

A Rainbow Sunset: LGBTQ Older Adults and Their Support System in Indigenous Community

Alexander G. Killip Jr.
University of Baguio

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 20 Dec 2024
Revised: 11 Feb 2025
Accepted: 26 Feb 2025

ABSTRACT

This study utilized a qualitative design that employs a descriptive exploratory approach to capture informant responses regarding beliefs and ideas concerning the perspective of LGBTQ older adults on aging in the indigenous community. The researcher used purposive sampling and referral method in gathering the informants of the study. Eight informants met the specified criteria outlined in this study, which required participants to be members of the LGBTQ community and above the age of 55. These informants were selected from various barangays in the municipality of Bontoc, including *Poblacion, Bontoc Ili, Samoki, Callutit, Can-ao, Talubin, Malidcong, and Tocuean*. The findings present a nuanced analysis on the challenges faced by LGBTQ elders, the current support systems available to LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community, including formal and informal networks, and the perceptions and attitudes of the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders and their support needs. One of the most prominent challenges is the influence of traditional values and cultural norms, which most of the informants agreed that it can lead to exclusion and a lack of acceptance within the community. The study further revealed that formal support systems predominantly consist of government-sponsored senior citizen programs, while providing general support for senior citizens, often lack LGBTQ-specific components. Lastly, the study emphasizes a diverse range of perceptions and attitudes within the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders, reflecting the complex interplay between cultural traditions and evolving viewpoints. The study illuminates the intricate dynamics surrounding LGBTQ elders in an indigenous community, emphasizing the array of challenges they encounter. This underscores the significance of enhancing and expanding support networks, both formal and informal, to cultivate a more inclusive environment where LGBTQ elders are not just recognized but also valued and empowered.

Keywords: Formal Support System, Informal Network, Gender Sensitive, Broader Indigenous Community, LGBTQ

INTRODUCTION

In the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) of the Philippines, the intersection of indigenous culture and LGBTQ rights has given rise to a unique and supportive community for LGBTQ elders. This community showcases the resilience and adaptability of indigenous traditions, blending them with contemporary acceptance of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. In recent decades, there has been a growing recognition of LGBTQ+ rights in the Philippines, with advancements such as anti-discrimination laws and same-sex marriage discussions. Still, LGBTQ elders often face unique challenges due to their age and the conservative roots of their communities. This has led to the emergence of support systems specifically designed to address their needs (Cutiongco-de la Paz et al., 2018). While the support system for LGBTQ elders in the Cordillera Administrative Region has made significant strides, challenges persist. The region, like much of the Philippines, still faces issues such as discrimination and social stigma. Some community members may hold conservative views, creating tension within families and communities (Salamanca, & Abasolo, 2020).

However, progress is evident. The introduction of anti-discrimination laws and the continued work of NGOs have helped raise awareness and foster acceptance. Indigenous cultures, with their inherent adaptability and resilience, are evolving to encompass LGBTQ+ inclusivity while preserving their unique identities (De La Salle University – Jesse M. Robredo Foundation, 2017). One of the most significant achievements in the Cordillera Administrative Region's approach to supporting LGBTQ elders is the preservation of indigenous values. The community has managed to strike a delicate balance between embracing contemporary LGBTQ+ inclusion and upholding traditional beliefs. By integrating the experiences of LGBTQ elders into the fabric of their cultures, indigenous communities in the CAR are not only respecting diversity but also demonstrating the power of tradition in promoting acceptance and harmony. This blend of old and new is a testament to the strength of indigenous cultures and their ability to adapt to changing times (Philippine Commission on Women, 2020).

The experiences of LGBTQ elders in the Cordillera Administrative Region serve as a powerful example of resilience, adaptability, and inclusivity within indigenous communities. While challenges persist, the support system that has emerged showcases the potential for positive change when traditional values are combined with contemporary acceptance. By fostering dialogue, advocating for legal protections, and preserving their rich cultural heritage, the

CAR's indigenous communities are paving the way for a more inclusive future for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity (Philippine Commission on Women, 2020).

OBJECTIVES

The study explored the perspectives of the LGBTQ members as one of the vulnerable and neglected sectors of their community. Specifically, it sought answers to the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the specific challenges and needs faced by LGBTQ elders within the context of an indigenous community;
2. To determine the current support systems available to LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community, including formal and informal networks;
3. To analyze the perceptions and the factors that influence the attitude of the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders.

