

# Tahanan at Kalayaan: The Narratives of Filipino LGBTQIA+ Gen Z Young Adults on Living in a Religious Household

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>The intersection of sexual identity and religious beliefs remains complex and often contentious. LGBTQIA+ young adults raised in religious households’ face challenges that influence their sense of belonging, mental health, and identity formation. This study explores their lived experiences, focusing on how religious beliefs shape self-perception, emotional well-being, and social interactions within their families and communities. Using a narrative research design, in-depth interviews were conducted with LGBTQIA+ individuals aged 18–25 who were raised in religious households. These narratives were transcribed and analyzed using narrative analysis. Findings indicate that while participants initially perceived their homes as safe spaces, this perception changed due to familial rejection and invalidation. The internal conflict between personal identity and religious teachings led to fear of negative consequences, compelling many to conceal their identities. This study highlights the ongoing struggle for acceptance within religious family structures and the emotional toll it takes on individuals. The findings emphasize the need for open dialogue, increased awareness, and inclusive environments where LGBTQIA+ individuals can reconcile their identities with their faith. This study provides insights into the complex relationship between religion and LGBTQIA+ identities in the Philippines, underscoring the importance of fostering support systems to promote acceptance and mental well-being.</i>
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## 1.0 Introduction

The link between sexual identity and religious beliefs in today's society is still complex and often controversial. Young adults who identify as LGBTQIA+ may find it difficult to deal with their identity in a religious home given that spiritual teachings and expectations from family may not align with their views on acceptance and self-expression. Inclusivity within this context can be very challenging, as some religious ideologies may not always accept different sexual identities. This can lead to rejection from family, and absence of religious support, which would eventually affect their mental health. In the negative experiences, almost all experiences were from prior faith communities (Gandy, Natle, & Levy, 2021).

In today's societal standards, people categorize the LGBTQ+ community under the umbrella of what we call

sexual minorities, also referred to as “the invisible ones”—individuals whose sexual preferences, identity, or orientation deviate from those of the majority in the community (Math & Seshadri, 2013). However, according to research done by Ferrari (2022) on a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of United Nations titled: “Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation” in the year 2010, it was discussed whether people with varying sexual orientations or identities, PWDs, and people belonging to specific political parties should be within the scope of the international concept of a minority according to the United Nations Minorities Declaration (e.g., national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities) or not.

When a member of a legally recognized minority is subjected to discrimination based on other characteristics,

such as being a member of the LGBTQ+ community, experts advise taking action. According to the European Union, ethnic or religious minority members who identify as LGBTQ+ are more susceptible to discrimination, and although there are many different reasons why someone might commit such acts against a minority group, Shepherd (2021) states that many studies suggest religious beliefs to have historically and currently greatly influence marginalization and violence against the LGBTQ+ community. The existence of such stressors—Discrimination and prejudices stemming from the lack of established protective policies for the LGBTQ+ minority—prompts the question of how familial relationships and early encounters with religion affect individual upbringing.

Having established that individuals belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community are considered minorities who often face stressors like discrimination from other people, the researchers anchored the study mainly on the *Minority Stress Theory*. Frost & Meyer (2023) elucidated the essence of the theory by comparing the excessive social stress experienced by minority groups due to their stigmatized social status, which contributes to health disparities, to the “common stress” people may usually experience in their daily lives.

Under the theory, two different stress processes were differentiated, namely, distal and proximal. Distal stressors are characterized as stressors received from people or institutions; this includes micro aggressions and discriminatory policies. On the other hand, proximal stressors are from negative interpersonal relationships—experiencing direct stigmatization from peers or family—which may cause internalized stigma.

Reconciliation is quite a vague and elusive process rather than precise and constant. As defined in a study by Brounéus (2008), it is a social process wherein parties acknowledge one another's suffering with significant changes, where negative attitudes and actions develop into positive connections that lead to long-lasting peace.

