended, and adoptive families. Generally, parenting styles fall under four labels: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved. All parenting types vary in how warm, strict, communicative, and responsive parents are. Among LGBTQ+ parents, there is a strong preference for the authoritative style, which helps ensure healthy growth for their children. According to Golombok et al.'s (2014) findings, gay fathers usually have close relationships and use thoughtful parenting to nurture their children. They may be affected by both social prejudice and laws in uncommon ways, yet their kind of parenting reveals how much they dedicate themselves to their kids. Likewise, according to Farr and Vázquez (2020), several LGBTQ+ parents use what they have experienced themselves to ensure their children adjust well and welcome diversity. This approach reveals how family dynamics are changing in our current society.

It matters a lot in our lives and in our culture because today, many people accept all types of families and individuals. Exploring parenting in rainbow families helps to confront the past prejudices that have affected the rights of LGBTQ+ parents. They now believe that a good family is one where love, understanding, and parenting exist no matter the sexual orientation or gender identity of its members. Studies of rainbow families also confirm that safety and support from the community are needed for these families to thrive. Gartrell and

Bos (2010) reported that adolescents raised by lesbian parents did not differ from those raised by heterosexual parents when it came to psychological well-being. Similarly, similar to heterosexual families, children with same-sex parents perform equally well in school and mental health, according to Fedewa, Black, and Ahn (2015). This study indicates that parenting influences children more than the type of family they live in. Recognizing these facts will help everyone feel appreciated in society by preventing discrimination and promoting equality for all rainbow families.

Theoretical Framework

This study anchored to a Queer Theory of Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Leo Bersani and an LGBTQ+ Family Resilience Model. *Queer Theory* challenges and deconstructs traditional norms related to gender and sexuality. It can be a powerful framework for examining how LGBTQ+ parents navigate societal expectations, norms, and stereotypes in the context of parenting. It encourages an exploration of diverse identities, experiences, and challenges within rainbow families.

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As such, the LGBTQ+ Family Resilience Model will also serve as the basis for constructing a concept of Parenting Style in this context wherein researchers such as Caitlin Ryan, David Huebner, and Ilan H. Meyer have made significant contributions to the study of LGBTQ+ families and resilience. Building on the concept of family resilience, this model focuses specifically on the strengths and coping strategies employed by LGBTQ+ families in the face of adversity. It can be applied to investigate how rainbow families adapt, thrive, and develop unique parenting styles in response to the challenges they may encounter, such as discrimination, social stigma, and legal issues.

Research Questions

The primary challenge in researching current family parenting styles (Golombok & Tasker, 2018) is finding a representative population, particularly in the LGBTQ community. Nonetheless, here is where this research begins. The researcher plans to perform an exploratory study to offer insight into LGBT parenting components. A qualitative setting was selected since many earlier types of research were quantitative in character.

The primary question in this study is whether or not their sexual orientation influences their parenting approaches.

1. What are the parenting styles of LGBTQ parents?
2. How do parenting styles impact the dynamics of rainbow families and their children?

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the parenting styles, experiences, and approaches of LGBTQ+ parents, including same-sex couples, transgender individuals, and other nontraditional family structures known as "Rainbow families." The goal is to investigate how these parenting styles influence children's roles in the household, emotional development, and overall well-being. Data will be gathered through qualitative, in-depth interviews with LGBTQ+ parents who live in the province of Laguna.

The study intends to investigate parenting practices, punishment methods, family communication, emotional bonding, and societal obstacles, with the goal of filling gaps in the literature that has hitherto focused on heterosexual, cisgender family models (Goldberg & Allen, 2022).

Rainbow families come up when LGBTQ+ individuals, whether gay or lesbian, choose to live together as partners with an individual who has children from a previous relationship. It also happens when an LGBTQ+ individual has a child from a previous relationship and lives together with a same-sex partner.

Participants in this study are composed of a lesbian who's raising the children of her female partner from her previous relationship, a gay who is a father of his kid from his previous relationship and now living together with his male partner, and a lesbian who's a father to the child of her lesbian partner from her previous relationship.

