



## FAMILY ORIENTATION AND ITS IMPLICATION ON SEXUAL PREFERENCE

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**ABSTRACT:** *A person's identity is one of the most important aspects of his personality. This identity will serve as a determining factor in the development of his total person and oftentimes used to describe a person's perception of his or her own sex orientation. The sexual preference has a similar meaning to sexual orientation which is often used interchangeably, though sexual preference suggests a degree of voluntary choice. This study aimed to determine the extent of parents' influence on a child's sexual preference or orientation. All 746 Bachelor of Science in Business Administration students enrolled for the school year 2017-2018 were the respondents of the study. A self-made structured questionnaire was used in gathering the data. The data gathering tool determined the respondents' assessment on family orientation and parents' influence on their sexual preference. This study used the descriptive research design. Simple statistical tools such as frequency (F), percentage (%), mean and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used in the study. Results of the survey show that all 48 families with an LGBT in the family encountered problems with their parents regarding their gender. The fourth year respondents are more vocal in expressing their problems as compared to the lower years. Findings revealed that both father and mother have equal influence on their children regarding gender but 46 respondents stated that their fathers exert more influence on their children while 37 expressed that their mothers have a stronger influence rather than their fathers. The salient features of this study should be considered by the school administration in order to come up with strategies such as conducting seminar, conferences and the like, guidance and counselling for problems regarding the LGBT community in the school may be conducted.*

**KEYWORDS:** *family, orientation, sex, gender, gender identity, LGBT, socio-demographic, lesbian, gay, egalitarian, democratic type*

## INTRODUCTION

The family is considered the basic unit of the Philippine society where the primary socialization process of the child is being introduced. In the words of Giddens, gender socialization is a more focused form of socialization; it is how children of different sexes are socialized into their gender roles (Giddens, 1993, p. 165) and through socialization, individuals are taught what it means to be male or female (Morris, 1988, p. 366). DeAngelis also mentioned in his work that gender differences result from socialization process,



especially during childhood and adolescence. For instance, before the child reaches 3 years old, there are fascinating differences between how boys and girls interact (DeAngelis, 1989). In his discussion, boys attempt to dominate, to control, to find out "Am I better than you?" and show that they do this by little contests or by being aggressive, if necessary by establishing their status and continue to use power to improve their position in the "pecking order" (De Angelis, 1989). According to him, this type of family orientation and socialization may be attributed to the colonial times when the hierarchical structure of family has been widely accepted, when age and status demand high levels of respect, and the good of the family takes precedence over personal desires. This characteristic is still present despite modernization.

A person's sexual motivation is the central to some of strongest emotions and deepest commitments. Its influence is so pervasive that many of individuals' actions would be incomprehensible without taking it into account. Although the complexity of human sexuality should not be underestimated, it can be reasonably hypothesized that one of the main reasons people are so motivated by sex is because they experience sexual activities as highly rewarding. From an evolutionary perspective, the motivating nature of sexual experience is best explained as an adaptation for ensuring successful reproduction.

LeVay mentioned in his work that sexuality is influence by evolution, adaptations are thought to depend on the relative "feminizing" and "masculinising" effects of sex hormones on the developing brain (LeVay 2010; Savic et al. 2010). Sex identities in his discussion are assumed to be necessary intermediaries for shaping how to respond in particular ways toward physical and behavioural characteristics typical of male and female organisms. According to this model, non-heterosexual attraction results from these processes of developmental masculinisation and feminization proceeding in ways that are sex-atypical. Although genetic effects on sexual orientation have been observed, among identical twins where at least one sibling reports homosexual preferences, the probability of the other sibling reporting homosexuality has been estimated to be as low as 24% (Bailey et al. 2016). This limited heritability demonstrates that orientation cannot be



completely determined by genetic factors. Aspects of developmental programs contributing to sexual orientation maybe genetically specified, but the underlying processes could be disrupted by a variety of environmental factors, especially prenatally. One notable example is the “older brother effect,” wherein each successive older brother increases the odds of the development of homosexuality in men (but not in women), which has been suggested to result from the maternal immune system developing increasingly strong reactions to Y-chromosome proteins found in male fetuses (Bogaert et al. 2017). According to him, this kind of model demonstrates how there can be influence on sexuality that are innately determined without being genetically specified which in turn affected the degree of intense pleasure on the nature of sexual activity that reward learning can have profound impacts on sexuality. Indeed, Hoffmann and Pfaus et al argued that classical and operant conditioning maybe a primary means by which adult sexual preferences are established in humans as well as other species (Hoffmann 2017; Pfaus et al. 2012).