METHODS

The study employed a qualitative research design using a descriptive exploratory approach to capture the beliefs and experiences of LGBTQ older adults on aging in an indigenous community. It followed an interpretive paradigm, valuing participants' responses as valid knowledge sources. The research used purposive and referral sampling to identify informants aged 55 and above who were members of the LGBTQ community in Bontoc, Mt. Province. The data collection process involved in-depth interviews guided by a validated tool, ensuring reliability through inter-rater agreement. Thematic and content analysis methods were applied to identify key themes, analyze language use, and interpret experiences, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and support systems.

Ethical considerations were rigorously followed, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, and their anonymity was maintained throughout the research. The researcher also engaged with community leaders to minimize potential stigma and ensure respectful interactions. Triangulation techniques were used to validate findings through interviews, personal observations, and existing literature. The final research output was presented to relevant institutions to enhance support and social welfare programs for LGBTQ older adults in indigenous communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Within the context of an indigenous community, LGBTQ elders encounter several challenges and have specific needs. Challenges include facing social stigma and discrimination (de Vries and Blando, 2004), which can lead to isolation and mental health issues. The traditional values and conservative attitudes prevalent in the community contribute to this isolation (Bolding et al., 2022). Moreover, challenges related to cultural norms and traditional expectations can further compound the difficulties faced by LGBTQ elders.

Challenges Faced by LGBTQ Elders in the Indigenous Community

The findings of this study shed light on the profound impact of social stigma and discrimination on LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community of Bontoc, Mt. Province. These issues are identified as significant contributors to isolation and mental health concerns among this demographic.

Social Stigma faced by the LGBTQ members in the Indigenous Community. Social stigma are the negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes held by society towards individuals or groups based on certain characteristics, traits, or behaviors. These characteristics may deviate from societal norms or expectations, leading to marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion (Ottati et al., 2005). In the context of LGBTQ elders within indigenous communities, social stigma manifests as societal disapproval, prejudice, and discriminatory behavior towards individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or cultural background. This stigma can have profound effects on the well-being and mental health of LGBTQ elders, contributing to feelings of isolation and hindering their access to support and resources within their communities (Sanchez et al., 2006).

The findings of the study shows that it is evident that social stigma is a significant issue that can lead to isolation and mental health problems for LGBTQ elders of the indigenous community in Bontoc Mt. Province. The informants of the study highlighted the “*ug-ugali nan naipuan*” (the values of where we came from) or the influence of traditional values and cultural norms is another substantial challenge, where these LGBTQ elders may face exclusion and a lack of acceptance due to the deeply rooted conservative values and expectations in the community. Over time, there has been some evolution in attitudes, most of the informants agreed that, “*san inong-a ad wani et maawatan da mapay*” (the youth of today has better understanding) and acceptance on the presence of LGBTQ members driven by increased awareness and education about LGBTQ issues, but challenges persist.

Discrimination faced by the LGBTQ members in the Indigenous Community. Discrimination are the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on certain characteristics, such as race, gender, sexual

orientation, religion, or age. This treatment can take various forms, including exclusion, harassment, unequal opportunities, or denial of rights and privileges (Smith et al., 2022). In the context of LGBTQ elders within indigenous communities, discrimination often manifests as systemic or interpersonal actions that marginalize or disadvantage individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or cultural background. This discrimination can result in significant social, economic, and psychological harm, perpetuating inequality and hindering the full participation and well-being of LGBTQ elders within their communities (Boggs et al., 2017).

The findings of the study shows that LGBTQ elders grapple with discrimination. Informant 1,3,4 and 5 highlights that LGBTQ elders often confronted discrimination, their common statement is “*maifafain kami ay kanayun saet makalikaliyan*” (we are always embarrassed and scolded by the people), which can result in isolation and take a toll on their mental health. Informant 2, 3 and 4 also underscores that LGBTQ elders frequently experience isolation, primarily stemming from the deeply ingrained traditional values and conservative attitudes that permeate their society. The prevalence of discrimination poses significant hurdles for LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community, affecting their well-being and sense of belonging (David and Cernin, 2008). Recognizing and addressing this issue is fundamental in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ elders within the community.