Chapter II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The rainbow flag, which was formerly known as the gay pride flag, symbolizes LGBTQ pride and social movements. The different colors represent the LGBTQ community's variety as well as the whole spread of natural relations and gender. The use of a rainbow flag as a sign of LGBTQ pride began in San Francisco, California, and has now spread to other LGBTQ rights rallies throughout the world. Rainbow flag was originally designed by the artist Gilbert Baker, James McNamara, Lynn Segerblom, and other activists. The flag design passed multiple differences after its debut in 1978 and continues to inspire variations. Although Baker's original rainbow flag featured eight colors, from 1979 until the present, the most frequent variation has six stripes: red, orange, pusillanimous, green, blue, and violet. People constantly display the flag horizontally, with the red stripe at the top, mimicking a natural rainbow.

The rainbow family idea (German Re-genboden familien, Croatian dugine obitelji, Slovenian mavrične družine) has been formed internationally to identify families with same-sex parents (Zaviršek & Sobočan, 2012). Rainbow families are the same as other families when it comes to raising a child or children. LGBTQ+ parents are responsible and loving like parents in nuclear family. The things that make them different are the family structures and the heads of the family are same-sex parents.

Same-sex marriage is now legalized and acceptable in a variety of countries. There are 38 countries that recognize same-sex marriage legally. Based on the article "Gay Marriage Around the World" 2017, The Dutch parliament enacted a landmark bill in December 2000 allowing same-sex marriage by a three-to-one vote, making the Netherlands the first country to do so. The legislation granted same-sex partners the freedom to marry, divorce, and adopt children. The Philippines rejects same-sex marriage. The Catholic Church, which firmly opposes same-sex marriage, has a significant impact on the Philippine environment because they believe and also defined the Family Codes of the Philippines that marriage is for a man and a woman (Villegas, 2015).

Despite the lack of legalization of same-sex marriage in the Philippines, the emergence of rainbow families in the country continues to grow. Many LGBTQ+ individuals decide to have a family of their own and want to become parents. Parenting, also known as child raising, encourages and supports a child's physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive growth from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the complexities of raising a child and is not limited to a biological bond.

Lesbian and gay families are simply one sort of family in a culture that is rich in variation. Lesbian families, in particular, are on the rise. Lesbians are gradually deciding to start families and become parents. In a recent national Australian study of 3,835 LGBT people's relationships, health, and well-being, approximately 33% of lesbian participants reported being parents or step-parents

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or having some other form of parent-like relationship. (Dempsey, 2014).

As Calzo et al. (2019) report from the United States data, parenting quality is the central determinant of children's well-being in all types of families. Strong predictors of positive psychological outcomes in children living in LGBTQ households are emotional availability, stable caregiving, and ongoing communication within such households. The family (same-sex or heterosexual) is much less important than emotionally consistent and supportive interchanges. Responsive, predictable, communicative caregivers have the most benefit for children.

As explained by Rostosky et al. (2017), religious or spiritual beliefs shape LGBTQ parenting styles insofar as some may adopt progressive values but also incorporate faith. On the other hand, they usually have an authoritative voice that is warm and structured at the same time and advocates for tolerance and inclusivity. This allows children to reconcile the rejection of religion with that of their LGBTQ identities. According to McCurdy and Russell (2023), the supportive and autonomy-focused parenting style of LGBTQ parents who adopt their children is important for their children's mental well-being. They provide children with emotional support while trying to minimize psychological control to make them feel validated and prepared for identity-related challenges.

As Gato et al. (2021) examined, the rainbow parenting style leads to rainbow family dynamics that are inherently accepting, intentional, and emotive. For these parents, this will often mean offering openness in the way that they communicate with their partner and treat one another whilst establishing a healthy balance in regards to exposing a child to male and female members of their family.

Chapter III
METHODOLOGY

Approach and Rationale

The researcher employed a multiple case study as the research design because she deemed it most suited to her topic: the parenting styles of rainbow families. Research utilizing several case studies yields rich, contextual data, facilitates comparative analysis, and improves comprehension of complicated phenomena. This method is a helpful way to obtain thorough insights into various research problems since it enhances the generalizability of findings and provides flexibility in study design (Stake, 2013).

The study sought to explore how parents who are members of the LGBTQ community raise their children. It aimed to understand the unique challenges they face, the parenting strategies they employ, and how their identities influence family dynamics. Additionally, the research examined the social, emotional, and developmental outcomes of children raised in these diverse family structures, providing insights into the support systems and resources that contribute to their well-being.

