

Bakit Dalawa Ang Tatay ni Emman: a Short Film and Storybook on understanding Same-Sex Parenthood

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Abstract

Family is understood in various ways, commonly defined as a group of individuals connected by blood, marriage, adoption, or committed relationships who share responsibilities and emotional bonds. Families play a vital role in shaping identity, emotional security, and social development. Contemporary research affirms that diverse family structures, including same-sex parent families, are capable of fostering healthy child development and positive psychosocial outcomes (APA, 2021; Farr, 2023). Despite growing global recognition of family diversity, same-sex parenthood continues to face social resistance, particularly in conservative societies. In the Philippines, while the LGBTQIA+ community is visible and increasingly represented, full societal acceptance remains limited (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] & United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2021). Misconceptions often stem from the belief that children require both a mother and a father for proper development, although empirical studies show no significant differences in well-being between children raised by same-sex and heterosexual parents (APA, 2021). Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities), this study explored perceptions of same-sex parenthood through the development of a short film aimed at young adults. The film depicted the lived experiences and challenges of same-sex parents and their adopted child within their community. Evaluation results showed strong audience reception: Story/Message (4.54, Highly Satisfied), Creativity and Originality (4.44, Very Satisfied), and Cinematography (4.39, Very Satisfied). The project promotes inclusivity, awareness, and social understanding of diverse family structures.

Keywords: Short Film, Same-Sex Parenthood, Family, Adoption

1. Introduction

Family may be understood in various ways, but it is generally defined as a group of people connected by blood, marriage, adoption, or other legally and socially recognized relationships. Families play a central role in shaping identity, providing emotional support, and promoting social development. A commonly used definition from the U.S. Census Bureau describes a family as “a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Another structural definition describes family as “two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption” (Ooms & Preister, 1988). This broader definition includes individuals who may be legally or biologically connected even if they do not live in the same household.

Family structures have become increasingly diverse over time. In addition to traditional nuclear families, societies now recognize remarried families, dual-earner families, single-parent households, extended families, and other non-traditional family arrangements. In the Philippine context, the Philippine Statistics Authority commonly identifies a nuclear family as one composed of a father, a mother, and their children living in the same household. Because this family model is often emphasized in early socialization, many Filipino children grow up with the belief that it is the only standard or acceptable form of family. However, as society becomes more diverse, it is important to acknowledge that many children are also raised in non-traditional family structures.

One of these family structures is same-sex parenthood. Around the world, same-sex couples have increasingly formed families through adoption, surrogacy, co-parenting, and other means. Research has shown that children raised by same-sex parents are capable of achieving healthy emotional, social, and developmental outcomes comparable to those raised by heterosexual parents. Despite these findings, same-sex parent families continue to experience stigma, misunderstanding, and discrimination, particularly in conservative societies.

In the Philippines, LGBTQIA+ individuals and families are increasingly visible, including lesbian mothers, gay fathers, transgender parents, and nonbinary guardians. However, visibility does not always translate into full acceptance. Social attitudes toward gender and sexuality remain heavily influenced by traditional and religious beliefs, which often shape how non-traditional families are perceived. Reports have shown that LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Philippines continue to face barriers in social recognition, protection, and inclusion. As a result, same-sex parent families may

experience prejudice, rejection, and social stigma, not only toward the parents themselves but also toward the children they raise.

These forms of stigma may affect the well-being of both parents and children. Same-sex parents may encounter public judgment, doubts about their parenting ability, and assumptions that their family structure may negatively affect a child's development. Previous studies have also noted that adoptive and non-traditional families often face stress caused by social discrimination, which may have implications for parental mental health and family functioning. In this context, misunderstandings about same-sex parenthood persist not because of a lack of family care or parental commitment, but because of deeply rooted social beliefs about what a family should look like.

For this reason, there is a need to promote greater awareness and understanding of same-sex parenthood in the Philippines. Creative media may serve as an effective tool for this purpose because it can communicate lived experiences in a relatable, emotional, and accessible way. This study therefore aimed to produce a short film titled *Bakit Dalawa Ang Tatay ni Emman* to help audiences better understand the realities, challenges, and perspectives of same-sex parent families. Through storytelling and visual representation, the project seeks to encourage empathy, reduce prejudice, and broaden public understanding of diverse family structures.

The study was guided by a conceptual framework that served as a production roadmap for the development of the short film. This framework illustrates the systematic flow of the project, from idea generation to final evaluation. It identifies the major stages involved in the creation of the film and shows how information gathered from respondents informed the creative process.