Traditional Norms and Cultural Practices. Traditional norms and cultural practices are the established beliefs, values, customs, and behaviors that are passed down through generations within a particular community or society. These norms and practices play a central role in shaping the identity, social interactions, and worldview of individuals within that community. Traditional norms and cultural practices are deeply rooted in the community's history, land, and ancestral knowledge, serving as a source of identity, cohesion, and resilience (Smith et al., 2022).

The findings of the study shows that the challenges faced by LGBTQ elders are also closely tied to traditional norms and cultural practices. Informants 3, 5,6,7 acknowledges that LGBTQ elders often encounter difficulties associated with cultural norms and traditional expectations, which can lead to feelings of exclusion and a lack of acceptance. Response 4,7,6 further stated that “*sin pamati nan anam-a ay lalaki ken fapai yangay nan inamag lumawig*” (the belief of the elders that only men and women are created by Lumawig (the god of ifontok)), further emphasizes that these challenges are rooted in traditional norms and conservative values that have been deeply ingrained in the community. These challenges point to the need for the community to engage in open dialogues and foster understanding between the LGBTQ elders and the broader community, aiming to reconcile traditional values with the identities and needs of LGBTQ elders (Pereira, 2022). This approach can help create a more inclusive environment that respects the cultural heritage while supporting the unique needs of LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community.

Influence of Traditional Values. The influence of traditional values remains a significant factor in shaping the experiences of LGBTQ elders within the context of an indigenous community, as emphasized by multiple informants. These traditional values and expectations can have a substantial impact on the lives of LGBTQ elders, often contributing to the challenges they face. The presence of historical prejudices and discrimination rooted in traditional values is still felt by older LGBTQ individuals. These deep-seated attitudes create barriers to full acceptance and support within the community. To ensure the well-being and inclusivity of LGBTQ elders, it is crucial to proactively address these issues and work towards fostering greater understanding and respect for the intersection of LGBTQ identities and traditional values (Bayanihan LGBTQ Elders' Support Group, 2023). This underscores the need for ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between tradition and contemporary acceptance, recognizing the unique experiences and contributions of LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community.

Evolution of Challenges Over Time. The evolution of challenges faced by LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community over time is a complex interplay of changing attitudes and the persistent influence of traditional values. Respondents acknowledge that changing attitudes and increased awareness of LGBTQ issues have positively influenced the community, but challenges persist, underscoring the need for ongoing support and education. The dynamics of societal attitudes are evident, highlighting the importance of continuous community education and support to ensure the well-being and inclusivity of LGBTQ elders. It is clear that further efforts are required to foster understanding, acceptance, and support for this demographic.

The findings of the study shed light on the significant challenges faced by LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community. One of the most prominent challenges is the influence of traditional values and cultural norms, which most of the informants agreed that it can lead to exclusion and a lack of acceptance within the community. Moreover, most of the informants agreed that the deeply rooted conservative values and expectations have historically contributed to the stigmatization of LGBTQ identities, they further added that “*san ug-ugali id sang-adum ay ipapati din anam-a ay masulot*” (the conservative values system in the past that the elders wanted to be followed) creating barriers to full inclusion. While most of the informants agreed that there has been some progress in evolving attitudes over time, driven by increased awareness and education about LGBTQ issues, these challenges persist.

Needs of LGBTQ Elders in the Indigenous Community

The findings of the study show that the needs of LGBTQ elders include access to culturally sensitive healthcare. Moreover, addressing this challenge requires fostering understanding, inclusivity, and open dialogues within the community to create a more supportive environment for LGBTQ elders while respecting the traditional values and cultural practices that are an integral part of the indigenous community.

Access to Culturally Sensitive Healthcare. The needs of LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community that require attention is access to culturally sensitive healthcare. Access to culturally sensitive healthcare is crucial, as emphasized by respondents. It is imperative to ensure that healthcare services are not only inclusive but also respectful of the sexual orientations and gender identities of LGBTQ elders. This need highlights the importance of healthcare that recognizes and addresses the unique experiences and challenges faced by this demographic. Inclusive and affirming healthcare services are a critical component of creating a supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community.