In the late part of March 2007, a cluster of human rights experts launched the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (the Yogyakarta Principles). These Principles are intended as a coherent and comprehensive identification of the obligation of States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This activity launched significantly played a role for more advocacy efforts and, whether directly or otherwise, in normative and jurisprudential development. One of the most important published critical commentary of the article sought to situate the contexts of (a) the actual situation of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and (b) the applicable international human rights law as it stands today.

Several retrospective studies link boyhood cross-gender behavior with late adolescent and adult homosexual orientation. In the study conducted by Saghir and Robins found that 65% of 89 homosexual men and only 3% of 35 heterosexual men recalled a “girl-like” syndrome, which was characterized by an aversion to playing with boys, an loathing to boys’ games and activities, and an interest in playing with dolls. A larger study by Bell et al. of 575



homosexual and 284 heterosexual men found that the most significant correlate of adult homosexuality recalled from boyhood was “gender nonconformity,” which was characterized by a preference for girls’ rather than boys’ activities and cross-dressing. In the same perspective study conducted by Harry in an even larger study (1,400 homosexual and 200 heterosexual men) found that significantly more homosexual than heterosexual men recalled being called “sissy,” being social loners, wanting to be girls, playing with girls, and cross-dressing. This association between boyhood non-erotic behaviors and adulthood erotic behaviors is also supported by cross-cultural research. Whitam (4) studied homosexual and heterosexual men in Brazil and Guatemala as well as in the United States; homosexual men in the three cultures more often recalled an interest in toys typically preferred by girls, cross-dressing, a preference for girls’ games and activities, and being regarded as a “sissy.” The potential fallacies of retrospective recall include inaccuracies produced by the eroding influence of time and conscious and unconscious needs to selectively recall events to construct a coherent developmental theory of the self or to present the self in a socially acceptable manner. To overcome such limitations, this study was prospective. Two groups of subjects were initially evaluated in childhood and then re-evaluated during adolescence and/or young adulthood. During childhood, extensive data were gathered on the child’s sex-typed behaviors, his relationships with other children, and his relationship with his parents. The parents were also extensively evaluated.

Gender preference is the first element in creating social identity that shapes a child’s life. The family may influence on children’s gender development that includes role modelling and encouraging different behaviours and activities of sons and daughters. When parents have a newly born child, the first thing that matters to the family members is whether it is a girl or a boy since gender choice is a very important matter to both parents and their family and serves as a foundation on how they will treat their future. Although a growing literature exists on children of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) parents, little is known about these children's experiences as adults. In the qualitative study conducted by Gold, Abbie (2007) of 42 adults raised by LGB parents explores this issue. Participants grew up in a diverse range of contexts: Some were always aware of their family's non-traditional status, some were



told in childhood, and others were never explicitly told. Number reasons participants expressed for surfacing about their family, comprising a desire to educate, a desire to “screen out” homophobic individuals, and a need for openness in their relationships. Some participants did not disclose about their families at all, and several told only when necessary. Findings are discussed in terms of the diversity inherent among adult children of LGB parents and implications for practice, policy, and research.

In the literature summarized by Ruble, Martin, and Berenbaum (2006) on gender development of African American youth they made a presentation within six content areas covering biological/categorical sex, activities including their interests, their personal and social attributes, social relationships, styles and symbols, and values concerning gender. Results from this study of the African Americans were compared with what is known about gender processes in other U.S. racial groups, and gaps in the literature were significant. The summary of the literature on socialization influences on gender development in African American youth, focusing particularly on parents and media. Their review demonstrate that gender, together with race, play a significant role in the development of African American youth, with many of these processes similar to what is found in youth of other racial/ethnic groups. Contextual factors such as family structure and racial context are important to take into account to best understand individual differences in the gender development of Black youth.