Within the context of the study, the theory of reconciliation can be applied for the researchers to understand how young adults with existing conflict with family members may interpret their religious upbringing in connection to their LGBTQ+ identity and derive possible aid or solutions to the problem (e.g., reconciliation of familial bonds, reconciliation within one's fragmented sense of self because of the consequences of minority stress., etc.). On account of this, across several studies, the researchers observed plenty that focused on the negative aspects of the relationship between religion and the LGBTQ+ identity such as hate, hostility, and in some cases, violence that takes place.

However, as a result of further research, it is also evident that there are unique cases that result in acceptance and reconciliation. In a study by Sorrell et al. (2023), the researchers brought up talks on how LDS (Latter Day Saints) parent-LGBTQ+ teen relationships can improve despite their conflicting beliefs on sexual/gender identity through establishing relationships with family, conversing casually, being honest about one's LGBTQ+ identity, and allowing parents to have space and time to process.

In essence, with both theories in mind, it emphasizes the possibility of conflict as well as resolution in the lives of LGBTQ+ children raised in religious households. By applying both theories to these experiences, researchers can enhance their comprehension of this intricate relationship and provide feasible information on the matter at hand.

While existing research has highlighted the poor mental health outcomes and heightened vulnerability experienced by this group of people, there remains a limited understanding of the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that contribute to these outcomes. Thus, this research seeks to explore the lived experiences, family dynamics, and mental health of LGBTQIA+ gen z young adults in religious environments more comprehensively.

In the Philippine context, where society is predominantly religious, LGBTQIA+ individuals may encounter challenges distinct from those in foreign settings. The Philippines is known for its deep-rooted Catholic and Christian beliefs, which are closely intertwined with cultural norms and family dynamics. Moreover, a study by Libiran et al. (2024) further illustrates the conflicts faced by Filipino LGBTQ+ individuals with strong religious ties. Participants in the study reported feeling deeply conflicted due to their sexual identity being perceived as a sin and morally wrong within their religious communities. This belief, which is often justified by referencing biblical teachings, has led to inequitable and oppressive treatment toward LGBTQ+ members, fostering feelings of helplessness, guilt, and shame.

Although a plethora of research extensively exploring relationships between concepts of religion and LGBTQIA+ identity exists, there is still an overwhelming gap in the samples and their ethnicities (Miller et al., 2020), considering many mainly cover only the “White” population. This calls forth for a deeper understanding involving Filipino samples, more so knowing the prevalence of religion in the Philippines which has been ingrained in numerous households. In addition, varying religious institutions are also to be considered to represent different religious backgrounds broadly.

While families have a profound impact on adolescent health, there is limited understanding of how this influence

manifests specifically for LGBTQ youth. Newcomb et al. (2019) emphasize the need for research and intervention development to address the effect of families on LGBTQ youth health. This gap in knowledge underscores the importance of exploring the role of family dynamics and religious affiliation in shaping the experiences and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals.

In this study, the multifaceted experiences of Filipino LGBTQ+ young adults grappling with their sexual and gender identities within the context of a religious household are highlighted. Through a series of studies, we aim to accomplish the following:

1. Determine the experiences of Filipino LGBTQ+ young adults navigating their sexual and gender identities in the setting of a religious home.
2. Examine how familial factors affect religious households' acceptance or rejection of LGBTQIA+ identities.
3. Evaluate how religious beliefs and practices affect LGBTQ adolescents' self-worth, identity formation, mental health, and social functioning.
4. Identify the external support systems that contribute to the well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals in religious contexts.

Considering all of this and the pressing need to explore the dynamics between sexual diversity and religion, the study aims to deepen understanding of individual insights, experiences, and living conditions of LGBTQ+ young adults as a minority in an environment directly influenced by religion and all its complexities. Overall, this research has the potential to encourage positive change by understanding and promoting communication and support for LGBTQ+ individuals within religious communities and society as a whole.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

The researchers utilized a qualitative narrative research design, allowing for an in-depth study of each individual's experiences and the interpretations that individuals ascribe to those experiences. This study is beneficial for comprehending the complexity of living as an LGBTQIA+ individual in the context of religion, where personal experiences can illustrate the nuances in which individuals make sense of their lives.