Several studies, such as "Chasing Rainbows: Exploring Gender Fluid Parenting Practices" by Green (2013), explore the intricacies of feminist parenting, emphasizing the potential and difficulties of raising kids in ways that are both gender-aware and genderfluid. By fusing academic research with personal accounts, the book promotes critical discourse on gender variety while providing insights into how parents negotiate and defy conventional gender binary thinking. It examines the cultural changes toward a broader acceptance of gender fluidity and highlights the significance of establishing supportive environments for children who identify as gender non-conforming.

Existing studies inspired the researcher to explore the lived experiences of rainbow families. Thus, the study utilized phenomenology. Zahavi (2018) introduces phenomenology as a philosophical approach that studies lived experiences, emphasizing intentionality, embodiment, intersubjectivity, and the lifeworld.

The personal perspectives of LGBTQ+ parents can be investigated with phenomenology in rainbow parenting, offering profound insights into how they manage their roles and relationships. This method provides a deep, complex awareness of their lives while revealing the special difficulties and rewards of rainbow parenting.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The participants of this study were represented by three (3) LGBTQ parents with his/her partner living together for more than ten (10) years: one (1) lesbian parent living with her female lived-in partner, one (1) gay parent living with his male partner, and one
(1) lesbian parent living with her lesbian lived-in partner.

Referral or Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling approach in which new units are recruited by existing units to join the sample. Snowball sampling can be a good technique to do research on persons with specific features who may otherwise be difficult to identify.

Snowball sampling is one of the most common qualitative research sampling methodologies, with networking and recommendation as essential aspects.

The participants were chosen using three criteria. The first criteria were that the participant was a member of the LGBTQ community. The second requirement was that the participant has at least one biological or adoptive child with the age requirement of 12 years old and above. The third requirement is that the participant is married or living together for more than 10 years. To prevent limiting participants' eligibility to be part of the sample, age limits were waived in this study.

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Chapter 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Characteristics of Different Parenting Styles

Parenting Styles	Characteristics
Authoritative	• Solves problems together with the child • Sets clear rules and expectations • Open communications and natural consequences
Authoritarian	• Parent-driven • Sets strict rules and punishment • One-way communication with little consideration of the child's social and behavioral needs
Permissive	• Child-driven • Rarely gives or enforces rules • Overindulge child to avoid conflicts

Table 2. Background of the Participants

Pseudonyms	Sexual Orientation	Parenting Style	Personal Background
IAN	Lesbian	Authoritative	• 39-Year-Old • Cable Agent
MATTHEW	Gay	Authoritative	• 44- Year-Old • College Instructor • Public Servant
BELEN	Lesbian	Authoritative	• 42-Year-Old • Free-Lancer

Table 3. Parenting Styles

Parenting Style	Case 1 IAN	Case 2 MATTHEW	Case 3 BELEN	Synthesis
Fostering Open Communication and Child Autonomy	Explicitly recognizing and advocating for children's "right to speak for themselves," actively affirming their right to it.	The understanding that guidance is provided when children are "wrong" or make mistakes implies a proactive rather than reactive approach to correction.	The practice of "sitting down, talking," and engaging in discussions" whenever we are" suggests a commitment to making communication readily available and not confined to formal settings.	They all showed an open dialogue, and they empowered their children by allowing them to speak for themselves. Also, they guide them throughout their life rather than imposing a sense of strict control.
Beyond Traditional Parenting	A direct statement that "parenting like before…where parents hit is no longer in style" signifies that they clearly break from an older disciplinary paradigm.	The participant believes that logical reasoning and developmental support are much better than fearbased correction.	The participants demonstrate a degree of selfreflection and honesty about their parenting journey.	Their responses reflect that they consciously move away from punitive, traditional parenting methods towards approaches centered on explanation and understanding.
Active Involvement and role Modeling	The participants highlight a deep level of engagement and personal investment in their children's daily lives.	They teach their children empathy and social responsibility by becoming an example to them.	Their responses suggest a conscious effort to counteract potential societal biases with strong parental support.	It shows that they are deeply committed to being actively involved in their children's lives, and they demonstrate positive values through their actions.