The LGB adolescents' relationships with their parents are often challenged, particularly around the time of disclosure of sexual identity or “coming out” (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2005; Patterson, 2000; Savin-Williams, 1998a, 1998b; Savin-Williams & Dubé, 1998; Tharinger & Wells, 2000) or when parents learn that their children are LGBT. Researchers in one study (Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2009) examined substance use among LGB youth and asked youth whether they perceived reactions to their LGB identity from a range of individuals (including family members, coaches, teachers, therapists, neighbors, and friends) to be accepting, neutral, or rejecting. The number of perceived rejecting reactions was reported to predict substance use; although accepting reactions did not directly reduce substance use, such reactions buffered the link between rejections and substance use.



A wide group of researchers who conducted studies involving family reactions to their children's LGBT identity indicate that parental acceptance and rejection are different constructs (e.g., **Perrin et al., 2004**); thus, accepting and rejecting behaviors can take place as families adjust to learning about their child's LGBT identity. However, the focal point of prior research has been largely on finding the middle ground parent–adolescent relationships for LGB young people. However, with the widespread transformations in civic visibility and attitudes about LGBT people and issues over the course of past decades (**Savin-Williams, 2005**), some families react to learning on their child's sexual preference with acceptance (**Ryan, 2009a**).

Some theories argue that parenting has a negligible impact on children's gender development. When gender identity is primarily determined by genetic/biological influences (Iervolino et al. [2002](#)) or prenatal sex hormones (Collaer and Hines 1995), the influence of parents will be little. From the standpoint of cognitive-developmental theory, the role of parents in the child's gender identity is also negligible.

The Philippine society highly considers the need to understand a child's sexual preference. For instance, not all parents can accept their child who becomes a lesbian or a gay. Along this line, the researchers have come up with the idea of determining one's gender preference and its association with their family orientation. Therefore, this research work shall attempt to find out how parents influence a child's gender preference or orientation and to better understand their feelings, interest and perspectives upon choosing their identity. Finally, this study may pave the way to open opportunities for them and to create an avenue towards giving them freedom in our society.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study aimed to determine the extent of parents' influence on their child's sexual preference or orientation. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' assessment on family orientation and parents' influence on their sexual preference?
2. What are the problems encountered by respondents related to gender preference?



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Assessment on Family Orientation & Parents' Influence on Child's Gender Preference

**Table 1**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Type of Family Orientation**

Family Orientation	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
Democratic	116	182	150	448	60.05
Authoritative	20	50	30	100	13.40
Nuclear	8	58	18	84	11.26
Extended	10	24	30	64	8.58
Permissive	8	14	28	50	6.70
Total	162	328	256	746	100

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to type of family orientation. This explains that majority of the respondents used or followed democratic orientation with 448 or 60.05%. This means that parents believe on the importance of freedom in managing the family. Children are free to be on their own, however, there are some conditions set by parents. Next in rank with 100 or 13.40% is authoritative. Parents still value the significance of being strict in their children. This is the best way for them to let their children behave in a particular manner. Last in rank is permissive orientation with 50 or 6.70%. This discusses that parents are giving their children full freedom to be in their own because they believe that they are old enough to do so.

**Table 2**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Type of Family Authority**

Family Authority	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
Patriarchal	44	76	52	172	23.06
Matriarchal	20	26	22	68	9.11
Egalitarian	98	226	182	506	67.83
Total	162	328	256	746	100



Data on the prevailing type of family authority are shown in Table 2. Majority of the families with 506 or 67.83%) are egalitarian where there is equal power or influence of father and mother. This means that it is normal that both parents should decide on family matters. Working together for the betterment of the family is better than to be on their own. Next in rank is patriarchal with 172 or 23.06% which implies that some of the parent' respondents still believe that fathers should be more influential as compared to mothers because of the cultural practice that they are the head of the family.

