

# Caring from the Margins: Lived Experiences of Tomboys and Bakla as Tagasalo in Filipino Families

Junix Jerald I. Delos Santos

*School of Advanced Studies, Saint Louis University,  
Baguio City, Philippines*

*School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts, University of  
Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines*

This study aims to elucidate how traditional notions of gender roles shape the lived experiences of *tagasalo* ‘tomboys’ (i.e., lesbian women) and *bakla* (i.e., gay men) in their families. Tagasalo has been conceptualized as a family member who takes care of others or comes to their rescue. A qualitative approach was used to build on the extant literature on tagasalo and to explore the phenomenon through the lived experiences of Filipino ‘tomboys’ and bakla. *Pakikipagkuwentuhan*, an indigenous method of data collection, was conducted with four ‘tomboys’ and four bakla who identify as the tagasalo in their families. Six family members, specifically a sibling who is not a tagasalo, were also interviewed to situate how the tagasalo ‘tomboys’ and bakla are perceived in the family. Using an integrated theoretical lens of queer theory and intersectionality theory, participant narratives were analyzed and resulted in two domains that describe the experiences of tagasalo among minoritized individuals. The first domain centers on the self-perceived characteristics of the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ and bakla, while the second domain focuses on their family’s perception of the tagasalo. The findings show that some Filipino ‘tomboys’ and bakla feel compelled to occupy the role of the tagasalo to be accepted by their families, due to an internalized sense of inferiority. Aside from the emotional support that the tagasalo participants provide for their families, they also highlighted the provision of financial resources in their narratives.

*Keywords: tagasalo, lesbian, gay, queer theory, intersectionality*

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Junix Jerald I. Delos Santos, School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts, University of Baguio, General Luna Road, Baguio City, 2600, Philippines. Email: junixdelossantos@gmail.com

Published online: 14 October 2025

Filipinos have been known to have a close-knit family orientation; thus, the family, as a system, has a great impact on the development of an individual (Alampay, 2013; Tarroja, 2010). Studies on child-rearing in the Philippines have established that the family plays an important role in the gender socialization of Filipino children (e.g., Alampay, 2013; Liwag et al., 1998; Morillo et al., 2013). Consequently, specific gender role expectations for women and men remain apparent and are also reinforced in the Philippine culture (Averia et al., 2024; Fletcher-Brown et al., 2015; Villanueva & Obaob, 2021). As such, the overarching aim of this qualitative study is to explore whether these traditional notions of gender roles still apply, given the increasing visibility of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community across the globe and particularly in the Philippines. More specifically, I aim to explore whether these notions shape the lived experiences of Filipino ‘tomboys’ (i.e., lesbian women) and *bakla* (i.e., gay men) as the *tagasalo* in their families. These social constructions of gender and sexuality are often intertwined or conflated in the Philippine context (Ofreneo, 2003; Tan, 1998). In his earlier studies, Tan (1995, 1998) argued that Philippine culture does not have a term equivalent to sexuality, which is a concept largely shaped by Western thought, and that there are no indigenous words for categories of sexual orientation. The local term that is typically used for a gay man is *bakla*, a contraction of *babae* (woman) and *lalaki* (man), which links being gay to femininity (Tan, 1995). On the other hand, the local term usually used for a lesbian woman is *tomboy* (Josef, 1999), which amalgamates sexuality and gender as the word primarily refers to the expression of masculinity (Ceperiano et al., 2016).

Tagasalo pertains to a family member who “takes care” of others or comes to their rescue (Carandang, 1987). It traces its roots from the Tagalog word *salo*, which means “to catch.” Attached with the prefix *taga-*, it means “the one who catches.” Carandang (1987) was the first to conceptualize the tagasalo and label the phenomenon as the “tagasalo” or “mananalo” syndrome, in which she presented cases of individuals with the “syndrome” from her clinical practice. Initially, the tagasalo was theorized as a non-normative or clinical phenomenon that is a response to adversity or trauma, which could possibly lead to clinical issues (e.g., internalized anxiety, depression, low self-worth) if left unaddressed (Carandang, 1987).

It was also posited that the tagasalo is common among Filipino women and that it is usually the *ate*, or the eldest girl in the family, who is given the role of caretaker. Carandang (1987) highlighted the women in the family because they were expected to take care of household matters, as compared to the men, who were allowed to play outside. Later on, Udarbe (2001) elaborated on the tagasalo by systematically investigating the theory, not in a clinical setting, but within the context of the Filipino family. The findings revealed that, as opposed to what was previously theorized by Carandang (1987), many men are the tagasalo in their families. Conversely, a study that was done to validate Garcia's (1999) Tagasalo Scale using the *Panunukat ng Pagkataong Pilipino* (PPP) supported the initial argument that women have a stronger tendency to take on the tagasalo role (Go Tian, 2004). Taken together, these findings show that both men and women can take on the tagasalo role. Udarbe (2001) further elaborated that birth order does not affect whether an individual turns out to be a tagasalo or not, since a younger sibling may take on the role; however, the tagasalo is, more often than not, an older sibling.

Tuazon et al. (2021) developed the Tagasalo Scale to measure the tagasalo personality, which was pilot tested on a normative sample of 565 participants. Four main descriptors of the tagasalo were identified in the first phase of the scale development: strong urge to assume responsibility; being a mediator; prioritizing others over self; and inclination to take care of others. These were consistent with the characteristics of the tagasalo identified by Udarbe (2001), namely: sense of responsibility; ability to listen; need to mediate; need for harmony; need for control; parents as central; capacity for caring; and tagasalo as a sibling. The second phase yielded two more factors: taking care of other people; and taking care of family. This implied that being a tagasalo extends beyond the context of family (Tuazon et al., 2021). A recent exposition of the multidimensionality of the tagasalo highlighted the internalizing and externalizing behaviors of the tagasalo, aside from its compulsive and non-compulsive dimensions (Go Tian-Ng & Umandap, 2023).

The original conception of the tagasalo, and subsequent elaborations on the phenomenon, were anchored on heteronormativity and highlighted the socioemotional aspects of being a tagasalo. With

that, the current study aims to further the understanding of tagasalo by exploring the provisional aspect (i.e., providing material and financial resources) of the phenomenon. Moreover, I offer an alternative way of looking at the tagasalo—not as a personality, but as a role that one takes on in the family—thus, shifting it to a more conscious role-taking behavior, rather than a personality construct that develops over time.

Research has shown that young people in the United States today are more likely to disclose their lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) identities compared to young people in previous generations (Savin-Williams, 2005). However, this disclosure can lead to both positive and negative outcomes. According to a study by D'Amico and Julien (2012) among LGB youth from Quebec, disclosing their sexual orientation may facilitate support from their family members. In relation to this, Shilo and Savaya (2011) confirmed the significance of support from both family and friends to the mental health and identity formation of LGB youth, which is consistent with the extant literature on social support in adult populations, including LGB populations (Azmitia et al., 2013; Doty et al., 2010; Ewertzon & Hanson, 2013; Mustanski et al., 2011; Secor et al., 2017). On the other hand, Needham and Austin (2010) found that lack of parental support is a factor that amplifies the risk of multiple negative health outcomes among LGB young adults.

