

# Behind the Frame: Family Representations in Metro Manila Film Festival Posters

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## ABSTRACT

Media significantly influences public perceptions of family structures, especially in the Philippines, where traditional family values are well-established in both religious and cultural beliefs. The Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) posters serve as a visual representation of these values, yet they also introduce various portrayals of family, raising questions about inclusivity and societal expectations. This study examines how MMFF posters describe families and explores the perspectives of religious individuals and married couples on these portrayals. It seeks to contribute to media policies that advocate for respectful and accurate family representations, recognize marginalized family structures, and challenge norms that may exclude non-traditional families. This study employs a descriptive-qualitative research design, utilizing in-depth interviews and poster analysis with selected participants through a purposeful sampling technique. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes related to family values, media influence, and societal expectations. Findings reveal that participants mainly uphold traditional family definitions, emphasizing unity, morality, and strong parental roles. While some appreciated the artistic portrayal of families. The study highlights the need for balanced media representation that respects cultural diversity and values while promoting inclusivity. Based on the findings, the study recommends promoting an open family discussion, guiding religious institutions toward more inclusive perspectives, and encouraging filmmakers and policymakers to craft new films and policies that reflect the diversity of family dynamics. Future research should further investigate how media, religious beliefs, and structures collectively shape evolving perceptions of family life.

**Keywords:** Social studies, family representation, Metro Manila Film Festival

## INTRODUCTION

The term family has a lot of varying definitions depending on cultural, social, legal, and functional perspectives. According to Stapley et al. (2021), a family is a socially recognized group, usually joined by blood, marriage, cohabitation, or adoption, that forms an emotional connection and serves as an economic unit of society. In the legal aspect, according to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), when two or more people who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption live together, they are all regarded as belonging to the same family.

Family is the fundamental unit of social organization; however, not every family has an ideal family setup due to divorce or separation of parents (Ramla et al., 2023). Added by Mugiraneza and Irechukwu (2024), in Kenya, 69.4 percent of children with broken families had a higher risk of mental illness, resulting in depression. Furthermore, Digon (2023) emphasizes that children aged six to 12 years often blame themselves for their parents' divorce, leading to feelings of insecurity. This further means that self-awareness has long-term psychological consequences, affecting their emotional well-being and social development. This also means that parental separation not only affects the family dynamics but also impacts their children's mental health and self-esteem.

In one of the studies in the Philippines, Peduca et al. (2024) explored the effects of parental neglect, which

contributed to the well-being of the abandoned child. Aside from the feelings of being neglected, the struggles of financial constraints and other necessities of the child added to their experience. This issue is also present among families of Muslims; Alongan (2023) investigated the lens of divorced families among Muslims in the Southern Philippines, proving that it was the children who were greatly affected by this practice despite careful explanation. Thus, not only the family in general but also the emotional and psychological aspects of the children affect their cognitive behavior. Similarly, Tus (2021) found that even the students from broken families during the pandemic, from places such as Malabon, Bulacan, and Occidental Mindoro, experienced both several challenges and positive results. Most of these students revealed personal growth, stronger relationships, and a renewed sense of purpose. Therefore, it is evident that it is not only in the family in general but also in the psychological and emotional aspects of children, resulting in their cognitive behavior.

In the Philippines, especially in Davao City, there is a significant incidence of broken families, leading the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) to begin the basic provision of psychological first aid and counseling services (Sunstar, 2024). In addition, Villanueva (2018) puts forward a profound commentary on the societal effects of broken homes, arguing that there is an urgent need to address the causes of family disintegration and assist the victims of such incidents.

There is a lack of research on family representation in visual media, particularly in movie posters, which creates a significant gap in understanding how families are portrayed and perceived in popular culture. Most studies that discuss the standards of the family tend to focus on a global context, often overlooking the cultural nuances and variations in different regions, especially within a local context. In particular, the portrayal of family in Filipino cinema, as seen in Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) posters, has not been thoroughly examined. This gap is crucial because family dynamics in the Philippines may differ significantly from global norms, and local cultural values can shape how families are visually represented.