Current support systems available to LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community, including formal and informal networks

In the context of supporting LGBTQ members within indigenous communities, government-sponsored programs may include a range of services aimed at addressing their unique needs and challenges. Several informants have highlighted that while formal support systems, such as government-sponsored senior citizen programs, are present in the indigenous community, they often lack LGBTQ-specific components, as they stated that, “*faken met* LGBTQ elders’ program, program for elders *lng met*” (programs are not specifically LGBTQ elders related but for programs for elders in general). This observation underlines the existing gap in catering to the distinct needs and challenges faced by LGBTQ elders. The absence of LGBTQ-specific components within these formal support systems signifies the need for a more inclusive approach. To better serve the LGBTQ elder population, formal support systems should be enhanced to address the specific requirements, provide tailored services, and ensure that LGBTQ elders are not left behind in the community's support network (Barker et al., 2018). It is crucial to work towards creating more LGBTQ-inclusive and LGBTQ-friendly components within these formal systems to ensure the well-being and inclusivity of LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community (Cagampang, 2018).

Most of the informants underscore that formal support systems for LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community predominantly involve government-sponsored programs aimed at senior citizens. However, a common theme emerges that these programs often fall short in addressing the specific needs of LGBTQ elders. While they may offer general support for senior citizens, they may not be fully inclusive or sensitive to the unique challenges and requirements faced by LGBTQ elders. This highlights a significant gap in formal support systems, indicating the need for more targeted and LGBTQ-inclusive services within the government-sponsored programs. To better serve the LGBTQ elder population, it is essential to work towards making these formal support systems more responsive to the distinct experiences and needs of this community (Cagampang, 2018).

Limited Social Services for LGBTQ Elders. The informants have consistently pointed out the limited availability of social services for LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community. Several informants highlight the scarce to no organizations providing LGBTQ-specific support. These findings underscore the critical need for more comprehensive and tailored social services dedicated to LGBTQ elders. Many informants suggest the creation of specific LGBTQ senior centers or programs as a way to address their unique needs. It is clear that enhancing social services for LGBTQ elders is essential to ensure their well-being and inclusion within the community. A more proactive approach to expanding social services and support networks would significantly improve the lives of LGBTQ elders, making them feel valued and recognized within the indigenous community (Espinoza, 2011).

The findings related to social services for LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community shed light on several crucial aspects. A consistent theme emerges regarding the limited availability of social services tailored to the LGBTQ elder population, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive and specialized support. Respondents frequently stress the necessity of establishing dedicated LGBTQ senior centers or programs to address the unique needs of these elders effectively.

Dedicated LGBTQ Senior Centers. The informants highlighted a consistent demand for dedicated LGBTQ senior centers or programs within the indigenous community. These programs are seen as a crucial step toward addressing the unique needs of LGBTQ elders. The informants express the view that the social services currently available are quite limited, with only a handful of organizations providing support tailored to the LGBTQ community. As such, there is a clear and pressing need to establish LGBTQ-welcoming senior centers or initiatives to ensure that the distinct requirements of LGBTQ elders are adequately met. The community recognizes that providing these dedicated spaces and services is essential for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community.

Overall, the findings related to the support systems for LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community reveal both strengths and areas for improvement. Formal support systems predominantly consist of government-sponsored senior citizen programs, which, while providing general support for senior citizens, often lack LGBTQ-specific components. This underscores the need to make these systems more responsive to the distinct experiences and needs of LGBTQ elders. Similarly, social services for LGBTQ elders are limited, emphasizing the urgent need for more comprehensive and tailored support services dedicated to this demographic, such as dedicated LGBTQ senior centers or programs.

Informal Networks for LGBTQ Elders. Most of the informants indicate the existence of informal networks within the indigenous community that play a vital role in providing support to LGBTQ elders. These informal networks often consist of LGBTQ-affirming social groups and circles of friends who offer emotional support and companionship to LGBTQ elders. These friendships are essential as they allow LGBTQ elders to form close bonds with others who share similar life experiences. The presence of such networks fosters a sense of community and belonging, helping to address the social and emotional needs of LGBTQ elders in the absence of dedicated formal support systems. These informal networks highlight the importance of peer support and solidarity within the indigenous community. The informants highlighted the presence of informal networks that actively support LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community. These networks consist of LGBTQ-friendly gatherings, mutual support among LGBTQ friends, and local LGBTQ advocacy groups. Such gatherings, which may include activities like potlucks, picnics, and game nights, provide LGBTQ elders with a relaxed and comfortable space for socializing and building connections. The existence of these LGBTQ-friendly gatherings reflects an effort to create inclusive spaces where LGBTQ elders can find companionship and engage in social activities that contribute to their overall well-being. These networks play a crucial role in addressing the social and emotional needs of LGBTQ elders in the absence of dedicated formal support systems (Barker et al., 2018).