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Universal Parental Dedication Regardless of Identity	The response of the participants directly challenges the societal stereotypes normalizing a diverse family structure.	They highlight that parenting is a sacred duty or calling regardless of their identity.	The response of these participants underscores an absolute and unwavering commitment that is independent of external factors.	Despite their identity, they still performed the fundamental responsibilities and sacrifices of parenting, and their focus remains squarely on the child's well-being and future.

Table 4. Family Dynamics

Family Dynamics	Case 1 IAN	Case 2 MATTHEW	Case 3 BELEN	Synthesis
Shared Responsibilities and Household Management	Their response shows that household roles are not strictly bound by traditional gender norms, allowing them to have a flexible share of labor based on individual strengths and availability.	They highlight that their children are actively involved in household chores as they understand their contributions are for the family's well-being.	They show that they experience financial burdens, which enables them to demonstrate mutual commitment and responsibility for the household's stability.	They all believed that family members should contribute to household chores, and they, as parents, have financial responsibilities to ensure smooth daily operations.
Conflict Resolution and Relational Harmony	They acknowledge the imperfections in their relationship, but they also emphasize that disagreements are minimal and managed maturely.	They demonstrate trust through their children as they allow them to resolve their minor conflicts on their own.	The participant highlights clear communication and mutual respect as this is a bedrock for a stable and harmonious family environment.	They all prioritize peaceful conflict resolution, fostering understanding and respect among members.
Family Identity and Societal Perception	They emphasize that they are fostering a sense of internal normalcy and not choosing	They acknowledge and frame their nontraditional structure that	As per them, they maintain open communication about their family structure from the	They all navigate their unique structures, and they all strive for normalcy and
	to be different from other families.	contrasts the societal norms through love and stability.	very beginning of the child's understanding.	acceptance within the broader society.
Parental Authority and Child Empowerment	According to them, they expect respect, but they also grant their children the right to speak and express themselves, which creates a two-way street of deference.	As per them, the instructional or tasks they imposed on their children are not as burdens but as actions for their own good and benefit.	They acknowledge the obedience and good behavior of their children and reciprocate it with the fulfillment of their reasonable desires.	They all balance their guidance and authority in empowering their children, and they all provide them with appropriate freedom.

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Theme 2: Family Dynamics

Table 5. Impacts on Children

Impacts on Children	Case 1 IAN	Case 2 MATTHEW	Case 3 BELEN	Synthesis
Behavioral and Character Development	As per the parent, their children understand and accept disciplinary action because they provide a clear	They stated that their children exhibit moral character, including politeness, respect, and helpfulness, indicating successful value inculcation.	The participants highlight that their children do not only follow instructions but have initiative in their duties and tasks.	All of their parenting style has a direct influence on the child's values, discipline, and overall conduct.
Emotional Well-being and Relationship Quality	They stated that their children feel more comfortable and closely connected to them and are viewed as friends.	Parents highlight that their children show enjoyment and satisfaction with their upbringing, which indicates a positive emotional impact.	They disclose that the children grasp the rationale behind parental decisions and comply with authority, showing maturity in their relationship.	It can be concluded that as their parents, they foster a positive emotional state and a strong and healthy relationship within the family.
Academic and Future Preparedness	They viewed good grades of the children as tangible outcomes and a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of their parenting.	The participant highlighted that their children carry the positive lessons and values taught by them as they grow.	They discussed that their children have developed a sense of awareness and responsibility towards others.	This suggests that their efforts in guiding their children contribute to success in academics and their readiness for future challenges, which indeed fosters both intellectual growth and the development of core values.

Table 6. Recommendations for Other Parents

Recommendations	Case 1 IAN	Case 2 MATTHEW	Case 3 BELEN	Synthesis
Prioritizing Inclusive Love and Respect in Partnership	They emphasize that love for a partner who already has children must extend equally to those children.	The participant recommended that to have a healthy relationship, there should be respect, and it is nonnegotiable to build a harmonious family.	The participant stressed that beyond the love, there is an inherent obligation to care for and guide their children, which is paramount once they become parents.	They all insist that having a healthy family lies in extending love and respect not only to their partner but also equally to their children.
Resilience and Advocacy in NonTraditional Family Structure	The participant advises the LGBTQ+ parents to actively show their capacity for good parenting skills.	They are encouraged to just continue raising their family despite the potential lack of understanding or acceptance from others.	They indirectly raise the concern of financial challenges they are facing, and they advise parents to have financial stability.	They encouraged all the parents in LGBTQ+ to demonstrate their capabilities in building a family and advocate for acceptance within society.