In the Philippine context, the disclosure of LGBTQ identities is also a complex and multifaceted process, involving the interplay of various factors within the individual and their culture, religion, and family (Evangelista et al., 2016; Nadal & Corpus, 2013). Studies have highlighted the challenges faced by LGBTQ Filipinos in reconciling their identities with cultural and family expectations, such as traditional norms around masculinity (Rubio & Green, 2009). This is further complicated by the intersection of ethnicity and sexuality, as seen in the experiences of gay migrant Filipinos in New Zealand (Adams et al., 2022).

A study that looked into the role of family influences on LGB youth demonstrated that less parental rejection was linked to a greater probability of developing an affirmed identity, rather than struggling with one's identity (Bregman et al., 2013). Therefore, parental acceptance is crucial to ensure the development of a healthy sense of

self among LGBT youth (Katz-Wise et al., 2016). This was validated by a recent study on Filipino lesbian, gay, and bisexual women and men which found that psychological well-being increases when there is perceived parental acceptance alongside being overtly out with one's family, particularly with their parents and siblings (Gacusan et al., 2020). The inverse is true as well, as parental rejection has been shown to negatively affect LGBT youths' identity and health (Katz-Wise et al., 2016). A study on Filipino lesbian and gay adolescents found that fear of rejection and the possibility of being treated differently by their parents and family were potential reasons for choosing not to disclose their sexuality (Ereño, 2014). Thus, having a supportive environment allows individuals to freely express their true identity, without fear of being rejected.

Another possible response to their disclosure is tolerance, which refers to being neutral about LGBTQ people's sexuality and gender—that is, expressing neither acceptance nor rejection of their sexuality and their struggles. Findings from a study by the Pew Research Center (Poushter & Kent, 2020) identified Filipinos as being considerably more tolerant of lesbian women and gay men than the country's relatively high levels of religiosity would suggest. Therefore, although Filipinos are typically more religious, generally leading to traditional perspectives on sexual and gender minorities, they were still more likely to just be tolerant of lesbian and gay people, rather than to be accepting or rejecting of them.

Interestingly, a study by Docena (2013) found that young Waray gay men perceived their parents' tolerance of their sexuality as synonymous with acceptance. Tolerance from their family was also more common among gay Filipino migrant workers when asked about how they manage and disclose their sexual identity (Adams et al., 2022). When a person merely tolerates a lesbian woman's or gay man's sexual orientation, it suggests a permissive stance towards it; however, it does not necessarily mean that they accept it. Acceptance is when a person fully supports another person's sexual orientation, such that they accept the lesbian woman's or gay man's identity.

Overall, family support has been found to have the most direct effect on LGBTQ people's well-being, with regards to the acceptance of their own sexual orientation (Shilo & Savaya, 2011) and gender

identity (Simons et al., 2013). Furthermore, a study on Chinese LGB individuals found that the family plays the most important role in their life satisfaction (Hu et al., 2013). This finding is parallel with studies that identified the Filipino family as a source of emotional support (Alampay, 2013; Tarroja, 2010).

However, negative societal attitudes toward the LGBTQ community continue to persist in many regions of the world (Hu et al., 2013). According to the Pew Research Center (Poushter & Kent, 2020), although there have been positive developments in LGBTQ acceptance, there remains a global divide. For instance, several societies still do not accept LGBTQ individuals, and even warrant punishment for some. The death penalty for being gay is imposed in six UN Member States. Additionally, 67 UN Member States still criminalize being a sexual minority, and two more have de facto criminalization (Mendos et al., 2020).

Moreover, an investigation into the relationship of homonegativity with religiosity, nationalism, and attachment style revealed that religiosity and nationalism were positively correlated to homonegativity (Marsh & Brown, 2011). Similarly, Whitehead's (2010) study on the effects of religion on attitudes toward same-sex unions and the perceived cause of being gay found factors such as denominational affiliation, religious tradition, and holding literal interpretations of the Bible and images of God all shape attitudes toward sexual and gender minorities. In the Philippines, Manalastas and del Pilar (2005) analyzed a national survey revealing that one in four Filipinos would not accept gay people as neighbors, and 28% of Filipino adults view being gay as "unacceptable." This could be a result of societal standards rooted in the prevailing culture of heteronormativity, which stigmatizes same-sex relationships as deviant or wrong, in contrast to presenting heterosexual relationships as the desirable, normative, and natural form of intimacy (Manalastas, 2013). Reyes et al. (2015) supported this contention and explained that these perspectives on sexual and gender identity in the Philippines can be, to some degree, ascribed to the overall culture of heteronormativity and religious teachings. Apart from religious and cultural barriers, LGB youth also have other reasons for not disclosing their sexual orientation to their parents, including general feelings of fear about its outcome and not

having an intimate relationship with their parents (D'Augelli et al., 2005).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The current study is anchored on Ferree's (2010) assertion that in order to reflect the diverse strategies people use to navigate gendered expectations and struggles, we need to avoid the framing of a traditional-modern dichotomy (i.e., male vs. female gender roles). In the same vein, I take on the lens of queer theory, which demands a critical analysis of identity, rather than simply accepting traditional social constructions of sexual orientation and gender (Abes & Kasch, 2007). This also integrates with intersectionality theory, which is based on the idea that social identities (e.g., gender, sexuality, and social class, etc.) connect, or intersect, to form subjectively unique meanings and experiences (Warner, 2008). The current study explores the concept of tagasalo through the lived experiences of 'tomboys' and bakla, via the intersection of their gender, sexuality, and social class. Specifically, I use an integrated theoretical lens of queer theory and intersectionality theory in studying the tagasalo role among lesbian women and gay men.

### ***Queer Theory***

Queer theory is a perspective concerned with the critique of heteronormativity (Clarke et al., 2010). Within queer theory, heteronormativity is generally understood as a concept that centers patriarchy and heterosexuality as the social norm, which positions all other genders, sexualities, and sexual expressions as deviant (Battle & Ashley, 2008; Regan & Meyer, 2021; Robinson, 2016). This perspective highlights the intersections of identities while contesting oppressive social constructions of sexual orientation and gender (Abes & Kasch, 2007; Cannon, 2025). As such, I acknowledge the social position of 'tomboys' and bakla and how the intersections of their social identities affect their experience of being the tagasalo, thereby expanding the ways in which the tagasalo has been theorized to explicitly include the experiences of minoritized individuals. Moreover, I engage in

queering (Butler, 1990; Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1993), as I blur the lines of conventional understandings surrounding gender (e.g., woman and man) and sexuality (e.g., lesbian and gay) as fused in the social construction of the 'tomboy' and bakla in the Philippine context.