Nasheeda et al. (2019) summarized the definition of narrative research from several proponents as a type of qualitative method understood from spoken or written texts describing accounts of events that are chronologically connected. It is a method of studying one's life experiences as a source of knowledge in and of itself that requires deeper comprehension. According to Joyce (2015),

interviews are the most commonly used approach in creating narratives. Participants of the narrative study examine how individuals interact in reality. These convey information regarding an event that is both present and alive and can be investigated through observation, listening, and cohabitation. By co-creating the participants' experiences, narrative inquiry emphasizes the relational engagement between the researcher and the participant when writing and analyzing texts.

### 2.2 Participants and Sampling Technique

A non-probability purposive sampling method intentionally included participants with diverse gender identities and religious backgrounds, ensuring a thorough exploration of their experiences and perspectives. This qualitative approach prioritizes in-depth understanding over statistical generalization, aligning with the study's focus on capturing nuanced phenomena (Campbell et al., 2020).

A sample size of 5 was chosen to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences. The qualitative research goal of gathering rich and detailed data justifies this decision. A small, purposively selected group allows for more focused data collection and analysis, which is crucial for investigating complex topics (Subedi, 2021).

*Eligibility Criteria* - for the study include being a Filipino citizen aged 18-26, identifying as LGBTQIA+, raised and currently living in a religious household, able to provide informed consent and participate in study procedures, and fluent in English or Tagalog.

*Exclusion Criteria* - include individuals who may be uncomfortable discussing their sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious upbringing, those with cognitive impairments affecting their participation, and those currently in crisis or experiencing severe mental health issues.

The researchers prioritized ethical considerations throughout the sampling process. Before recruitment, they obtained ethical clearance from the Research and Development Center of UPHSD-Molino to safeguard the welfare of the participants. The researchers obtained informed consent from all participants while maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. They also ensured that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

### 2.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study will consist of a researcher-made semi-structured interview protocol approved and validated by 3 licensed professionals in the field of Psychology and Research to be used in interviews conducted with the participants. This is a qualitative data collection method that allows for a balance between guided

questions and the flexibility to explore emerging topics. This method begins with a set of standardized questions but allows the interviewer to delve deeper into areas of interest that may arise during the interview.

The research team designed the semi-structured interview questions to tailor them to the study's objectives and to explore the following sections:

1. *Lived Experiences*: Questions focusing on their familial relationships, religious upbringing, and interactions within their spiritual communities.
2. *Family Dynamics*: This section is about the dynamics within their families, including levels of acceptance, support, and understanding regarding their sexual orientation or gender identity.
3. *Mental Health*: The interview included questions about the participants' emotional well-being and any challenges they may have faced related to their LGBTQ+ identity within their religious upbringing.
4. *Impact of Religious Beliefs*: The researchers asked participants to share how their religious beliefs and practices have influenced their sense of self, relationships with family members and peers, and overall well-being.

Validation of the semi-structured interview guide involves reviewing questions for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness to ensure content validity (Adeoye-

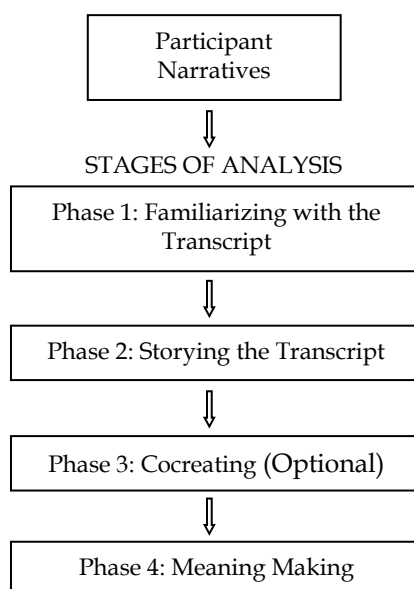
Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows for both focused exploration of research objectives and emergent ideas, ensuring adaptability to diverse participant experiences. Reliability is ensured through a set of core questions consistently asked to all participants (Ahlin, 2019). This approach maintains a balance between structure and flexibility, enhancing the reliability of the data collected.

## 2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Given that the study anchors itself on the participants' narratives, the stories we tell about ourselves, others, and society (Bolen & Adams, 2017)—the researchers opted for narrative inquiry through semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. Interviews done either face-to-face or online depending on the participants' availability, lasting at least a total of 30 minutes, were audio-recorded (and video-recorded with permission) and later transcribed for accuracy.