Community-Based Support Systems. Several of the informants indicate that formal support systems within the indigenous community actively engage in community outreach and education to address the specific needs and challenges of LGBTQ elders. This involves organizing workshops, seminars, and information campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the unique issues faced by LGBTQ elders by the local government unit of Bontoc in many occasions. By providing education and information, these formal support systems seek to foster a better understanding of the challenges that LGBTQ elders encounter and promote inclusivity within the community.

The responses highlight that the effectiveness of the current support systems available to LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community varies. While informal networks, such as LGBTQ-affirming social groups and gatherings, play a crucial role in reducing isolation and providing emotional support, the formal support systems are often less LGBTQ-specific. There is a consensus among respondents that there is room for improvement in the existing formal support systems to better cater to the specific needs of LGBTQ elders. Some respondents emphasize that these support groups are effective in offering emotional support and a sense of community. Still, their impact may be limited due to participation rates and the need for broader outreach and increased LGBTQ-specific focus. Overall, the effectiveness of support systems varies, indicating the need for further development and expansion of services tailored to the LGBTQ elder population within the indigenous community.

Prevailing Perceptions of the Broader Indigenous Community Towards LGBTQ Elders

Perception within the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders is multifaceted, encompassing a spectrum of attitudes shaped by cultural traditions and evolving beliefs. While some individuals exhibit understanding and acceptance, others adhere to more conservative views rooted in traditional beliefs, leading to varied perceptions within the community (Stein et al., 2010). This complex interplay highlights the need for continued efforts to foster understanding, bridge generational gaps, and promote inclusivity to effectively meet the specific support needs of LGBTQ elders (Pereira, 2022).

Respect for Eldership. The responses from most of the informants indicate that, within indigenous cultures, there is often a strong emphasis on respecting and honoring elders, a sentiment that extends to LGBTQ elders in many instances. Informants 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8 stated that, “*waday latta met respeto sin ili ken dakami tay amam-a ken ini-a kami et*” (we still received respect from the community since we are elders of the community), it shows that community members recognize the wisdom and life experiences of LGBTQ elders, suggesting a positive perception based on traditional values of honoring those who have lived longer. This respect for eldership represents an encouraging aspect of attitudes within the broader indigenous community, which can serve as a foundation for building more inclusive and supportive environments for LGBTQ elders. Efforts to bridge any existing gaps and further enhance understanding and acceptance within the community can build upon this foundation of respect (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2011).

Influence of Traditional Beliefs. The informants highlighted the influence of traditional beliefs on the perceptions and attitudes of the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders. Traditional norms and values within indigenous cultures may not always fully embrace LGBTQ identities, some of the informants stated that

“waday latta din ugali nan tanapina ay tinitigsas” (there are still traditional beliefs instill to some people in the community that is machismo), leading to tensions and mixed perceptions within the community. This underscores the complexity of the issue, as some community members may struggle to reconcile their cultural traditions with the existence of LGBTQ elders. It is important to recognize that these traditional beliefs are deeply rooted, and addressing this aspect of perception requires thoughtful and culturally sensitive approaches. Efforts to bridge the gap between traditional values and LGBTQ identities can help foster greater understanding and acceptance within the community, promoting a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ elders (Espinoza, 2011).

The findings of the study suggest that prevailing perceptions within the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders are characterized by a mixture of attitudes. Some individuals embrace diversity and exhibit understanding and acceptance, while others hold more conservative views that may be rooted in traditional beliefs and stigmatize LGBTQ identities. These mixed perceptions highlight the complex interplay between cultural traditions and evolving attitudes towards LGBTQ elders in the indigenous community. It underlines the need for continued efforts to foster understanding, bridge generational gaps, and promote inclusivity to ensure that the specific support needs of LGBTQ elders are met effectively.

The factors that influence the attitudes of the Broader Indigenous Community Towards LGBTQ Elders

Factors influencing the attitudes of the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders are multifaceted and vary significantly, contributing to a diverse range of experiences for LGBTQ elders within the community. One crucial factor is the intersection with cultural values, where prevailing attitudes towards LGBTQ elders often intersect with deeply rooted traditional beliefs and norms.