The researchers will share the findings of their inquiry by publishing articles in educational journals, either in print, online, or both. In addition, the researchers will disseminate the results of their research by presenting their newfound findings at academic assemblies such as a research forum. Moreover, the researchers will share the conclusions of their research through social media platforms to share critical findings to raise awareness among the general public. This dissemination plan guarantees that the research findings will be able to reach broad audiences, including educators, movie analysts, and the general public. The plan uses these methods to maximize the research's impact and contribution to improving information in family representations of Philippine films.

## Research Questions

This qualitative study aimed to determine the insights of religious and married couples in the context of family through the lens of Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) posters.

1. What are the views of the religious and married couples on a standard family and the posters of MMFF?
2. What insights about family can be shared with the community in general?

## Theoretical Lens

The theory supporting this study is the **Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST)**, developed by Dr. Murray Bowen in 1966. This theory offers insights into the dynamics of family relationships and how they shape the lives of people. It delves into the dynamics of family systems, emotional fusion, and the concept of differentiation (Bowen, 1966).

Bowen family theory, as proposed by Shultz (2023), highlights the potential conflicts between parents and educators in a student's learning process. This theory highlights the impact of individual actions and beliefs on others' behavior. A study examining the correlation between parent constructs and student social and emotional skills found significant associations between parent fusion and student tendencies to behave anxiously and emotional cutoff. Cepukiene and Celiauskaite (2020) from Vytautas Magnus University studied emotional fusion and family dynamics, utilizing the Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST). The study highlights the impact of persistent relational patterns on adolescents' social and emotional development, highlighting the importance of

differentiation and emotional fusion in family dynamics.

Bowen family system theory offers a deeper understanding of this topic's emotional and relational dynamics. This theory views the family as an interconnected emotional system, where individual behaviors and relationships are shaped by broader family patterns such as emotional triangles, differentiation of self, and multigenerational transmission. Applying Bowen's family research to this topic would allow an exploration of how family roles, emotional connections, and conflicts are visually communicated. Furthermore, Bowen's concept can be useful in analyzing recurring themes that may reflect traditional and evolving Filipino family structures across different film eras.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research design. A descriptive design was appropriate because the study aimed to describe the varying viewpoints and observable themes from participants without limiting the focus to one central experience. According to Jain (2023), descriptive qualitative research gathers detailed information to collect the complexity and diversity of human experiences. Additionally, Tenny (2022) added that qualitative design involves open-ended inquiries that cannot be quantified, such as exploring the “how” and “why” behind the people's experiences. In addition, Regoniel (2024) noted that descriptive research studies aim to explore the characteristics of a phenomenon rather than analyze its underlying causes or mechanisms.

In this study, the descriptive-qualitative design was applied by gathering data through in-depth interviews. These interviews explored how different individuals interpret and define the concept of a “standard family”. Allowing the study to highlight diverse understandings and meaningful reflections rooted in real-life contexts. It aimed to explore and analyze the perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of individuals regarding what constitutes a standard family.

### Research Participant/ Corpora

The study consists of three (3) participants, selected through a purposive sampling technique, which is a non-probability sampling method that allows the researcher to intentionally choose individuals who can provide rich and relevant information based on predefined criteria. A criterion was established, specifically being a married couple or part of a religious organization. This means that participants were either a head of a family (married individual) or members of a religious group, such as a nun or a lay. This selection allowed for a deeper understanding of the meaning of a standard family between these two groups and their perspectives on what constitutes a family. This research was conducted in Davao City, where participants were selected from two distinct groups: one group included a priest from the local church, while the other group consisted of heads of families. These different groups provided a broad perspective on the poster presented to them, allowing us to gather insights from both religious and familial viewpoints regarding their interpretations of the poster.

The corpora used in this study were five posters from the Metro Manila Film Festival, which depict a family regardless of whether it is a broken or complete family, as long as it represents a family. The consideration of the posters was from 2019 to 2024. The posters were as follows:

And the Bread Winner	2024
1. Firefly	2023
2. Family Matters	2022
3. Isa Pang Bahaghari	2020
4. Miracle in Cell No.7	2019

### Data Sources

In this study, we interviewed our participants individually through in-depth interviews. This was used because in-depth interviews were best suited for a qualitative study, as they utilized more natural and human-centered

data collection techniques, such as interviews and focus groups with our participants, which consisted of three people; one being both a married couple and part of a religious organization, another being a father, and one being a religion teacher. During the interview process, the participants discussed their views on what a standard family was in a one-to-one interview.