## 2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

Transcripts of the interviews, the primary sources of information for narrative studies, were interpreted using Narrative Analysis, which aims to provide the research context for the participants' personal stories. As there are various processes for analyzing narratives, the researchers' reference most of the steps provided in the method used by Nasheeda et al. (2019). The step-by-step process is as follows:



**Figure 1.** *Narrative Analysis Model*

### **Phase 1: Familiarizing with the Transcript**

This phase involves reading and listening to it multiple times to identify a story's who, what, and when. This familiarity allows the researcher to see how the person

being interviewed tells their story, including their perspective and experiences. By understanding the order of events and key moments, the researcher can identify how the person creates a narrative and integrates their



experiences into a story that reflects their social world. Finally, the researcher needs to organize the information from the interview into a precise sequence of events, which is a crucial part of storytelling.

### **Phase 2: Storying the Transcript**

A method called employment involves examining the way a person speaks, describing events, and talking about characters and their roles. The main objective of this step is to make sense of how events connect and relate to each other and focus on the function of a character's actions rather than the specific characters themselves.

### **Phase 3: Cocreating (Optional)**

If gaps appear in the organized transcript, it will be sent back to the participant for re-checking to confirm whether it accurately reflects their story. Follow-up interviews may be conducted to discuss discrepancies and confusing parts to fully understand the narratives and create the final story.

### **Phase 4: Meaning Making**

As the last step, researchers will examine the transcripts from different perspectives to find the meaning behind the stories using structural analysis. This analysis focuses on how the story is conveyed and how language is used, which is crucial for reflecting a person's beliefs, values, and how they see and feel about a situation.

## **2.6 Ethical Considerations**

The questions were formulated based on the two theoretical frameworks and Measures of Religiosity (Höllinger & Makula, 2021). The Minority Stress Theory compares the excessive social stress experienced by minority groups due to their stigmatized status, which contributes to the common stress people may usually experience. The ISSP's measurement of religiosity emphasizes the dimensions of belief and practice, which helped form the development of the questions. The questions will be open-ended and exploratory to allow the participants to freely share their experiences while ensuring alignment with the study's objectives.

Before data collection, researchers secured approval from the Research & Development Council (R&DC) and the Office of the School Director. An agreement was co-signed with the university to ensure ethical compliance. Potential participants were invited via email or in person, provided with an overview of the study, and asked to complete a pre-selection survey to confirm eligibility. Informed consent was obtained, outlining the study's purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and participants' right to withdraw at any time.

## **3.0 Results and Discussion**

Drawing upon the power of qualitative research to reveal the complex and nuanced stories of religion and sexual identity within each unique expression of the participants, the researchers aim to learn more about the motivations and experiences of individuals belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community who currently live in religious households and their implications for the surrounding broader societal context. This study examines the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ young adults navigating their identities within religious Filipino households. The following are the four key themes that emerge from the data which aligns with the study's research objectives.

### **Theme 1: Early Religious Experiences**

At an early age, participants were introduced to their respective religions — Catholicism, Jehovah's Witness, or Christianity — primarily through their families. This early exposure fostered a bond with their families, bringing them happiness and fulfillment. Initially, practicing religion was a source of joy and connection for them.

*"Ever since I was a child, I've been exposed to the Catholic religion. Back in grade school, after classes, I would attend catechism. Then, when I got home, we would pray using the rosary or watch videos about Divine Mercy or the Virgin Mary. So almost every day, like every week, I was constantly exposed to being religious."*

However, as they grew older and were exposed to diverse beliefs and opinions, they began to realize and confront their sexual identities. This led to internal conflict, as many of their religious teachings regarded homosexuality as a sin. This conflict caused them to question their faith, mainly when they felt that being part of the LGBTQIA+ community meant their religion did not accept them.