### ***Intersectionality Theory***

At its core, intersectionality theory examines how systems of power and inequality shape lived experience through the overlapping and interacting dimensions of gender, sexual orientation, class, race, and national origin (Simien & Hancock, 2011). Similar to Hancock's (2007) analysis of sociopolitical difference, social identities related to being the tagasalo are approached in this study, not as a single category (e.g., gender or sexuality or social class) nor having multiple categories as isolated (e.g., gender and sexuality and social class), but as intersecting categories of social identity (e.g., gender interacts with sexuality and social class). In this vein, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of lesbian women and gay men who take on the tagasalo role by considering how their social identities of gender (i.e., being a woman and being a man), sexuality (i.e., being lesbian and being gay), and social class (e.g., middle class, lower class) intersect to produce a qualitatively distinct experience.

Taken together, queer theory and intersectionality theory serve as the foundation for this study. On the one hand, queer theory informs the critical interrogation of heteronormative structures that define and constrain caregiving roles. On the other hand, intersectionality theory highlights how these roles are further shaped by the convergence of gender, sexuality, class, and family dynamics. By combining these perspectives, the study examines how 'tomboys' and bakla embody, negotiate, and sometimes resist the tagasalo role within a context marked by intersecting systems of power and marginalization. Rather than treating these theories as additive, the study foregrounds their entanglement to reveal how tagasalo subjectivities are constituted through complex negotiations of marginalization.



## Method

### Study Design

Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study focused on the lived experiences of Filipino lesbian women and gay men as the tagasalo in their families. This perspective allowed for a detailed exploration of participants' meaning-making, with regards to their personal and social world (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Data was gathered through *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, a Filipino indigenous method of exchanging ideas and beliefs in a free and informal manner that facilitates an uninhibited range of expression (Javier, 2012; Orteza, 1997). This data collection method was used as it is more flexible and casual, making it less intimidating for the participants to share their experiences (Ong, 2016). Through *pakikipagkuwentuhan*, participants shared stories of how they make sense of and understand their experience as a tagasalo, which resonates with the principles of phenomenology (Smith & Osborn, 2008). From the *pakikipagkuwentuhan* with the participants, themes that captured their experience of being the tagasalo in the family were identified and described in this study.

### Participants

To ensure that I captured the depth, breadth, and rigor of the situatedness of the participants' tagasalo experience, this study focused on sexual minorities. In particular, I interviewed both the tagasalo 'tomboys' and bakla, and a member of their family, specifically a sibling who is not a tagasalo in the family. Four self-identified 'tomboys' and four self-identified bakla, whose ages ranged from 23 to 56 years old, were interviewed. The inclusion criteria required that participants self-identified as lesbian or gay who fulfill the role of a tagasalo in their family by taking on caretaking or supportive responsibilities (e.g., managing household finances, running errands, providing emotional support, and mediating conflicts), and have at least one sibling. To further situate the participants in their role as the tagasalo, six family members from their family circle, whose ages ranged from

18 to 62 years old, were also interviewed. Each family member that was interviewed was a sibling who was not a tagasalo in the family, as identified by the tagasalo participants, and was aware of the sexual orientation of the lesbian or gay sibling. The sexual orientation of the siblings was not considered in order to be nominated for the interview. The original number of siblings to be interviewed was eight, but two opted out before the commencement of the interviews due to personal reasons. The participants' demographic information can be found in Table 1.

The lesbian and gay participants were recruited using snowball sampling, wherein participants who were already interviewed used their social network to refer other people who could potentially participate or contribute to the study. Afterward, each lesbian and gay participant identified a sibling to be interviewed, regardless of their sexual orientation.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

Before participating in the research, the participants were asked to sign an informed consent form to signify that they voluntarily agreed to be interviewed and to share their lived experience as the tagasalo or sibling of a tagasalo.

Pakikipagkuwentuhan was conducted separately with the 'tomboy' and bakla participants and their non-tagasalo siblings, with each participant interviewed individually, to gather information regarding the 'tomboy' and bakla's role as the tagasalo in the family. The process of pakikipagkuwentuhan started when participants were asked about their experience of either being the tagasalo in their family or the sibling of a tagasalo, which was followed by an exchange of thoughts and experiences and sharing of emotions (Javier, 2012). The interviews were done at the participants' convenience in a location of their preference, and were conducted in a secure location to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Participants were also assured that any personal information would not be linked to them and would be anonymized. They were later assigned a code or an alias for anonymity (i.e., LWO1 for lesbian woman 01, GMO1 for gay man 01, FLO1 for the family member of lesbian woman 01, FGO1 for the family member

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants

Tagasalo						Non-tagasalo sibling			
	Pseudonym	Age	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Pseudonym	Age	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity	Social Class
1	LWo1	23	Lesbian	Woman	FLo1	25	Heterosexual	Man	Middle class
2	LWo2	28	Lesbian	Woman	FLo2	24	Heterosexual	Woman	Middle class
3	LWo3	49	Lesbian	Woman	-	-	-	-	Lower class
4	LWo4	38	Lesbian	Woman	FLo4	42	Heterosexual	Woman	Middle class
5	GMo1	27	Gay	Man	-	-	-	-	Middle class
6	GMo2	30	Gay	Man	FGo2	18	Heterosexual	Woman	Upper class
7	GMo3	44	Gay	Man	FGo3	38	Heterosexual	Woman	Lower class
8	GMo4	56	Gay	Man	FGo4	62	Lesbian	Woman	Middle class

Note. Two non-tagasalo sibling participants had to withdraw from the interviews due to personal reasons.

of the gay man 01, and so on). The participants were also informed during the interview about their right to withdraw their participation in the study at any time and their data upon request. Consent was also obtained to record audio for transcription purposes.

To ensure credibility and consistency, data was gathered from multiple sources (i.e., tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla, and their sibling who is not a tagasalo) for better corroboration (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). During interviews, I followed a general flow in my questioning, but also allowed the conversation to flow freely, staying true to the nature of pakikipagkuwentuhan. After which, all data were coded at the end of the data collection period.

### **Data Analysis**

All interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data to draw meaning from the participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). To familiarize myself with the data, I listened to the audio recordings of the pakikipagkuwentuhan several times as I meticulously transcribed them. After which, I identified and labelled initial codes from the transcripts that pointed to key aspects of the participants' experiences as the tagasalo. This was followed by searching for similar codes and weaving them into themes, which I subsequently reviewed and refined. After finalizing the themes, each was labelled with a descriptive name and defined. I analyzed the transcripts side-by-side to provide a broader and more holistic description of the participants' experience as a tagasalo (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011).