Intersection with Cultural Values. The informants indicate that prevailing attitudes towards LGBTQ elders within the broader indigenous community often intersect with cultural values. Balancing the respect for indigenous traditions and the recognition of LGBTQ identities can be a complex and challenging issue. Informants 1,2 3, and 6 stated that, *“holit kayet nan taku sina Bontoc nan lawa din panang iila da sinan LGBTQ”* (many people in Bontoc have a negative perspective towards LGBTQ). It shows that many community members hold traditional beliefs and norms that may not fully embrace LGBTQ identities, and these beliefs are deeply rooted in cultural traditions. This intersection between cultural values and LGBTQ identities can lead to prejudice or discrimination, making it crucial to address this complex issue sensitively and proactively to promote understanding and inclusivity (Stein et al., 2010).

Moreover, the responses from the informants highlighted the discrimination experiences faced by LGBTQ elders within the broader indigenous community. Discrimination can manifest in various forms, such as exclusion from family gatherings or traditional ceremonies as mentioned by one of the informants, *“nu mamingsan adi da kami itaptapi nu waday am-among tay ibain da dakami”* (sometimes they (family) don’t include us to any gathering since they are embarrassed to be with us), as well as difficulties in accessing essential services like healthcare or housing. Moreover, LGBTQ elders may also face social exclusion, being left out of community events and activities, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. These experiences underscore the importance of addressing discrimination and promoting inclusivity and acceptance within the community to better support the needs of LGBTQ elders.

Furthermore, the responses from the Informants shed light on the support needs of LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community. It is noted that in some cases, LGBTQ elders may experience rejection or estrangement from their families due to their sexual orientations or gender identities. This unfortunate situation can lead to not only emotional distress but also financial instability. It underscores the crucial necessity of creating a supportive and inclusive environment within the community to address the unique challenges and needs of LGBTQ elders, ensuring they receive the care and understanding they deserve (Smye, Browne, & Varcoe, 2017).

Generational Differences. The findings of the study suggest that generational differences play a role in the prevailing attitudes of the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders. Most of the informants indicates that in some cases, there may be limited awareness and understanding of LGBTQ issues, particularly among older generations, like social support system and healthcare. This lack of awareness can contribute to misconceptions and negative attitudes. It highlights the importance of inter-generational dialogue and education to bridge the gap in understanding and foster more inclusive attitudes within the community.

Moreover, the responses from the informants indicate that attitudes within the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders vary, especially within family contexts. According to the informants, they stated that *“san tanap-ina ay pamilya et tanggap da met nan ipugao ngem wada met din pamilya ay adida layad din annak da ay minbalin ay LGBTQ”* (while some families are accepting and supportive of their LGBTQ family members, others may struggle to understand or accept their LGBTQ relatives). This variation highlights the need for family support, education, and awareness programs that can promote acceptance and inclusivity within families, ultimately contributing to better support for LGBTQ elders in the community.

The findings of the study highlight the existence of stereotypes that affect LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community. This can lead to exclusion from traditional ceremonies and gatherings due to their sexual orientations or gender identities, resulting in feelings of isolation and the erasure of their contributions to the community's cultural heritage (Jackson et al., 2008). Moreover, the perpetuation of such stereotypes and misconceptions can foster discrimination, social isolation, and a lack of support for LGBTQ elders. Addressing these issues is crucial to creating a more inclusive and accepting environment for all members of the community (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2016).

Overall, the findings of the study emphasize the factors that influence the attitudes within the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders vary significantly. While some community members are accepting and embrace LGBTQ diversity, others may still hold prejudiced views. This wide spectrum of attitudes contributes to a diverse range of experiences for LGBTQ elders. On one hand, there are those who foster acceptance and inclusivity, providing support and understanding to LGBTQ elders (Smith et al., 2022). On the other hand, there are individuals who hold onto prejudices, which can result in discrimination and isolation of LGBTQ elders. It highlights the need for continued efforts to educate and raise awareness within the community, ultimately promoting a more welcoming and supportive environment for LGBTQ elders (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

The research sheds light on the complex dynamics surrounding LGBTQ elders in an indigenous community, underscoring the diverse challenges they face. Disparities in the effectiveness of current support systems highlight the need for enhancements in LGBTQ-specific services and outreach within formal structures. This emphasizes the importance of improving and broadening support systems, both formal and informal, to foster a more inclusive environment where LGBTQ elders are not only acknowledged but also esteemed and empowered.