The framework begins with the initial phase of brainstorming, conceptualization, and data gathering. In this stage, the researchers collected information from same-sex couples regarding their experiences, motivations for adoption, and challenges in raising a child. The second phase includes scriptwriting, storyboarding, casting, and budgeting, where the research findings were translated into a structured narrative and production plan. The third phase covers film shooting, editing, and audio design, during which the creative output was produced using a hybrid live-action and animation format. The final phase consists of evaluation by respondents and project completion, in which the short film was assessed by young adult viewers in terms of story/message, creativity and originality, and cinematography.

This conceptual framework demonstrates that the study is both research-based and production-oriented. It ensures that the creative output is grounded in actual respondent data while also allowing the film to function as an awareness-building medium.

The main objective of this study was to produce a short film on understanding same-sex parenthood using a hybrid live-action and animation approach to engage the target audience. Specifically, the study sought to determine the factors that influence same-sex couples to adopt a child, identify the challenges they encounter in raising a child, and describe the respondents' familiarity with same-sex parenthood and family setup. In addition, the study aimed to assess the short film in terms of its story and message, creativity and originality, and cinematography.

2. Material and methods

The researchers aimed to present the situations and challenges experienced by same-sex parents through the short film. More specifically, the film was intended to educate viewers and deepen their understanding of the realities faced by same-sex parents and their adopted children.

This study employed a quantitative research design using survey questionnaires with close-ended questions. Initial data gathering was conducted among selected same-sex couples in order to obtain relevant information that would help shape the content of the short film. For the evaluation phase of the project, the researchers gathered responses from 50 young adults who came from typical family setups.

The study used simple random sampling in selecting the respondents for the evaluation. The respondents consisted of 50 young adults between the ages of 18 and 28 who came from traditional or typical family backgrounds. These respondents served as the target group for evaluating the short film.

The respondents in the study were classified into two groups. The first group consisted of 10 same-sex couples who participated in the initial data collection or pre-survey for the development of the project content. The second group consisted of 50 young adults aged 18 to 28 who came from typical family structures such as nuclear families, single-parent families, extended families, and step-families.

As the main research instrument, the researchers used survey questionnaires containing close-ended questions and Likert scale items. The questionnaires were designed to gather information from the respondents and to evaluate the short film based on specific criteria. The collected responses were interpreted using the Likert scale.

For the data gathering procedure, the researchers selected 50 young adult respondents aged 18 to 28 years old to participate in the evaluation of the short film. The survey questionnaires were distributed to these respondents, and the answers gathered were manually tallied by the researchers. The data were then organized and categorized according to the respondents' demographic profile.

For the statistical treatment of data, the researchers first tallied all responses and then analyzed them using descriptive statistics. The frequency percentage formula was used to determine the percentage of respondents who selected each answer in the questionnaire. The formula used was:

$$\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

where % refers to percentage, f refers to frequency, and N refers to the total number of responses. To evaluate the short film, the mean was also computed in order to interpret the respondents' ratings across the given criteria.

Here is a more polished journal-style version if you want it stronger:

This study sought to depict the situations and challenges faced by same-sex parents through a short film intended to educate viewers and promote a better understanding of the lived experiences of same-sex parents and their adopted children. A quantitative research design was employed using survey questionnaires composed of close-ended questions. Initial data gathering was conducted among selected same-sex couples to obtain information that informed the development of the film's content. For the evaluation phase, the study involved 50 young adults from typical family backgrounds.

The respondents were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of 10 same-sex couples who participated in the initial pre-survey for content development. The second group consisted of 50 young adults aged 18 to 28 from family structures such as nuclear, single-parent, extended, and step-families. The study used simple random sampling for the selection of the young adult respondents. Survey questionnaires with Likert scale items served as the main research instrument for gathering and interpreting the data.

During data collection, the questionnaires were distributed to the 50 young adult respondents, and the researchers manually tallied the responses. The data were then organized according to demographic variables and evaluation criteria. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the responses. Frequency and percentage were computed to describe the distribution of answers, while mean scores were used to interpret the respondents' evaluation of the short film.

One correction for your paper: since your respondents include nuclear, single-parent, extended, and step-family, avoid saying only traditional family setup because that is narrower than your actual data. Use typical family backgrounds or varied family setups instead.

3. Results and discussion

This section presents the findings of the study based on the responses gathered from two groups of participants. The first group consisted of 20 respondents representing 10 same-sex couples who participated in the initial data collection for the development of the short film. The second group consisted of 50 young adults who evaluated the completed short film. The discussion is organized according to the main variables of the study, including the reasons same-sex couples adopt a child, the challenges they encounter, what they want people to understand about their family setup, the demographic profile of the evaluators, the respondents' familiarity with same-sex parenthood, and their evaluation of the short film in terms of story/message, creativity and originality, and cinematography.