*"Growing up, I thought being part of this community is bad... is a sin... Maybe the only difference is that I have my own interpretation that when LGBTQ+ is mentioned, that's my limit, I don't know if I'll still follow it like that... It's like I can't do anything about it; it's not my choice to be part of the community or it's like it's not my choice to be part of LGBTQ+, but my belief in religion is still the same."*

What once was a source of happiness started feeling like a duty. Over time, practicing religion became less about personal fulfillment and more about meeting the expectations of their families. For participants, this sense of obligation stemmed from a fear of potential consequences, such as being scolded by parents or losing familial affection.

*"So, for me, it feels difficult to get along with them, to go along with what they do, because it feels like I'm losing my freedom. That's where I lose my freedom—in the part where I don't want to be religious. It feels very forced; the things I do for them. They often get angry (when I don't comply), so I have to do or follow what they want... It feels like I have no choice, like I have to follow them."*

Despite these struggles, participants' responses varied in how they reconciled their faith with their identity. Others chose to retain their belief in and practice of their religion, while others shifted their faith directly to God, distancing themselves from the institutional aspects of their religion. On the other hand, individuals decided to reject their religion altogether, citing perceived hypocrisy and a lack of integrity among some members of their religious communities.

*"As of now, since I turned 16, I stopped practicing religion, but my parents don't know that I have no interest in practicing it. Though I'm not atheist or agnostic, I've stopped my religious practices. Ever since I was a child, I participated in worship, but as I grew older, I no longer believed in it. As much as possible, I stay at home while they attend their church activities."*

Participants described being deeply embedded in spiritual practices from a young age, often in environments where faith was interwoven with family life. This immersion was nurturing initially, providing a framework of values. However, this deeply ingrained religiosity set the stage for later conflict, as participants experienced a sense of alienation from religious institutions that labeled their identities as sinful and wrong.

Knowing that parental communication and attitudes, including religious and spiritual beliefs, significantly shape the emotional support LGBTQIA+ individuals receive (Maliňáková et al., 2019) when familial rejections occur that stem from heterosexist or cisnormative religious values, the positive link between family warmth and self-esteem leads to outcomes such as pain and emotional disconnection. (Meanley et al., 2021; DeChants et al., 2022). Using the Minority Stress Theory, it can be implied that these conflicts manifested in self-hatred and emotional turmoil as participants navigated the discord between their identities and familial expectations.

## **Theme 2: Comfort and Freedom**

The participants defined home as a place or a person who serves as their "safe space." It should bring a sense of peace, security, and acceptance. On the other hand, the participants think of freedom as the ability to express their thoughts, preferences, likes and dislikes, without limits.

*"Home for me is where they can accept you for who you are, where they accept you for what you are."*

*"Freedom, for me, is having the ability to do whatever you want and be who you want to be. It's like there are no limits to what you want to do."*

However, they expressed that as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, the supposed essence of home and freedom is not felt and is different from what they are experiencing.

*"The very unfortunate thing is that I'm not free to express my sexuality to my family because they don't know about it. Since our household is religious, I don't have the freedom to express my sexuality."*

For LGBTQIA+ young adults raised in religious households, finding peace often involves navigating the tensions between religious expectations and personal identity. Participants shared their desire for a "home" as a place of safety and acceptance. However, their religious households often limited their ability to express themselves freely. It further underscores the stressors individuals belonging to minorities face and discrimination embedded within family structures reflecting social norms that stigmatize LGBTQIA+ identities, forcing participants to suppress their true selves.

These findings reflect the study of Rosenkratz et al. (2020), who identified cognitive-affective factors, such as emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility, as crucial for developing higher levels of parental acceptance. When these factors are absent, rejection often manifests through increased conflict and neglect, reinforcing the restrictive environment that stifles comfort and freedom for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

## **Theme 3: Imposed Stigma**

Fear is the most consistent aspect of the participants' journey living in a religious home as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The fear of the repercussions of coming out haunts them to this day, which is why none of the participants are entirely open about their sexual identity with their families. They often anticipate being subjected to their parents' insulting remarks and mockery toward the LGBTQIA+ community, which deepens their emotional strain and internal conflict.