### **Results**

This study aimed to answer the research question: "What are the characteristics of tagasalo lesbian women and gay men as shared by the tagasalo themselves and their families?" As such, this section provides the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data to elaborate on the lived experiences of tagasalo 'tomboys' and bakla in the family. The pakikipagkuwentuhan with the 'tomboys' and bakla and their siblings revealed that being the tagasalo in the family becomes more

nuanced when viewed through the interactions between a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, and social class, and how, together, they impact such a role. The domains and themes that describe the experiences of tagasalo are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. *Domains and Themes on the Experiences of the Tagasalo Lesbian Women and Gay Men*

Domain 1: Self-perceived characteristics of the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla		Domain 2: Familial perception of the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla	
Themes	Description	Themes	Description
Theme 1: Providing emotional support	The tagasalo serves as a listening ear and provides emotional support when family members need someone to talk to or to vent.	Theme 1: Being emotionally available	The tagasalo is seen as someone who can lend a listening ear and provide emotional support. They are also perceived as a guide that either gives pieces of advice or is expected to mediate in family arguments.
Theme 2: Giving advice and guidance	The tagasalo is regarded as a guide for making decisions and settling arguments in the family.		
Theme 3: Taking care of the family	The tagasalo feels responsible for taking care of their family members. They take on the role willingly because it is done for the family. However, the tagasalo also feels compelled to take on the role as they perceive that no one else in the family will take it.  Taking on the tagasalo role functions as a compensatory mechanism for perceiving oneself as inferior (i.e., internalizing that being lesbian or gay is inferior) and to gain acceptance from the family.	Theme 2: Providing financial resources  Theme 3: Taking responsibilities in the family	The tagasalo is described as someone who can be relied upon or is dependable. This characteristic of the tagasalo usually presents as providing financial resources to the family, especially when a family member is in dire need of money.  The tagasalo is the sibling who took on responsibilities at a young age, as they are described as someone who can be relied upon or dependable, strict, and firm. This may sometimes extend to other people (e.g., friends).

### **Self-Perceived Characteristics of the Tagasalo ‘Tomboy’ and Bakla**

This domain captures the various roles that the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ and bakla take on in the family. Three themes were identified from the narratives of the tagasalo participants: providing emotional support; giving advice and guidance; and taking care of the family.

#### ***Providing Emotional Support***

The tagasalo participants described themselves as a listening ear that provides emotional support when family members need someone to talk to or to vent to. LWO1 likened herself to a “sounding board” whenever there are arguments in the family:

. . . ‘*pag nag-away, may kaaway, or ‘pag magkaaway sila (kuya) ni mama, ako ‘yong magiging sounding board niya.* [...] when there’s an argument, when they have arguments, or when my brother and mother have an argument, I will be my mother’s sounding board.] (LWO1, 23)

LWO1 also added that she is the one who reassures her mother. This is also similar to what LWO2 and LWO4 shared:

For my mom to feel better, *parang gano’n, kunwari may na-share siya na* something negative *sa* work or with other family members. [For my mom to feel better, for instance, when she shares something negative with work or with other family members.] (LWO2, 28)

I’m always there for them to listen *kung ano man ‘yong ano, kung ano man ‘yong* problems *nila.* [I’m always there for them to listen to whatever problems they have.] (LWO4, 38)

LWO4 specifically talked about providing emotional support for her older sister by uplifting her:

. . . *'pag minsan kung may kailangan gawin na mga simpleng kailangan, like i-uplift siya [ate], medyo 'pag minsan nawawalan siya ng confidence eh, nando'n ako para sa kanya.* [... when there are simple things that need to be done, like uplifting my older sister, sometimes she loses confidence, I'm there for her.] (LW04, 38)

In relation to this, GM04 shared that he has the impression that he is the one who binds his family. These statements illustrate the many ways in which emotional support is provided by the tagasalo, which range from merely listening to uplifting a family member during difficult times or when there is conflict. In their narratives, the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla are portrayed as someone who offers empathy, understanding, and reassurance to their family members when they face challenges or experience negative emotions. Overall, the tagasalo serves as a source of comfort and support, helping their loved ones feel heard, validated, and uplifted.

### ***Giving Advice and Guidance***

Moreover, the tagasalo participants are sought by family members for advice before making decisions and are even expected to help settle arguments in the family. LW03 expressed:

*Kumbaga noon, ang setup namin, bago sila mag-decision sa sarili nila, tinatanong muna nila ako.* [Before, our setup was, before they decide for themselves, they would ask me for my opinion first.] (LW03, 49)

LW04 also shared a similar experience, and added that she serves as a guide for her older sister, who easily gets emotionally overwhelmed. This is similar to what GM04 said about how his family would come to him for advice on personal problems, and even added:

If there was [sic] disagreements, I would be the one to come in and make sure they settled things *kasi nga nakita ko na mahal*

*na mahal ako ng mga kapatid ko.* [If there were disagreements, I would be the one to come in and make sure they settled things because I saw that my siblings love me very much.] (GMO4, 56)

The tagasalo's position of influence or authority within their family is highlighted in these narratives. Based on the experiences shared by the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla, they are sought out for validation or approval before making decisions or when there are disagreements in the family. Thus, the tagasalo participants are expected to mediate or resolve such disagreements, which alludes to their central role in providing guidance and resolution.

### ***Taking Care of the Family***

Some tagasalo participants mentioned that they feel responsible for taking care of their family members. LWO1 said:

*Ako 'yong typical na tagaluto, tagahugas. Lalo na 'pag ando'n ako sa bahay.* ... If I'm with my mom, with my dad, with my family. *Ako 'yong typical na tagahugas, tagaluto, 'yong typical na kwan.* ... Tapos if needed, for example, *may sakit si mama, tapos walang mag-aasikaso sa ibang bagay, mamamalengke, hatid ng kapatid ko, ako na 'yon.* *Lalo na kung hindi rin available 'yong kuya ko or 'yong dad ko.* *Ako, akong gagawa no'ng mga 'yon.* [I'm typically the one who cooks and washes the dishes. Especially when I'm at home. ... If I'm with my mom, with my dad, with my family. I would usually be the dishwasher and cook. ... Then if needed, for example, my mom is sick and no one will take care of other things, like going to the market, fetching my brother, I'll be the one to do it. Especially when my older brother and dad are not available. I will do all of those things.] (LWO1, 23)

Similarly, GMO2 also shared that this caretaking extends to other members of the family (e.g., cousins and grandparents). Moreover, 'tomboys' and bakla may take on the tagasalo role as a way to compensate for perceived inferiority and prove their worth to the family. LWO2 expressed:



*Kaya parang* for me, personally, *hindi naman sa gusto kong magmayabang* or what *pero meron 'yong parang kahit—ang pangit—kaya ayoko, pero parang ang pangit pero kasi, 'di ba parang 'pag sinabing bakla ka, parang* you're inferior? So with that idea coming from, *kasi sa akin*, it's not, *hindi gano'n. Pero* since *'yon 'yong sa environment, parang meron din sa akin 'yong kahit na bakla ako, ganito naman*. I can do this, I can do this for my family. [For me, personally, it's not that I want to brag or what but—this doesn't sound good—but when they say you're gay, that means you're inferior, right? For me, it's not supposed to be like that, but since it's what the environment says, there's a part of me that says: even if I'm gay, I can do this (provide), I can do this for my family.] (LWo2, 28)

On the other hand, it could also be interpreted as taking pride in being able to provide for the family, even if one is lesbian or gay. As GMo4 shared:

. . . *mga older na siblings ko 'tong mga 'to* and then they come to me. You [sic] have so much respect for me despite, despite my ano, sexuality. [... these are my older siblings, but they come to me. They have so much respect for me, despite my sexuality.] (GMo4, 56)

These constructions of engaging in the tagasalo role function as a mechanism for the tagasalo lesbian women and gay men to gain acceptance from their families, which operates within a culture of heteronormativity. LWo2's statement that "even if" they are gay they manage to provide for their family, and GMo4's use of the word "despite," suggests that they expect a lack of respect due to their sexuality. These notions may inadvertently reinforce the idea that respect is contingent upon one's sexuality. These statements further imply that there is a norm or expectation of reduced respect when someone is a sexual minority, which they must compensate for by contributing more to their family.