This investigation is using the five phases of the process by Robinson (2011), the first phase was Problem Identification, where we identified the problem of the study that was connected to the topic at hand. Secondly, Research Design, where we chose what type of research to conduct, which in this case was a correlational qualitative research design. Data Collection involved gathering relevant data through various in-depth interviews with our chosen respondents regarding what constituted a standard family. Data Analysis was conducted using statistical, thematic, or other analytical techniques. Lastly, the Dissemination Plan involved planning how to spread this study to share the information we had gathered with people worldwide, such as through online publishing and websites. Furthermore, the interviews lasted approximately 30–60 minutes.

## Data Collection

For the researchers to proceed further, a crucial clearance from the principal had to be obtained, after which we provided informed consent to the participants. For the qualitative portion of this study, in-depth interviews were used. This step was essential for establishing a smooth flow of conversation. Then, proper sorting out of posters before the interviews was done to ensure well-founded communication focused on relevant perspectives. We employed tools such as audio recorders, pens, and paper to collect data. The interviews were conducted on-site at the participants' chosen locale. Following the interviews, participants received tokens as a mark of thanks for their essential contributions. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in participant responses, with codes assigned to specific comments made during the interviews, which enriched the overall assessment.

## Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was utilized in this study to understand the data that was gathered after the data collection. Thematic analysis refers to the examination of patterns to find meaning (Jansen, 2025). In other words, it involved analyzing the themes and patterns of the data gathered to determine different interpretations. Furthermore, thematic analysis was a qualitative research method used to identify and interpret patterns within data, making it valuable across various disciplines. It was widely applied in psychology to explore lived experiences, in social sciences to examine cultural and societal issues, and in education to study student and teacher perspectives. Additionally, it was used in healthcare to understand patient experiences, in business for analyzing organizational culture, and in media studies to assess narratives and discourses. Its adaptability made it a key tool for qualitative research across multiple fields.

## Trustworthiness of the Study

We had the obligation of conducting a study using unchanged data. There was no accusation of disinformation or altered data in the study. A successful study requires that every assertion be accurate and true. The research findings needed to be genuine and dependable, correctly reflecting reality.

**Credibility** was essential to internal validity. Throughout the data collection process, we consulted numerous sources and perspectives to verify that the qualitative data was suitable, accurate, and authentic. The data gathered was translated precisely and without change.

**Confirmability** guaranteed that data was inspected and rechecked during data collection and analysis to verify that the results were repeatable by others. We used a precise coding schema to identify the codes and patterns observed during data collection. We employed an audit trail, which was a precise, chronological record that tracked and traced accounting records, project information, transactions, user activity, and other financial data. We also ensured that the data was triangulated and member-verified, as well as conducted a bracketing interview or practiced reflexivity to address any potential personal bias.

**Transferability** refers to highlighting all of the findings and applying them to similar situations or persons rather than broader contexts. The researchers took full responsibility for any data collected, including the preservation

of personal privacy. No participant was pushed to answer questions that were outside of their comfort zone or too personal to share with others. All of the people we interviewed remained anonymous, and no information or data was released to the public or used against them.

**Dependability** was ensured by employing high-precision raw data collection methodologies, procedures, and thoroughly descriptive analyses. We consistently planned and organized every aspect of our investigation. The researchers also guaranteed that the collected data fulfilled the required standards and was of high quality. Dependability was required for our study's credibility in demonstrating the results as lasting data.

### Role of the Researcher

In conducting the research, the process of data gathering required the researchers to split up the necessary duties. We divided the work based on the accessibility of each member. Members who were near the religious facilities were responsible for interviewing participants within the vicinity. Meanwhile, other members interviewed couples near their respective areas. The roles included an interviewer, recorder, note-taker, and transcriber. We had distinct roles during the interview. One acted as the interviewer and was assigned to interview participants and collect authentic data. Next, the recorder was responsible for documenting the information collected from the interview and assisted the note-taker in listening for key points. Furthermore, the note-taker simplified the participants' responses, noted several key points in the data gathered, and kept a record of misheard words during the interview. Lastly, the transcriber was responsible for translating and documenting the texts recorded during the interview.