*"Uh, it's scary to say that you're part of this (LGBTQIA+) community because deep down, you know you won't be fully accepted. And just to share something my cousin said—her dad once said that if he finds out she's gay, he'll have her hanged upside down."*

Participants expressed that even when they revealed their sexual identity, it was dismissed as a "phase"—something temporary that could or should be changed or "cured." This reaction adds to their feelings of invalidation and rejection, making them hesitant to express their true selves fully.

*"Their religious beliefs have an impact because they always say that God gave that to you, that it's a negative thing. It's a challenge for an LGBTQ individual, and they believe that if you pray enough, it might go away, like it's a sickness. Their 'acceptance' isn't really acceptance because it doesn't come with respect."*

The participants frequently struggle with self-expression, often choosing to hide their sexual orientation to meet their families' expectations or to avoid conflict. They worry about their relatives' reactions, especially their parents if they reveal their true identities. It contributes to social limitation, as they feel compelled to avoid certain social situations or present themselves in a way that aligns with their family's beliefs.

The expectations rooted in their families' religious beliefs create additional challenges. Participants report difficulty concealing their true identities and feel uncomfortable or hesitant in conversations, even with others outside their families. They are cautious in communicating, fearing judgment or exposure.

*"There are times when I really try to act more feminine or behave in a more feminine way so that they won't raise suspicions about my gender identity."*

This emotional and social burden leads to significant mental strain. Participants struggle with questions about their sexuality, gender expression, and overall sense of self, often grappling with the opposing views perpetuated by their religious families. These internal conflicts, combined with a reluctance to discuss their worries or troubles with their families, leave participants feeling isolated and emotionally drained.

*"Every time, I kneel before the Lord and cry to Him in our church during Praise and Worship, saying, 'Lord, why am I like this?' I cried about it. It felt like I hated myself at some point, I couldn't accept who I was. Actually, now I can say that I haven't fully accepted myself as part of the community."*

Stigma often can be observed in overt and subtle ways, including family rejection, societal condemnation, and internalized conflict. Results indicated that religious beliefs contributed to the stigmatization of LGBTQIA+ identities, further providing support to studies that emphasized how religion plays a significant role in marginalizing LGBTQ+

individuals (Shepherd, 2021) and exacerbating stress that only minorities uniquely experience, especially in a country that is highly religious and conservative with doctrines that mostly pushes traditional gender roles.

Sentiments coming from the responses of the participants indicated that parental or familial rejection remains a significant source of imposed stigma as it is a common experience for LGBTQIA+ youth throughout their upbringing. This leads to psychological burdens and mental health struggles as it continues to put the individuals in a hostile environment, hindering their sense of discovery of their sexual identity.

#### **Theme 4: Coping Mechanisms and Ways of Adaptation**

Balancing faith and identity is a deeply personal and challenging journey, especially for those navigating the tension between their sexual identity and the expectations of religious communities. For individuals, finding a safe space to share these struggles becomes essential. This frequently entails relying on younger family members, siblings, or cousins, who may be more sympathetic because of their close age and generational perspective—instead of elder relatives who could have more traditional opinions.

*"My parents don't know, but both of my sisters know that I'm bisexual and that I'm part of the community."*

With this being said, individuals adopt various coping mechanisms, from reconciling their faith with their identity, patiently waiting for the right moment to fully embrace their truth or seeking solace in accepting those who offer unconditional support.

*"After I graduate and get a job, I think I want to move out so I can have the freedom to do what I want. I don't think I have plans to serve in our ministry, and I'm planning to leave, but my relationship with Jesus won't change."*

Due to the stress and burden highlighted in the previous themes, participants often mentioned various strategies to aid their difficult situations. These ranged from seeking solace in other, more accepting family members to planning future independence to secure personal freedom. This reliance on external support systems reflects the Reconciliation Theory's emphasis on creating positive connections and acknowledging hardships as a step toward healing. By finding safe spaces and allies within or outside their families, participants took steps to reconcile their identities with their environments. Additionally, contrary to expectations, some participants chose to either keep their faith or reconcile with the idea by redefining their relationships with religion in their terms, illustrating how an individual can adapt to minority stresses by creating

personal pathways to spiritual fulfillment, separate from institutionalized religion.