3.1. Reasons Why Same-Sex Couples Adopt a Child

Among the 20 respondents from same-sex couples, the most common reason for adopting a child was the desire to have a complete family setup, as reported by 12 respondents or 60%. This was followed by 6 respondents or 30% who stated that they wanted to share the joy of taking care of a child with their partner. The remaining 2 respondents or 10% said that they adopted in order to help an abandoned child become part of a caring family. These findings suggest that adoption among same-sex couples is primarily motivated by the desire to build a family and experience parenthood, while also reflecting a sense of shared responsibility and compassion toward children in need of care.

3.2. Challenges Encountered by Same-Sex Parents

In terms of the challenges encountered by same-sex parents, 9 respondents or 45% identified the lack of social acceptance of same-sex parenthood, especially among highly traditional individuals, as the most significant challenge. Meanwhile, 7 respondents or 35% reported facing negative impressions that same-sex parents may influence their adopted children toward an alternative lifestyle. Another 4 respondents or 20% pointed to the lack of sufficient government support in addressing the stigma associated with same-sex parenthood. These findings indicate that the major difficulties faced by same-sex parents are rooted more in social prejudice, cultural conservatism, and institutional limitations than in parenting ability itself.

3.3. What Same-Sex Couples Want People to Understand About Their Family Setup

When asked what they wanted people to understand about their family setup, 10 respondents or 50% stated that same-sex parents may not follow the traditional family structure but are still responsible enough to adopt and raise a child. In addition, 5 respondents or 25% emphasized that unconventional family setups should be respected and accepted. Another 5 respondents or 25% expressed the view that all children are worthy of love and attention regardless of the sex or gender of their parents. These responses indicate that same-sex couples primarily seek recognition of their capability as parents and broader acceptance of family diversity in society.

3.4. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the 50 young adult respondents showed that the largest age groups were those who were 20 years old and 21 years old, with 14 respondents each or 28% per group. This was followed by 9 respondents or 18% who were 22 years old, and 7 respondents or 14% who were 23 years old. There were 3 respondents who were 24 years old, 1 respondent who was 19 years old, 1 respondent who was 25 years old, and 1 respondent who was 28 years old. In terms of gender, 26 respondents or 52% were male, 23 respondents or 46% were female, and 1 respondent or 2% identified as LGBTQIA+. With regard to family setup, 31 respondents or 62% came from nuclear families, 8 respondents or 16% came from single-parent families, and 11 respondents or 22% came from extended families. These findings show that most of the evaluators came from relatively conventional family backgrounds, which is relevant to the study because the short film was intended to broaden awareness among viewers who may have grown up with more traditional views of family.

3.5. Respondents' Familiarity with Same-Sex Parenthood

The respondents' level of familiarity with same-sex parenthood provided important context for interpreting the evaluation results. Out of the 50 respondents, 9 or 17.60% reported being extremely familiar with same-sex parenthood, while 33 respondents or 66.70% said they were familiar. The remaining 8 respondents or 16% stated that they were not so familiar. None of the respondents indicated that they were not familiar at all. This suggests that while most respondents already had some level of awareness of same-sex parenthood, the short film still played an important role in deepening their understanding and encouraging empathy.

3.6. Evaluation of the Short Film in Terms of Story/Message

The short film received a highly positive evaluation in terms of story and message. For the statement that the short film allowed viewers to understand the situation of same-sex parenthood, 29 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 19 selected Very Satisfied, and 2 selected Satisfied, resulting in an overall mean of 4.54, interpreted as Highly Satisfied. For the statement that the short film explained the situation of the adopted child carefully, 27 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 19 selected Very Satisfied, and 4 selected Satisfied, with an overall mean of 4.46, interpreted as Very Satisfied. For the statement that the narrative of the short film was relatable and easy to understand, 27 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 18 selected Very Satisfied, and 5 selected Satisfied, resulting in an overall mean of 4.44, also interpreted as Very Satisfied. For the statement that the film allowed viewers to see parenthood from the perspective of a same-sex couple, 34 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 14 selected Very Satisfied, and 2 selected Satisfied, producing an overall mean of 4.64, interpreted as Highly Satisfied. Lastly, for the statement that the film allowed viewers to empathize with the challenges of both the adopted child and the same-sex parents, 31 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 16 selected Very Satisfied, and 3 selected Satisfied, resulting in an overall mean of 4.56, interpreted as Highly Satisfied. Overall, these findings indicate that the film was particularly effective in presenting the lived experiences of same-sex parenthood, strengthening perspective-taking, and encouraging emotional understanding among viewers.