### **Familial Perception of the Tagasalo 'Tomboy' and Bakla**

This domain describes the different perceptions of the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla from the point of view of their family members, specifically a non-tagasalo sibling. Three themes were generated from the participants' narratives, which centered on emotional availability; financial resources; and a sense of responsibility.

#### ***Being Emotionally Available***

This theme describes the tagasalo as someone who can lend a listening ear and provide emotional support. The family members also perceived the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla as a guide that either gives pieces of advice or is expected to mediate in family arguments. FLO2 described the emotional support that their tagasalo sibling provides for them and their family:

Emotional support, yeah, *siya rin takbuhan ko. Lalo na 'yong ... actually last year, [because] I was very depressed talaga.* [She provides emotional support, she's my go-to person. Especially ... last year, (because) I was very depressed.] (FLO2, 24)

Similar to how the tagasalo 'tomboys' and bakla described themselves, their family members also described their tagasalo sibling as a sounding board who is willing to listen to problems and become a "shock absorber." Furthermore, the tagasalo siblings are also the ones who give their opinions and advice and are expected to mediate in family matters. FLO4 described this as:

... *siya lang din naman 'yong ano eh, 'yong napagsasabihan 'pag 'yong mga, oo, mga 'pag may misunderstanding sa pag-uusap namin sa family. Parang gano'n din. Advice, nag-a-advice din naman siya kung ano'ng gagawin. Mainly siguro, tagasalo nga talaga siya. Shock absorber kumbaga.* [... she is the only one I can talk to when there are misunderstandings in our conversations in the family. She gives advice on what to do. Mainly, I think she really is a tagasalo. A shock absorber.] (FLO4, 42)

These descriptions illustrate how their family members construct the emotional availability of the tagasalo lesbian woman or gay man—they are the first person that their family turns to when they need emotional support. This was consistently described and felt by the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ and bakla themselves.

### ***Providing Financial Resources***

In this theme, the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ or bakla is described as the one who provides for the financial needs of the family, especially when a family member is in dire need of money. The tagasalo’s socioeconomic status was salient throughout their siblings’ stories. FGO3 described their tagasalo sibling as the breadwinner in the family:

*‘Yon na nga po, sa aming magkakapatid, siya ‘yong parang breadwinner na din. Kasi noon pa man kasi after niya ng high school, sabi niya mag-work na lang siya para matulungan kami. Tapos ‘yon, ‘pag wala kaming pera, siya ‘yong palagi naming takbuan. ‘Kuya, pautang,’ ‘Kuya, pahiram nga ng gan’to,’ which is lagi naman siyang nagbibigay basta’t meron siya. Minsan umuutang pa siya para lang ibigay sa amin. [He is the breadwinner in the family. When he finished high school, he told us that he would just work instead in order to help the family. So we would always go to him when we don’t have money. “Big brother, may I borrow money?” “Big brother, may I borrow something?” To which he would always oblige as long as he had money. He would even borrow money from others so that he would have something to give.] (FGO3, 38)*

Coming from a low-income household, GMO3 described their life as “*isang kahig, isang tuka*” (one scratch, one peck), which is a Filipino idiom that pertains to the life of people who live in poverty, as they have to work first before they can eat. GMO3 started working at a young age to provide for his family and to get FGO3 and their other siblings through school.

In addition, FGO3 also mentioned that their tagasalo sibling is the one who provides the monthly financial allowance of their parents and

their maintenance medication in the province, since he is the only one without a spouse:

*. . . sa aming magkakapatid, siya na lang kasi 'yong walang asawa kaya sa mga parents namin, siya na rin 'yong nagbibigay kasi s'yempre lahat kami may mga pamilya na. Siya lang 'yong ano, sumu-support din sa parents. [... among us siblings, he is the only one without a spouse, that's why he provides for our parents. All of us already have families of our own. So he is the only one supporting our parents.]* (FG03, 38)

This is also similar to what was shared by FG02, who comes from an upper-class background. Even if they come from a well-off family, FG02 perceives that their tagasalo sibling does things willingly for the family, specifically with financial matters. FG02 even recalled that their tagasalo sibling was already very reliable, even when they were both still in high school. However, this perception contrasts what was mentioned by some of the tagasalo participants—that they were assigned the role, but eventually went along with it.

The assumption that the tagasalo 'tomboys' and bakla willingly take on the role of providing for the family's financial needs since they do not have a family of their own perpetuates the notion that lesbian and gay people will not have their own family anyway. Hence, they get pigeonholed into the provider role, which may be influenced by societal norms and legal restrictions in the Philippines.

### ***Taking Responsibilities in the Family***

The tagasalo was also often the sibling who took on responsibilities from a young age. In this theme, they are described as someone who can be relied upon or someone dependable, strict, and firm. As reported by their family members, these characteristics of the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla may also extend to other people (i.e., friends). FG02 described how their tagasalo sibling took on the responsibility of taking care of them at a young age:

*. . . no'ng bata kami, that's where he had the, that's where he took on the role of taking care of me and [my twin brother].* So

when my mom wasn't there, uh, or also my dad, *kasi usually maaga kaming ma-dismiss mga bata*. He was the one who took care of us. So that helped us a lot also. [... when we were young, that's when he took on the role of taking care of me and (my twin brother). When we would get dismissed from school early, and my mom or dad was not there, he was the one who took care of us. So that helped us a lot also.] (FG02, 18)

This quality was also mentioned by FG03 when they talked about their tagasalo sibling taking care of them, giving them advice, and providing financial help, which were outlined in the previous themes:

. . . *nagsi-seek* [sic] *siya ng advice*. 'Yong caring niya din, *atsaka sa financial*. 'Yon, *tinutulungan niya kami*. [... he gives advice. He is also caring, and he helps out financially. He helps us.] (FG03, 38)

Overall, the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla were described as reliable, strict, and firm. As many of the family members mentioned, most of the tagasalo siblings took on responsibility early in life. Moreover, this sense of responsibility does not appear to be limited to family members, as the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla extend this help to friends who may need support from them.

### Discussion

The roles that the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla take in the family were synthesized from two angles: from the tagasalo themselves, and from their family members. The experiences of the tagasalo as a sounding board are consistent with the tagasalo personality characteristics outlined by Udarbe (2001), particularly the "ability to listen," which suggests that the tagasalo has relatively open communication with their parents. Contrary to what was initially proposed in Udarbe's (2001) study, this capacity for listening also extends to friends of the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla. This affirms the earlier assertions of Carandang (1987) that the tagasalo has an overgeneralized and indiscriminate stance. That is, the need to catch

or *pagsalo* is not restricted to family members only. Moreover, other similarities were also observed, specifically the “need to mediate” and the “need for harmony” (Udarbe, 2001), which were supported by the family members’ perception of how the tagasalo’s capacity for caring accentuates their qualities of being accessible, approachable, and thoughtful. These seem to be part and parcel of the role of a tagasalo, as initially described by Udarbe (2001), in which the tagasalo gets “triangled” to relieve the tension in the family. Interestingly, a notable trend emerged among the tagasalo lesbian women, as they emphasized the role they play in offering emotional support to their families, which was also identified by their non-tagasalo siblings. This emphasis on emotional support not only highlights the distinct caregiving dynamics that the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ is engaged in, but also aligns with earlier theoretical conceptions of women who assume the tagasalo role within their families (Carandang, 1987; Go Tian, 2004).