**Table 3**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Number of Children in the Family**

Number of Children	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
1	22	40	30	92	12.33
2	24	92	70	186	24.93
3	42	88	76	206	27.61
4	24	28	32	84	11.26
5	24	36	30	90	12.06
6	20	20	6	46	6.17
7	4	14	4	22	2.95
8	0	10	4	14	1.88
9	2	0	2	4	0.54
10	0	0	2	2	0.27
Total	162	328	256	746	100

Table 3 presents the number of children in the family of the 746 respondents in which the most number of children is 10 (from two respondents) followed by nine children (from four respondents) and eight children (from fourteen respondents). There are 206 families or 27.61% with three children, 186 or 24.93% with 2 children, 92 or 12.33% with only one child, 90 or 12.06% with five children, and 84 or 11.26% with four children. These data imply that a majority of the 746 families (658 or 88.20%) have a maximum of five children in the family while only 88 families or 11.80% have 6-10 children in the family.





**Table 4**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Birth Order in the Family**

Birth Order	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
1st Child	52	124	88	264	35.39
2nd Child	34	74	62	170	22.79
3rd Child	44	38	52	134	17.96
4th Child	20	32	28	80	10.72
5th Child	8	22	8	37	5.09
6th Child	2	30	6	38	5.09
7th Child	2	6	6	14	1.88
8th Child	0	2	4	6	0.80
9th Child	0	0	0	0	0.00
10 <sup>th</sup> Child	0	0	2	2	0.27
Total	162	328	256	746	100

In Table 4 where the birth order of the respondents is presented, data show that most of the respondents are the first child in the family with numbering 264 or 35.39% and followed by 170 or 22.79% who are the second child in the family. Next in rank are 134 respondents or 17.96% who are the third child in the family and 80 or 10.72% who are the fourth child in the family.

**Table 5**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Sex of Each Child in the Family**

Birth Order	2nd Year		3rd Year		4th Year		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	26	26	56	68	40	48	122	142
2	18	16	40	34	28	34	86	84
3	20	24	22	16	28	24	70	62
4	8	12	22	10	8	20	38	42
5	4	4	10	12	4	4	18	20
6	2	0	12	18	2	4	16	22
7	0	2	4	2	2	4	6	8
8	0	0	2	0	2	2	4	2
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
Total	78	84	168	160	116	140	362	384

The sex of each child in the 746 families of the respondents is presented in Table 5. Results of the survey gathered indicate that there are is a greater number of the first born females



than males. There is an almost equal number among males and females in other birth orders, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> child except in the 9<sup>th</sup> (none for both sexes) and the 10<sup>th</sup> (only two male children).

**Table 6**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Presence of a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender in the Family**

Presence of LGBT in the Family	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
Yes	28	22	46	96	12.87
No	134	306	210	650	87.13
Total	162	328	256	746	100

The frequency and percentage distribution according to the presence of a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) in the family are shown in Table 6. Results indicate that 650 of the 746 families or 87.13% do not have an LGBT in the family. Only 96 respondents or 12.87% stated that there is an LGBT in their respective families.

**Table 7**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to the Reaction of Parents on the Presence of an LGBT in the Family**

Reactions	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
A. Surprised	8	6	18	32	33.33
B. Confused	8	4	10	22	22.92
C. Angry	2	0	8	10	10.42
D. Amused	0	2	2	4	4.17
E. Indifferent	6	2	0	8	8.33
F. A & C	2	8	6	16	16.67
G. A, B & C	0	2	0	2	2.08
H. A, D & E	0	2	0	2	2.08
Total	26	26	44	96	100

The varied reactions of parents regarding the presence of an LGBT in the family are presented in Table 7. Data show that 32 or 33.33% are surprised, 22 or 22.92% are confused, 10 or 10.42% are angry, 4 or 4.17% are amused, and 8 or 8.33% are indifferent. Meanwhile, 16 parents or 16.67% are both surprised and angry, one parent was surprised



and confused yet angry while another parent was surprised, amused and indifferent at the same time.