Additionally, it is crucial to bridge the gap between existing services and cultural traditions. Integrating cultural sensitivity and inclusivity into support systems presents an opportunity to better address the needs of LGBTQ elders within the indigenous community. The ongoing efforts demonstrate a dedication to inclusivity and cultural understanding, acknowledging and honoring the distinct identities and contributions of LGBTQ elders. The study also reveals a diverse factor that influence range of attitudes within the broader indigenous community towards LGBTQ elders, reflecting the complex interplay between cultural traditions and evolving viewpoints. While some individuals exhibit understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ diversity, others uphold more conservative views rooted in traditional beliefs, leading to the stigmatization of LGBTQ identities. Continued efforts to educate and raise awareness within the community are deemed essential for fostering a more welcoming and supportive environment for LGBTQ elders. Addressing the intricate balance between cultural traditions and evolving attitudes can pave the way for a more inclusive, accepting community that supports the specific needs of LGBTQ elders.

REFERENCES

- [1] Anthony, A., Alba, B., Waling, A., Minichiello, V., Hughes, M., Barrett, C., Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. & Edmonds, S. (2021). Mental health and identity adjustment in older lesbian and gay adults: Assessing the role of whether their parents knew about their sexual orientation. *Aging & Mental Health* 25:8, pages 1499-1506.
- [2] Barker, G., Olukoya, A., & Mete, E. (2018). Acceptance and rejection of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals: A global perspective. In J. L. Chin, D. L. Kreitzer, & E. O'Neal (Eds.), *Handbook on well-being of working women* (pp. 1-20). Springer.
- [3] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- [4] Boggs J., Portz, J., King, D., Wright, L., Helander, K., Retrum, J. & Gozansky, W. (2017) Perspectives of LGBTQ Older Adults on Aging in Place: A Qualitative Investigation, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 64:11, 1539-1560, DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2016.1247539
- [5] Bolding, D., Acosta, A., Butler, B., Chau, A., Craig, A., Dunbar, F. (2022). Working With Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Clients: Occupational Therapy Practitioners' Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes, *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 10.5014/ajot.2022.049065, 76, 3.
- [6] Cagampang, R. (2018). Struggles of Filipino LGBTQ Elders: Voices from the Margin. *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, 68(2), 45-68.
- [7] Cutiongco-de la Paz, E. M., & Sy, K. T. (2018). LGBTQIA+ Health in the Philippines: A Scoping Review. *Journal of the ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies*, 33(2), 191-200.
- [8] David, S. and Cernin, A. (2008). Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Older Adults, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 20:1-2, 31-49, DOI: 10.1080/10538720802178908
- [9] DAWN (2021). "Sulod-Bukidnon Tribe: Advocates for LGBTQ+ Rights." Retrieved from <https://dawn.org.ph/stories/sulod-bukidnon-tribe-advocates-for-LGBTQ-rights/> De La Salle University – Jesse M. Robredo Foundation (2017). "LGBTQ Elders in the Philippines: A Participatory Research."