In addition, both Carandang (1987) and Udarbe (2001) observed that the tagasalo takes on these responsibilities early in life. Udarbe (2001) noted that there are many reasons why the tagasalo may take on the role, such as birth order and absence of the father; however, the characteristic dynamics of the role were still seen across families and were usually geared towards the benefit of the family. This specific sense of responsibility may be due to their belief that someone must be in control of the family (Udarbe, 2001). As such, the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ and bakla may feel responsible for exerting control and maintaining a certain level of order in the family, regardless of their family setup and their birth order, as evidenced in their narratives. For ‘tomboys’ and bakla, however, taking on the tagasalo role serves as a mechanism not only to stabilize the family, but more importantly, to gain their acceptance.

Apart from the emotional support that the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ and bakla give, their family members also highlighted the financial resources that the tagasalo siblings provide. This aspect was not explicitly mentioned in earlier studies on tagasalo (see Carandang, 1987; Udarbe, 2001; Go Tian, 2004), but this characteristic, also noted by the ‘tomboy’ and bakla participants themselves, can be seen within the “sense of responsibility” that Udarbe (2001) identified in her study. Most of the tagasalo ‘tomboys’ and bakla interviewed in the current

study come from working-class and middle-class families, which usually means that they have to work for a living to provide for the needs of their families. This responsibility was either explicitly assigned to them by their parents or the tagasalo willingly gave financial support to their family. Among the participants, only one ‘tomboy’ and one bakla shared that they come from lower-class families, which is why they felt a stronger need to provide for their family financially. These narratives exemplify the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ and bakla’s persistence and strong sense of responsibility. However, it is worth noting that providing financial resources for the family was more evident among the tagasalo gay men. This could be reflective of societal expectations that stem from heteronormativity, wherein the conventional role of men includes shouldering the responsibility of providing financially for their families. The inclination of the gay tagasalo to provide financially reveals the persistence of traditional gender roles, even among the gay participants, and stresses the impact of such heteronormative norms. This finding prompts a deeper exploration into the intersectionality of gender identity and societal expectations, to shed light on how individuals navigate and negotiate established norms within their unique personal contexts and experiences (e.g., being a tagasalo).

The notion that lesbian and gay people are supposed to take on family responsibilities since they will not be forming families of their own was implicitly assumed by the tagasalo’s family members. This is similar to the results of a study on the experiences of lesbian women who took care of a family member with dementia, wherein the lesbian participants were simply expected to “just get on with it,” implying that they are available to take care of family members because of the notion that they are least likely to get married (Price, 2011). This supports the argument that merely identifying as lesbian or gay typically typecasts an individual to be the tagasalo in the family. Coincidentally, this runs parallel with the concept of *familismo*, a core Latino value that highlights close family relationships and emphasizes the family over the self (Corona et al., 2017), which is also common among other collectivist cultures like the Philippines (Fan et al., 2022; Schwartz, 2007).

Furthermore, for the tagasalo ‘tomboy’ and bakla, assuming responsibility for providing for the family can be related to Pachankis

and Hatzenbuehler's (2013) investigation of the "best little boy in the world" hypothesis, wherein the extent of family support and acceptance that they receive may be contingent upon taking on the tagasalo role, which could be a learned strategy to divert focus away from internalized stigma. Analogously, Docena (2013) mentioned in his study that Waray gay adolescents believed that having exemplary performance in school and possessing other positive characteristics made them more worthy of their parents' approval. Thus, the 'tomboy' and bakla's decision to take on the tagasalo role could be interpreted as a mechanism or strategy to minimize their lesbian or gay identity (see Pachankis & Hatzenbuehler, 2013). This is also consistent with the results of de Lind van Wijngaarden and Ojanen's (2015) study on young Thai gay men who compensated for being gay because they believed that it was a "minor defect." The participants of that study compensated for this perceived defect by doing well in other areas of life, such as school, work, and being financially secure for their family, which was also done to gain respect from their parents (de Lind van Wijngaarden & Ojanen, 2015). Therefore, the need to have responsibilities in the family could be the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla's way of winning the approval and acceptance of their parents and eventually their other family members.

Overall, the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla are regarded as firm and dependable individuals with a strong sense of discipline. As many of the family members mentioned, most of them took on responsibility early in life, which is one of the characteristics identified by Udarbe (2001). This sense of responsibility does not appear to be limited to family members, as the tagasalo 'tomboy' and bakla also extend this help to friends who may need support.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, not only do the experiences outlined in the current study affirm what the extant literature says about the tagasalo (see Carandang, 1987; Go Tian, 2004; Go Tian-Ng & Umandap, 2023; Tuazon et al., 2021; Udarbe, 2001), the current study also extends the understanding of the concept to include the layered, intersectional experiences of lesbian women and gay men. The results of this study highlight the provision of financial resources that tagasalo 'tomboys'



and bakla provide, which was not previously emphasized in earlier studies on the phenomenon. This study surfaces the notion that lesbian women and gay men compensate for a minoritized sexual identity (i.e., being lesbian/gay) by taking on the role of a tagasalo in the family. This raises the question of whether non-heterosexual members have conditional worth in the family circle—that is, whether their acceptance depends on what they contribute to the family, unlike their non-lesbian or non-gay siblings, who are accepted without having to prove their worth. Moreover, this study offers an alternative way of looking at the tagasalo: not as a personality, but as a role that someone takes on in the family, which frames it as a more conscious pattern of behaviors.

Given the distinctive advantages of qualitative research, I want to draw attention to the valuable insights made possible through pakikipagkuwentuhan and thematic analysis in the current study. However, it is also crucial to acknowledge that reliance on self-reported experiences may introduce social desirability effects. Furthermore, the study looked into a specific cultural context of the phenomenon (i.e., being a tagasalo, as experienced by ‘tomboys’ and bakla), which may limit the transferability of its findings to other contexts. The goal, however, was to offer a rich description of how lesbian women and gay men take on the tagasalo role in the family.

Although the participants’ narratives allowed for an understanding of the tagasalo in the context of the lived experiences of ‘tomboys’ and bakla, the limited number of participants does not fully capture the multifaceted experience of being a non-heterosexual tagasalo. Expanding the participants to include bisexual, transgender, and queer people may provide a more complete picture of how the tagasalo role is manifested by a minoritized social group such as the LGBTQ community.