**Table 7a**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Occurrence of Problem with Parents Regarding Gender**

Response	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
Yes	28	4	12	96	12.87
No	134	324	244	650	87.13
Total	162	328	256	746	100

Data on the occurrence of problems with parents of the respondents regarding gender is indicated in Table 7a. Results of the survey show that all 96 families (as shown in Table 12) with an LGBT in the family encountered problems with their parents regarding their gender. This implies that problems occur when there is an LGBT in the family which may affect relationship within the family circle.

**Table 7**

**Problems Encountered with Parents Regarding Gender**

Year Level	Problems Encountered
Second Year	- lack of acceptance, fairness, caring of parents, and love of the other members of the family
Third Year	- lack of full acceptance from their parents
Fourth Year	- one brother is a gay and the father does not want to tolerate him because he is the only son in the family - second sister told her father that she has a girlfriend - when parents found out that I am a gay - when grandfather found out my brother is a bisexual - when parents noticed that my sister is boyish

Table 7b enumerates the problems encountered with parents regarding gender. Results show that fourth year respondents are more vocal in expressing their problems as compared to the lower years.



**Table 8**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Solutions to Problems with Parents Regarding Gender**

Year Level	Solutions to Problems
Second Year	- acceptance by the parents
Third Year	- the father and mother must support their children no matter what is their gender - act normal like a straight guy - I don't know
Fourth Year	- show them that I will be a worthy person in spite of being a gay

Table 8 enumerates some solutions proposed by the students-respondents regarding parents with an LGBT in the family. Overall, the more important keywords expressed by the respondents relates to acceptance by the parents as well as the need for their support regardless of their gender preference. One statement provides a self-challenge and an inspiration to prove him worthy in spite of being a gay.

**Table 9**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Influence of Parents Regarding Gender**

Influence	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
Father	12	44	36	92	12.33
Mother	18	32	24	74	9.92
Both	132	252	196	580	77.75
Total	162	328	256	746	100

A majority of the respondents stated that both father and mother have equal influence on their children regarding gender with 580 or 77.75%. But 92 respondents or 12.33% stated that their fathers exert more influence on their children while 74 or 9.92% expressed that their mothers have a stronger influence rather than their fathers. This implies that both parents are practicing the close monitoring on their children.



**Table 10**

**Frequency and Percentage Distribution on Reaction to Parents' Influence**

Reaction	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Total	Percent
A. Afraid	26	106	42	174	31.29
B. Amused	36	116	48	200	35.97
C. Angry	8	14	0	22	3.96
D. Annoyed	6	10	2	18	3.24
E. Confused	6	24	18	48	7.55
F. Disturbed	16	28	10	54	9.71
G. Indifferent	18	18	10	46	8.27
Total	116	316	130	562	100

Table 10 indicates the varied reactions of the respondents regarding their parents' influence on gender preference. Results of the survey showed that only 562 respondents or about 75% gave a response to this particular item in the questionnaire in which 200 or 35.97% are amused and 174 or 31.29% are afraid. The others gave other reactions such as anger, annoyance, confusion, disturbance and indifference. The data imply that respondents find it so funny regarding how their parents react on the matter.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing results and data gathered in the study the following conclusions are derived:

1. That there are lesbians and gays among students of the program who deserve to be given respect and serious attention especially on their need for social acceptance
2. That the type of family authority being practiced by the respondents' parents as well as the type of family orientation has great effects on the gender preference of the respondents
3. That the results of this study provide the initial information regarding the strong influence imposed by the parents on the gender preference of their children

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That there must be proper dissemination on the results of this study that may be spearheaded by the College officials
2. Results of this undertaking should be explained to the students and their parents in order to fully understand the problem on gender preference



3. Seminars/trainings/conferences must be conducted for both parents and students to provide adequate information on gender preference and how to deal with the possible problems which may arise from it
4. More in-depth studies should be conducted to obtain more information and detailed understanding of the issue

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