### Ethical Considerations

This study was to determine what a standard family was based on the perspectives of religious and married families. By examining different viewpoints, the study aimed to provide insight into how families were defined within various cultural and religious contexts. Before conducting the research study, the researchers had to ask for consent from the participants and others, such as the heads of schools involved in this study. We ensured that all participants understood the potential risks as well as the advantages of participating in the research study. Some risks of the study included discomfort or emotional stress during the performance of certain activities. Every effort was made to minimize these risks through ongoing support, clear instructions, and adjustments to the study as needed. To enhance these benefits, the study was designed in a manner that allowed participants to feel safe in terms of human treatment and security, while their input was highly valued. Data on individuals was treated with the highest confidentiality, secured, and used only for academic research and analysis. To this end, the study complied with the principles of the Data Privacy Act on the collection, processing, and storage of all personal data. The participants' information was not reported, revealed, or utilized for any other purpose, and every effort was made to ensure anonymity in the study. This study aimed to spread awareness of a standard family to friends, families, and members of the community, as well as other communities. By promoting understanding and appreciation of the core values and structures that defined the standard family, the study contributed to a broader social discussion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1.1 Profile of the participants**

Participant's code	Order of Participants	Gender	Category
Lay	Participant 1	Male	Religious
Bliss	Participant 2	Male	Married Couple
Sis	Participant 3	Female	Religious/ Married Couple

### Profile of the participants

The participants in this study were selected from a Catholic school, and all of them met the criteria for the



designated categories of married couples and religious individuals. Lay is a CLVED/Philosophy teacher who handles senior high school students and previously underwent seminary formation, placing him in the religious category. Bliss, a language teacher who also teaches senior high school students, is married, which qualifies him for the married couples category. Lastly, Sis is a member of the campus ministry at a Catholic school. She is currently a widowed mother, which places her in both the religious and married couples categories.

**Table 1.2 Participants' views on the standard family**

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Perspectives on family structure and values	<p>Defining family as the foundational unit of society, shaped by religious beliefs.</p> <p>Viewing family as a team that works together despite challenges.</p> <p>Recognizing different family structures beyond the traditional nuclear family.</p> <p>Emphasizing faith, love, and forgiveness as essential values in an ideal family.</p>
Understanding of family dynamics and structure in the MMFF poster	<p>Associating family with the traditional nuclear structure but recognizing unity even as children become adults.</p> <p>Identifying the extended family as a defining characteristic of Filipino families.</p> <p>Interpreting colors in representations of family as symbols of challenges or hardships.</p> <p>Viewing the father as the primary provider in the family.</p> <p>Emphasizing love, faith, and strong foundations as essential to an ideal family structure.</p>

**Perspectives on family structure and values.** This reflects how the individuals define and perceive what constitutes a family unit based on religious beliefs, cultural traditions, and personal experiences. These factors shape their understanding of family roles, responsibilities, and values, reinforcing a traditional nuclear structure or a more inclusive perspective. It highlights the traditional nuclear family, while others recognize diverse family forms. As mentioned by the participants.

Lay: *“Family is a cell unit of a society kungbaga, siya ang sinugdanan nganong nahimo ang society... I think it's an influence as a religious person didto siya leaning ang akoang ideas sa family sa simbahan... Mas gina una jud nato ang family about kaysa sa uban.”*

The family is considered the basic unit of society, serving as the foundation for the formation of communities. I believe my perspective on family is deeply influenced by my religious upbringing, since my understanding of family comes from the teachings of the Church. We usually place the family as our top priority over everything else.

Bliss: *“Is a team that makes things work, though sometimes its challenges are always there... A family could also be a grandfather and a grandmother for me.”*

Sis: *“A family is composed of a mother and a father and children...An ideal family of Christian family is one that has faith.”*

The finding is in support of the study by Smith (2020) demonstrated that forming a nuclear family often increases religiosity, as marriage and parenthood enhance individuals' engagement with religious practices and communities. This connection underscores the role of faith in reinforcing traditional family values and providing emotional, practical, and spiritual support during critical life stages. Further, a study by Blekesaune and Skirbekk (2022) on intergenerational religious transmission reveals that conservative religious ideologies significantly influence family dynamics by fostering socialization practices that strengthen familial bonds and moral values.

**Understanding of family dynamics and structure in the MMFF poster.** This theme was developed through a detailed analysis of MMFF posters and insights gathered from in-depth interviews. The data was taken from

both visual analysis and participant responses, focusing on how families are depicted in these posters. The participants who contributed to this study were a father, a religion teacher, and a member of the campus ministry. Their perspectives have given valuable insights into the portrayals of families in MMFF posters.