Since the family members who were interviewed were all siblings of the tagasalo, the narratives are limited to their experiences and assumptions. As such, it would be valuable to look into parents’ perceptions of the tagasalo lesbian or gay child as an added perspective.

As I have pointed out earlier, it would be interesting to explore the influence of assuming the tagasalo role on familial acceptance and support (i.e., whether the assumption of the tagasalo role facilitates

easier acceptance), particularly among LGBTQ individuals. This prompts an investigation into whether the existence of familial support and acceptance is dependent on the lesbian and gay child adopting the tagasalo role.

Despite these limitations, this research study contributes to scholarly work exploring ideas surrounding sexual minorities in the Philippine context and expands the Filipino indigenous concept of the tagasalo.

### References

- Abes, E. S., & Kasch, D. (2007). Using queer theory to explore lesbian college students' multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(6), 619–636. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2007.0069>
- Adams, J., Manalastas, E. J., Coquilla, R., Montayre, J., & Neville, S. (2022). Exploring understandings of sexuality among “gay” migrant Filipinos living in New Zealand. *SAGE Open*, 12(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221097391>
- Alampay, L. P. (2013). Parenting in the Philippines. In H. Selin (Ed.), *Parenting across cultures: Childrearing, motherhood and fatherhood in non-Western cultures* (pp. 105–121). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7503-9\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7503-9_9)
- Averia, L. T., Casulla, K. A. H., Dumalagan, K. K. A., Gabuelo, Z. M. P., Lastimoso, M. M. C. O., & Faller, E. M. (2024). Nursing student's perception on gender-defined roles in the Philippines: A mixed method study. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 5(1), 805–817. <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0124.0125>
- Azmitia, M., Syed, M., & Radmacher, K. (2013). Finding your niche: Identity and emotional support in emerging adults' adjustment to the transition to college. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 23(4), 744–761. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12037>
- Battle, J., & Ashley, C. (2008). Intersectionality, heteronormativity, and Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) families. *Black Women, Gender, and Families*, 2(1), 1–24. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/blacwomegendfami.2.1.0001>

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage.
- Bregman, H. R., Malik, N. M., Page, M. J. L., Makynen, E., & Lindahl, K. M. (2013). Identity profiles in lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth: The role of family influences. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42, 417–430. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9798-z>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Cannon, C. E. B. (2025). Queer theory. In G. Ritzer (Ed.), *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosq003.pub2>
- Carandang, M. L. (1987). *Filipino children under stress: Family dynamics and therapy*. Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Ceperiano, A. M., Santos, E. C., Jr., Alonzo, D. C. P., & Ofreneo, M. A. P. (2016). “Girl, bi, bakla, tomboy”: The intersectionality of sexuality, gender, and class in urban poor contexts. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 49(2), 5–34. <https://www.pap.ph/assets/files/journals/girl-bi-bakla-tomboy-the-intersectionality-of-sexuality-gender-and-class-in-urban-poor-conte.pdf>
- Clarke, V., Ellis, S. J., Peel, E., & Riggs, D. W. (2010). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer psychology*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511810121>
- Corona, K., Campos, B., & Chen, C. (2017). Familism is associated with psychological well-being and physical health: Main effects and stress-buffering effects. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 39(1), 46–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986316671297>
- D’Amico, E., & Julien, D. (2012). Disclosure of sexual orientation and gay, lesbian, and bisexual youths’ adjustment: Associations with past and current parental acceptance and rejection. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 8(3), 215–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2012.677232>
- D’Augelli, A. R., Grossman, A. H., & Starks, M. T. (2005). Parents’ awareness of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths’ sexual orientation. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(2), 474–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2005.00129.x>

- de Lind van Wijngaarden, J. W., & Ojanen, T. T. (2015). Identity management and sense of belonging to gay community among young rural Thai same-sex attracted men: Implications for HIV prevention and treatment. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 18(4), 377–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2015.1087595>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2017). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Docena, P. S. (2013). Developing and managing one's sexual identity: Coming out stories of Waray gay adolescents. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 46(2), 75–103.
- Doty, N. D., Willoughby, B. L. B., Lindahl, K. M., & Malik, N. M. (2010). Sexuality related social support among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(10), 1134–1147. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9566-x>
- Ereño, J. R. (2014). Playing it straight: A phenomenological study of Filipino homosexual adolescents who are “closeted” at home but are “out” at school. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, 2(1), 105–119.
- Evangelista, Z. M., Dumaop, D. E., & Nelson, G. (2016). Journeying to a safe space: Sexual and religious identity integration of Filipino LGBT-affirmative church members. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 49(2), 101–133.
- Ewertzon, M., & Hanson, E. (2019). Support interventions for family members of adults with mental illness: A narrative literature review. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 40(9), 768–780. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840.2019.1591547>
- Fan, J. P. H., Gu, Q., & Yu, X. (2022). Collectivist cultures and the emergence of family firms. *The Journal of Law and Economics*, 65(S1), S293–S325. <https://doi.org/10.1086/718853>
- Ferree, M. M. (2010). Filling the glass: Gender perspectives on families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(3), 420–439. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00711.x>
- Fletcher-Brown, J., Camacho, M., & Middleton, K. Z. (2015, September 8–10). *Pluralist gender-role expectations in health advertising in the Philippines. Are advertising agencies 'on-message'?* [Paper presentation]. British Academy of Management (BAM) Conference, Portsmouth, United Kingdom. <https://www.bam.ac.uk/civicism/event/info?id=2886>

- Gacusan, C. G. D., Uy, D. M. S., Yu, D. A. B., & Hechanova, M. R. M. (2020). Sexual identity management of GLB emerging adults in social support contexts. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 17(1), 63–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2020.1746724>
- Garcia, W. C. (1999). *A measure of tagasalo* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Ateneo de Manila University.
- Go Tian, R. L. (2004). A construct validation of the tagasalo personality using the Panunukat ng Pagkataong Pilipino (PPP). *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 36(2), 35–49.
- Go Tian-Ng, R. L., & Umandap, J. D. (2023). An exposition of the multidimensionality of the tagasalo personality. In V. L. Gregorio, C. M. Batan, & S. L. Blair (Eds.), *Resilience and familism: The dynamic nature of families in the Philippines* (pp. 103–125). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1530-353520230000023007>
- Hancock, A.-M. (2007). When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: Examining intersectionality as a research paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(1), 63–79. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707070065>
- Hu, X., Wang, Y., & Wu, C.-h. (2013). Acceptance concern and life satisfaction for Chinese LGBs: The mediating role of self-concealment. *Social Indicators Research*, 114(2), 687–701. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-012-0168-8>
- Javier, R. E., Jr. (2012). Pangpamamaraang kaangkinan ng pakikipagkuwentuhan. In R. E. Javier Jr. (Ed.), *Ang pakikipagkapwa: Pilipinong lapit sa pananaliksik* (pp. 241–288). Central Book Supply, Inc.
- Josef, J. C. (1999). Sexual identities and self-images of women-loving women. In S. H. Guerrero (Ed.), *Selected readings on health and feminist research: A sourcebook* (pp. 341–346). University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies.
- Katz-Wise, S. L., Rosario, M., & Tsappis, M. (2016). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth and family acceptance. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 63(6), 1011–1025. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2016.07.005>
- Liwag, M. E. C. D., de la Cruz, A. S., & Macapagal, M. E. J. (1998). How we raise our daughters and sons: Child-rearing and gender