In conclusion, the results showed that minority stress coming not just from external sources but also from proximity (familial and personal relationships) poses a significant risk to the lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals. However, despite the restrictive nature of religion and the stress and stigma it imposed on the participants, they

demonstrated resilience through various coping mechanisms that created positive connections and improved personal agency. These findings, condensed and summarized in the table below, underscore the significant role of family, religion, and societal norms in shaping the challenges and adaptive strategies of LGBTQIA+ individuals, calling for greater inclusivity and support within religious and familial settings.

*Summary Table*

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Early Religious Experiences	Early Exposure to Religion	Religion shaping early childhood perspectives and behaviors.
	Internal Conflict	Tension between religious expectations and a developing sense of self.
	Sense of Obligation	Conflict between sense of obligations and autonomy
	Faith and Identity	Aligning with religious norms to gain acceptance or avoid judgment
Comfort and Freedom	What Home Means	Home as a source of comfort, peace and authenticity
	What Freedom Means	Being true to oneself and feeling unrestricted
	Contrast of Home and Freedom	A dichotomy between restrictive home environments and external freedom
Imposed Stigma	Fear of the Repercussions	Fear of losing relationships due to conflicting values or identity
	Invalidation and Rejection	Being treated as 'different' by family or community
	Concealment of True Identity	Pretending to align with religious norms to avoid stigma
	Manifestations of Internal Struggle	Adapting a performative identity
Coping Mechanisms and Ways of Adaptation	Interrelationship Support	Finding emotional validation through relationships with like-minded individuals
	Coping Mechanisms	Relying on distractions, seeking isolation, and introspection

## 4.0 Conclusion

Creating secure and accepting environments in the surroundings should be a top priority for religious convictions and organizations. These areas ought to be created to encourage candid conversations and encourage one another, enabling LGBTQIA+ young adults to express who they are, not worrying about prejudice or condemnation. Regarding the context of religion, fostering open discussion regarding LGBTQIA+ topics can lessen stigma and advance acceptance.

Salvador (2018) points out that there currently are not enough LGBT-affirmative psychological solutions for members of religious groups who are struggling with psychotherapy issues like hostility. Counseling services that are especially suited to the needs of LGBTQIA+ people ought to be created and implemented by mental health experts. In order to offer comprehensive help, these

counseling sessions must incorporate cultural and religious backgrounds. This method guarantees that people receive direction that honors their religious convictions while encouraging acceptance of oneself, healthy coping mechanisms, and family disputes.

To strengthen the results' generalizability, the researchers advise future researchers who would like to replicate or refer to this work to use a bigger sample size. The experiences of LGBTQIA+ young adults in religious environments can be better understood with a larger sample size. A phenomenological research design can provide a more in-depth understanding of LGBTQIA+ individual lives. Using this method, researchers can investigate participants' subjective perceptions and interpretations of their interactions within religious communities. Future researchers should consider including people from less



frequently researched faiths, like Islam and other denominations. A more nuanced view of the relationship between religion and LGBTQIA+ identities can result from this inclusion, which can highlight the diverse impacts of various religious beliefs and practices on LGBTQIA+ Gen Z young adults.

Ultimately, the arduous journey that young adults who identify as LGBTQIA+ in the Philippines take while navigating their identities in religious homes has been evident throughout this research. The findings answered the research questions by revealing how religious teachings affect familial relationships that shape the participants' experiences. Significant internal conflicts, mental strain, and a loss of connection to faith resulted from the conflict between sexual identity and religious convictions. Additionally, due to the stigmatization and lack of acceptance, their well-being and social functioning were affected.

It underscores the need for greater inclusivity, understanding, and empathy within familial and religious settings. It is a call to action for families, religious institutions, and society to create environments where acceptance and open dialogue can flourish. By doing so, it can pave the way for individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community to thrive without compromising their identities and well-being.

Furthermore, this study contributes valuable insights to the broader discourse on the intersection of religion and LGBTQIA+ identities in the Philippines. It provides a foundation for future research, particularly in exploring diverse religious affiliations and their varying impacts on individual experiences. Ultimately, the narratives shared in this study will remind us of the power of resilience and the importance of having inclusive spaces where everyone, regardless of their identity, can feel truly at home.

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