- [10] De Vries B.(2014). LG(BT) Persons in the Second Half of Life: The Intersectional Influences of Stigma and Cohort. *LGBTQ Health* 1(1), pp. 18-23.
- [11] de Vries, B., & Blando, J. (2004). The study of gay and lesbian lives: Lessons for social gerontology. In G. Herdt & B. de Vries (Eds.), *Gay and lesbian aging: Research and future directions* (pp. 3-28). New York: Springer.
- [12] Ertmer, P., & Newby, T. (1993). Behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism: Comparing critical features from an instructional design perspective. *Performance improvement quarterly*, 6(4), 50-72.
- [13] Espinoza R. (2011). The diverse elders coalition and LGBTQ aging: Connecting communities, issues, and resources in a historic moment. *Public Policy & Aging Report*, 21(3), pp. 8-12.
- [14] Fredriksen-Goldsen I, Kim J, Emlet A, Muraco A, Erosheva A., Hoy-Ellis C., & Petry H (2011). The aging and health report: Disparities and resilience among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender older adults. Institute for Multigenerational Health Retrieved from <http://caringandaging.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Full-Report-FINAL-11-16-11.pdf>
- [15] Fredriksen-Goldsen, K., Hoy-Ellis, C., Goldsen, J., Emlet, C. & Hooyman, N. (2014). Creating a Vision for the Future: Key Competencies and Strategies for Culturally Competent Practice with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBTQ) Older Adults in the Health and Human Services, *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 57:2-4, 80-107, DOI: 10.1080/01634372.2014.890690
- [16] Fredriksen-Goldsen, I., Kim, J., Goldsen, J., Shiu, C., & Emlet, C. A. (2016). Addressing Social, Economic, and Health Disparities of LGBTQ Older Adults & Best Practices in Data Collection. *LGBTQ+ National Aging Research Center, University of Washington, Seattle, WA*: Retrieved from: <http://caringandaging.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016-Disparities-Factsheet-Final-Final.pdf>
- [17] Philippine Statistics Authority (2016). Highlights of the Philippine Population 2015 Census of Population. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/highlights-philippine-population-2015-census-population>
- [18] Jackson, N. C., Johnson, M. J., Roberts, R. (2008). The potential impact of discrimination fears of older gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals living in small- to moderate-sized cities on long-term health care. *Journal for Homosexuality* 54(3), pp. 325-39.
- [19] Johnson, M., Jackson, N., Arnette, J., Koffman, S. (2005). Gay and lesbian perceptions of discrimination in retirement care facilities. *Journal for Homosexuality*. 2005; 49(2), pp. 83-102.
- [20] Sanchez NF, Rabatin J, Sanchez JP, Hubbard S, Kalet A. (2006). Medical students' ability to care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered patients. *Family Medicine*; 38 (1) pp. 21-7.
- [21] Katz-Wise, S. L. (2015). Sexual fluidity in young adult women and men: Associations with sexual orientation and sexual identity development. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 6(2), 189-208.
- [22] Kelleher, C. (2019). Loneliness and the psychosocial well-being of older adults in the Philippines. *Journal of Aging and Mental Health*, 23(7), 854-861.
- [23] Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Sage Publications.
- [24] Mirandé, A. (2017). *Behind the Mask: Gender Hybridity in a Zapotec Community*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- [25] Myers, M.D. (2009) *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- [26] Nadal, K.L. & Corpus, M.J.H. (2013). 'Tomboys' and 'baklas': Experiences of lesbian and gay Filipino Americans. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 4(3), 166-175
- [27] Olita, I. (2017). "Third Gender: An Entrancing Look at México's Muxes." Artistic Short Film. National Geographic, Short Film Showcase, February 2017.
- [28] Ottati, V., Bodenhausen, G. V., & Newman, L. S. (2005). Social Psychological Models of Mental Illness Stigma. In P. W. Corrigan (Ed.), *On the stigma of mental illness: Practical strategies for research and social change* (pp. 99-128). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10887-004>
- [29] Pereira, H. (2022). The impacts of sexual stigma on the mental health of older sexual minority men. *Aging & Mental Health* 26:6, pages 1281-1286.
- [30] Picq, M. & Tikuna,T. (2019). Indigenous Sexualities: Resisting Conquest and Translation. *E-International Relations*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/08/20/indigenous-sexualities-resisting-conquest-and-translation/>
- [31] Philippine Commission on Women. (2020). "Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Act No. 11166 or the 'Tres Marias Act'."
- [32] Salamanca, A., & Abasolo, S. (2020). Queering the Indigenous: Gender and Sexual Diversity in the Lumad Communities of Southern Philippines. *Philippine Studies: Historical & Ethnographic Viewpoints*, 68(2), 177-203.
- [33] Smith, J. R., Brown, A. M., & O'Connell, S. T. (2022). Supporting LGBTQ Elders in Indigenous Communities in Canada: A Qualitative Study of Resilience and Cultural Competency. *Journal of Indigenous Studies*, 22(3), 345-362.
- [34] Smye, V., Browne, A. J., & Varcoe, C. (2017). "Two-Spirit" People: A Response to Harassment and Violence. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, 12(1), 83-98.
- [35] Stein, G., Beckerman N., & Sherman P. (2010). Lesbian and Gay Elders and Long-Term Care: Identifying the Unique Psychosocial Perspectives and Challenges, *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 53:5, 421-435, DOI: 10.1080/01634372.2010.496478