Lay: *“Kung mo ingun tag family automatic mo register sa atong huna-huna mama, papa, tapos anak, siblings, pero sa kaning poster is duha lang sila...Ilahang gi embrace ang idea na sailahang pagka family oriented kay bisan pa og makita nimo adult na ang mga anak united gihapon sila, as one.”*

When we speak of "family," what typically comes to mind are the traditional members as mother, father, children, and siblings. However, in this particular poster, only two individuals are depicted. Despite the limited number, the poster embraces the concept of family orientation. It highlights that even though the children are already adults, they remain united as one, demonstrating a strong and enduring familial bond.

Bliss: *“The typical Filipino family, it's an extended one... Colors may depict the negativity that's black; maybe there's a big challenge.”*

Sis: *“Parents or all the siblings, or all the other relatives in the family, look up to him as the sole provider in the family... If their so strong foundation of the faith then the picture of a family wherein the father, the mother, and the child can be complete...”*

This is congruent to the study of Paragas et al. (2022), that Filipino family representation in popular media, such as posters, often depicts idealized versions of family life, emphasizing happiness, completeness, and traditional gender roles where fathers are breadwinners and mothers are caregivers. Furthermore, Ocab (2024) stated that these portrayals align with the persistent gender stereotypes observed in Philippine advertising, which reinforce domestic roles for women and professional roles for men, preserving traditional norms rather than showcasing diverse or progressive family dynamics.

## Participants' view of family portrayal in the MMFF posters

**Figure 1** Breadwinner Movie Poster



## And the Breadwinner

And the Breadwinner is a 2024 Filipino comedy-drama film starring Vice Ganda, which centers on the struggles and resilience of a queer individual who becomes the main provider for their family. The story explores themes of love, sacrifice, and self-acceptance, as Vice Ganda's character navigates societal expectations and personal dreams while ensuring their family's survival (Ralph Lawrence G. Llemit & Ralph Lawrence G. Llemit, 2025). The film blends humor with heartfelt moments, reflecting the challenges faced by many Filipino breadwinners.

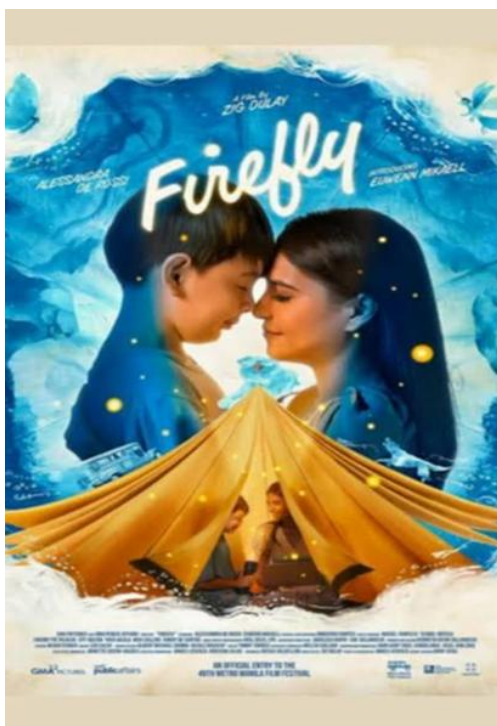
Participant 1 emphasized the role of a breadwinner, highlighting the importance of someone who supports and sustains the family. He also mentioned that the posters depict unity within the family, where members stay together as one. However, he pointed out a missing element in the representations, a fatherly figure.

Participant 2 viewed the poster "Breadwinner" that this was the most suitable because he could see that the breadwinner is not a role to be taken lightly, as he has stated that you need to be that certain somebody, that will always try to make sure that everyone eat, and everyone is well provided and taken care of. Bliss also stated that for him, he could relate to this certain poster because he himself is also in an extended family, but currently staying with his wife and kids, and he has experience of being in an extended family.

Participant 3 pointed out that an essential element was missing from the poster: spiritual support and faith. She emphasized that a breadwinner should not only provide for material needs but also offer spiritual guidance, suggesting that a symbol of faith, such as a crucifix, could have represented this aspect. Participant 3 mentioned that faith serves as a strong foundation that sustains the family, especially during challenging times when material provisions may be lacking.