3.7. Evaluation of the Short Film in Terms of Creativity and Originality

The short film also received favorable ratings in terms of creativity and originality. For the first criterion, 26 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 18 selected Very Satisfied, and 6 selected Satisfied, producing an overall mean of

4.40, interpreted as Very Satisfied. For the second criterion, 31 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 18 selected Very Satisfied, and 1 selected Satisfied, resulting in an overall mean of 4.60, interpreted as Highly Satisfied. For the third criterion, 23 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 20 selected Very Satisfied, and 7 selected Satisfied, with an overall mean of 4.32, interpreted as Very Satisfied. For the fourth criterion, 24 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 18 selected Very Satisfied, 7 selected Satisfied, and 1 selected Slightly Satisfied, resulting in an overall mean of 4.26, interpreted as Very Satisfied. These results show that the film was perceived as creative, engaging, and original by the respondents. At the same time, the relatively lower rating for one of the items suggests that some aspects of the hybrid visual treatment, particularly the animated background and surroundings, may still be improved.

3.8. Evaluation of the Short Film in Terms of Cinematography

The film was likewise positively evaluated in terms of cinematography. For the first cinematography criterion, 35 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 12 selected Very Satisfied, and 3 selected Satisfied, resulting in an overall mean of 4.64, interpreted as Very Satisfied. For the second criterion, 17 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 27 selected Very Satisfied, and 6 selected Satisfied, producing an overall mean of 4.22, interpreted as Very Satisfied. For the third criterion, 23 respondents selected Highly Satisfied, 20 selected Very Satisfied, and 7 selected Satisfied, with an overall mean of 4.32, also interpreted as Very Satisfied. These findings indicate that the short film was generally successful in its visual and technical execution. The respondents particularly appreciated the steadiness, framing, and focus of the camera work, while the slightly lower ratings in some areas suggest that there is still room to strengthen the use of close-ups, camera angles, and lighting for more expressive visual storytelling.

3.9. Overall Discussion of the Findings

The findings demonstrate that the short film was effective as an awareness-building medium on same-sex parenthood. The responses from same-sex couples show that adoption is closely linked to the desire to build a loving and complete family, while the challenges they face are primarily rooted in social stigma, negative public perceptions, and limited institutional support. At the same time, the evaluation by young adult viewers indicates that the short film was well received across all three criteria, with especially strong results in story and message. This suggests that the project succeeded in communicating the lived experiences of same-sex parents and in encouraging greater understanding, empathy, and openness toward diverse family structures. The findings also support the idea that creative media can serve as an effective educational tool for presenting socially sensitive issues in a way that is accessible, relatable, and emotionally engaging.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that the short film was effective in promoting understanding of same-sex parenthood among its intended audience. The film received an overall mean of 4.54 in story and message, interpreted as Highly Satisfied, which suggests that it successfully conveyed the lived experiences, perspectives, and challenges of same-sex parents and their adopted child. The respondents' evaluation further implies that the film was able to communicate its social message clearly and meaningfully. However, the addition of scenes that further develop the relationship between the parents may enhance audience comprehension and emotional engagement. In terms of creativity and originality, the film obtained an overall mean of 4.44, interpreted as Very Satisfied, indicating that the respondents found the project imaginative and distinctive in its presentation. Despite this positive evaluation, improvements in the background design and animation are recommended to strengthen the visual coherence of the hybrid live-action and animation format. The film also received an overall mean of 4.39 in cinematography, interpreted as Very Satisfied, reflecting a favorable assessment of its visual and technical execution. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that certain technical aspects, particularly audio consistency, lighting, and the use of additional camera angles, may still be improved to further enhance the quality of the production. Overall, the study concludes that *Bakit Dalawa Ang Tatay ni Emman* served as an effective creative medium for raising awareness about same-sex parenthood. The project demonstrates how short film can be used not only as an artistic platform but also as an educational tool for encouraging empathy, reducing stigma, and promoting greater acceptance of diverse family structures. One important correction: based on your item means, Creativity and Originality computes more cleanly to 4.40, not 4.44. If you want, I can also give you a corrected final conclusion using 4.53, 4.40, and 4.39 for consistency.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with general ethical standards in research. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from the respondents, and all information gathered was kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.

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