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Seeking and Inspiring Social Acceptance	They suggest that families being raised by LGBTQ+ may serve as an example leading to increased support and acceptance from society.	They should raise their family without seeking preferential treatment but with the desire for recognition and respect.	They encourage LGBTQ+ parents to not be ashamed of their identity and should know that they have a rightful place and contribution to the community.	All of them suggested that they should pave the way for greater understanding and support for all the diverse family types.

Table 7. Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
1. Family Background	Household Description Parental Responsibility
2. Family Dynamics	SharedResponsibilities and Household Management Conflict Resolution and Relational Harmony Family Identity and Societal Perception Parental Authority and Child Empowerment
3. Parenting Styles and Outcomes	LGBTQ+ Family Identity Parenting Approaches and Strategies Emotional Connection and Identity in Parenting
4. Social and Community Perceptions	Reflections and Outcomes of Parenting LGBTQ+ Visibility Comparative Identity Guidance for LGBTQ+ Families Support System Expand the Community and Thrive as LGBTQ+ Individuals Shared Wisdom Needs of LGBTQ Families LGBTQ+ Empowerment

Chapter 5
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations
of this study.

Summary

This study explores the parenting styles of LGBTQ+ parents within Filipino "Rainbow Families" in Laguna, Philippines. It aims to provide qualitative insight into how LGBTQ+ individuals raise their children and how their parenting styles influence family dynamics and child development. Recognizing the limited local literature on LGBTQ+ parenting, the study addresses a critical gap by examining how sexual orientation may shape caregiving roles, parenting behaviors, and parent-child relationships.

Guided by Queer Theory and the LGBTQ+ Family Resilience Model, the research challenges traditional gender roles and highlights the resilience strategies employed by LGBTQ+ families amid social stigma and legal inequality. It emphasizes that the quality of parenting—rather than family structure or parental gender—is the most significant factor in fostering children's emotional and social well-being.

Utilizing a qualitative, multiple case study approach, the research collects data through in-depth interviews with referral or snowball sampling selected LGBTQ+ parents raising children aged 12 and above. The study seeks to understand their lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and the specific parenting styles they adopt. The findings aim to inform educators, guidance counselors, social institutions, and future researchers about the strengths, challenges, and evolving realities of LGBTQ+ parenting in the Philippine context.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the parenting styles of LGBTQ+ parents and how these approaches influence family dynamics and child development within rainbow families. Grounded in a

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qualitative multiple-case study, the research provided rich, lived experiences of LGBTQ+ parents navigating their roles in a largely heteronormative society. Drawing from in-depth interviews, the findings addressed the challenges and strategies these parents employ to create loving, functional, and affirming households while also responding to societal perceptions and pressures.

This study sheds light on the evolving configurations of Filipino families by centering the voices and experiences of LGBTQ+ parents. Through qualitative thematic analysis, it becomes clear that these families are not only redefining traditional notions of kinship but also actively demonstrating the resilience, functionality, and emotional depth of non-traditional households. The four themes—Family Background, Dynamics, Parenting Styles and Outcomes, and Social and Community Perceptions, collectively illustrate how LGBTQ+ families cultivate environments grounded in love, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.

Despite encountering societal stigma and structural limitations, LGBTQ+ parents consistently exhibit parenting practices aligned with authoritative, emotionally intelligent frameworks. They emphasize open communication, intentional discipline, and relational warmth—factors known to contribute positively to child development. Their children, in turn, are described as emotionally expressive, respectful, and socially aware, reflecting the effectiveness of such parenting.

What emerges from these findings is a powerful counternarrative to the dominant heteronormative assumptions about family. Rather than viewing LGBTQ+ families as exceptions or deviations, this study positions them as valid, thriving models of modern Filipino family life. Their practices, values, and outcomes challenge long-standing stereotypes, inviting a broader, more inclusive understanding of what it means to parent— and to belong.

In conclusion, the research affirms that the strength of a family lies not in its conformity to traditional structures but in its capacity for love, care, and shared growth. LGBTQ+ families in the Philippines exemplify these qualities, offering both a mirror and a model for inclusive and compassionate parenting in the 21st century.

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