- socialization in the Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 31(1-4), 1–46.
- Manalastas, E. J. (2013). Sexual orientation and suicide risk in the Philippines: Evidence from a nationally representative sample of young Filipino men. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 46(1), 1–13.
- Manalastas, E. J., & del Pilar, G. E. H. (2005). Filipino attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: Secondary analysis of 1996 and 2001 national survey data. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 38(2), 53–75.
- Marsh, T., & Brown, J. (2011). Homonegativity and its relationship to religiosity, nationalism and attachment style. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 50, 575–591. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-009-9286-2>
- Mendos, L. R., Botha, K., Carrano Lelis, R., López de la Peña, E., Savelev, I., & Tan, D. (2020, December). *State-sponsored homophobia 2020: Global legislation overview update*. ILGA World. [https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ILGA\\_World\\_State\\_Sponsored\\_Homophobia\\_report\\_global\\_legislation\\_overview\\_update\\_December\\_2020.pdf](https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ILGA_World_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_report_global_legislation_overview_update_December_2020.pdf)
- Morillo, H. M., Capuno, J. J., & Mendoza, A. M., Jr. (2013). Views and values on family among Filipinos: An empirical exploration. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 41(1), 5–28. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-12341278>
- Mustanski, B., Newcomb, M. E., & Garofalo, R. (2011). Mental health of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths: A developmental resiliency perspective. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 23(2), 204–225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2011.561474>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030168>
- Needham, B. L., & Austin, E. L. (2010). Sexual orientation, parental support, and health during the transition to young adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(10), 1189–1198. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9533-6>

- Ofreneo, M. A. P. (2003). Tomboys and lesbians: The Filipino female homosexual and her identity development process. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 36(1), 26–52.
- Ong, M. G. (2016). Ang kapakinabangan ng poststrukturalismo sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Hamon at halimbawa mula sa pag-aaral ng mga migranteng Pilipina sa Aotearoa. *Diwa E-Journal*, 4, 1–19.
- Orteza, G. O. (1997). *Pakikipagkwentuhan: Isang pamamaraan ng sama-samang pananaliksik, pagpapatotoo, at pagtulong sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (vol. 1). Philippine Psychology Research and Training House.
- Pachankis, J. E., & Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2013). The social development of contingent self-worth in sexual minority young men: An empirical investigation of the “best little boy in the world” hypothesis. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 35(2), 176–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973533.2013.764304>
- Parent, M. C., DeBlaere, C., & Moradi, B. (2013). Approaches to research on intersectionality: Perspectives on gender, LGBT, and racial/ethnic identities. *Sex Roles*, 68(11-12), 639–645. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0283-2>
- Poushter, J., & Kent, N. O. (2020). *The global divide on homosexuality persists: But increasing acceptance in many countries over past two decades*. Pew Research Center. [https://www.pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/PG\\_2020.06.25\\_Global-Views-Homosexuality\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/PG_2020.06.25_Global-Views-Homosexuality_FINAL.pdf)
- Price, E. (2011). Caring for mum and dad: Lesbian women negotiating family and navigating care. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 41(7), 1288–1303. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcr015>
- Regan, P. V., & Meyer, E. J. (2021). Queer theory and heteronormativity. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1387>
- Reyes, M. E. S., Lanic, P. J. P., Lavadia, E. N. T., Tactay, E. F. J. L., Tiongson, E. R., Tuazon, P. J. G., & McCutcheon, L. E. (2015). Self-stigma, self-concept clarity, and mental health status of Filipino LGBT individuals. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 17(2), 343–350.
- Robinson, B. A. (2016). Heteronormativity and homonormativity. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*, 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss013>



- Rubio, R. J., & Green, R.-J. (2009). Filipino masculinity and psychological distress: A preliminary comparison between gay and heterosexual men. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 6(3), 61–75. <https://doi.org/10.1525/srsp.2009.6.3.61>
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (2005). *The new gay teenager*. Harvard University Press. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.4159/9780674043138>
- Schwartz, S. J. (2007). The applicability of familism to diverse ethnic groups: A preliminary study. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 147(2), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.147.2.101-118>
- Secor, S. P., Limke-McLean, A., & Wright, R. W. (2017). Whose support matters? Support of friends (but not family) may predict affect and wellbeing of adults faced with negative life events. *Journal of Relationships Research*, 8, e10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jrr.2017.10>
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet*. University of California Press.
- Shilo, G., & Savaya, R. (2011). Effects of family and friend support on LGB youths' mental health and sexual orientation milestones. *Family Relations*, 60(3), 318–330. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00648.x>
- Simien, E. M., & Hancock, A.-M. (2011). Mini-symposium: Intersectionality research. *Political Research Quarterly*, 64(1), 185–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912910393647>
- Simons, L., Schrager, S. M., Clark, L. F., Belzer, M., & Olson, J. (2013). Parental support and mental health among transgender adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53(6), 791–793. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.07.019>
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 53–80). Sage.
- Streubert, H. J., & Carpenter, D. R. (2011). *Qualitative research in nursing: Advancing the humanistic imperative*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Tan, M. L. (1995). From bakla to gay: Shifting gender identities and sexual behaviors in the Philippines. In R. G. Parker, & J. H. Gagnon (Eds.), *Conceiving sexuality: Approaches to sex research in a postmodern world* (pp. 85–96). Routledge.



- Tan, M. L. (1998). *Sex and sexuality* (Policy research briefs series 1998–2). University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies.
- Tarroja, M. C. H. (2010). Revisiting the definition and concept of Filipino family: A psychological perspective. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 43(2), 177–193.
- Tuazon, A. D., Calvadores, C. K. M., & Quinain, K. T. (2021). Developing a scale to measure the tagasalo personality. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 54, 83–104. <https://doi.org/10.31710/pjp/0054.04>
- Udarbe, M. H. (2001). The tagasalo personality. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 34(2), 45–65.
- Villanueva, L. A. A., & Obaob, G. (2021). Language and sexism: The use of English language as academic discourse in Balamban, Cebu primary education textbooks. *European Scientific Journal*, 17(24), 132–150. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n24p132>
- Warner, L. R. (2008). A best practices guide to intersectional approaches in psychological research. *Sex Roles*, 59(5–6), 454–463. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9504-5>
- Warner, M. (1993). *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Whitehead, A. L. (2010). Sacred rites and civil rights: Religion's effect on attitudes toward same-sex unions and the perceived cause of homosexuality. *Social Science Quarterly*, 91(1), 63–79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2010.00681.x>

### Acknowledgements

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the tagasalo participants and their families for generously sharing their stories. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Faridah Kristi Cabbigat-Wetherick for her guidance as thesis supervisor; to Dr. Peejay D. Bengwasan and Ms. Mary Grace A. Ang for reviewing the initial analyses; and to the University of Baguio for funding this research through a Thesis Grant.