Together, their perspectives suggest that being a breadwinner goes beyond financial support; it is about leadership, sacrifice, and being a pillar of strength for the family. It involves taking on emotional burdens, guiding loved ones through crises, and often setting aside personal needs for the good of others. This holistic view of a breadwinner aligns closely with the film's portrayal of Bambi, Vice Ganda's character, who returns home from working abroad to support her dysfunctional family, not just financially but also emotionally and spiritually. Her character reflects the silent struggles many Filipino breadwinners face, especially OFWs, who are expected to be strong for their families no matter the emotional cost (Mallorca, 2024). The film ultimately celebrates the resilience and depth of character required to be the backbone of a family, shining a light on a role that is too often taken for granted. The result supports the study by Sear (2021), which suggests that being a breadwinner, they always aim for success, that most of the time fail to check themselves if they are still doing okay, most especially those working abroad who thrive in order to earn and have something to give back home. This resonates with the findings of Quindoza et al. (2024) that it is the nature of a Filipino to help the family, connected to familial obligations, which leads the breadwinner to assume the responsibility of the parents.

**Figure 2** Firefly Movie Poster



## Firefly

Firefly is a fantasy film about Tonton, a young boy searching for the mythical "Island of Fireflies" after his



mother's death. Joined by strangers, they embark on a journey that explores family, dreams, and childhood imagination. The film won Best Picture at the 2023 MMFF, with Euwenn Mikaell Aleta named Best Child Performer. Going beyond pristine bodies of water that the country is known for, Firefly shifts its focus to personifying various natural land structures, drawing inspiration from Filipino folklore animism (Tomada, 2023).

Participant 1 feels the image of just a mother and child is incomplete, as his definition of family requires both parents raising the child. Participant 1 believes that the family depicted does not align with his definition of a standard family. The views of participant 1 are that a family is a domestic church where both parents work together to praise the child, which is incomplete without a father figure.

Participant 2 sees the absence of the father figure as a gap, believing a traditional family should include both parents. Meanwhile, another married participant feels that while the father is missing, a strong religious foundation can spiritually replace him, making the mother's love and support enough to symbolize a complete family. Participant 2 feels that the poster reflects his belief in a traditional family structure, which includes a mother, father, and children. Participant 2 acknowledges that love and care between the mother and child are important, but emphasizes the importance of a father figure for a complete family dynamic.

Participant 3, however, believes it aligns with their view of family, as it shows the strong love and care between mother and son. Despite the absence of the father, Participant 3 believes that God can spiritually fill the role of the father. Participant 3 argues that a solid religious foundation and the mother's love and support are sufficient to symbolize a complete family, even if it does not follow the standard structure.

The movie for us is that growing without a father is hard, like in the movie poster, the boy, two of our members also experience growing without a father figure, there's hard that theirs a feeling that is incomplete. The movie reflects the reality of many families where children grow up with one parent; it speaks to the emotional struggle of trying to fill that missing piece in one's life. Fatherless divorce refers to a situation in which a child lacks paternal involvement, particularly impacting the child's emotional development during this formative process. Does not receive adequate attention from a father figure. Consistent with the study of Utame et al. (2023) that regarding the problem of divorce and death, Problems in the parents' marriage generally prompt the child's parents to separate. In addition, Chavda and Nisarga (2023) mentioned that a single parent can be a single mother or a single father, a solo parent, where the individual is a divorcee or a widow or widower, separated from their partner and unplanned pregnancy, or could be a single parent by choice. As single parents move in and out of intimate relationships, children are exposed to the changes and stresses associated with multiple family transitions.

**Figure 3** Family Matters Movie Poster



## Family Matters

The story revolves around Francisco (Noel Trinidad) and Eleanor (Liza Lorena), an elderly married couple, and

their four children: Kiko (Nonie Buencamino), the successful son; Fortune (Mylene Dizon), a homemaker; Ellen (Nikki Valdez), the unmarried daughter; and Enrico (JC Santos), the carefree youngest son. Ellen, who is her parents' primary caregiver, decides to relocate to the United States in pursuit of love, which disturbs the family dynamic. The surviving siblings must take turns caring for their aging parents, especially Francisco, who is fragile. This predicament forces the family to negotiate their individual struggles while rediscovering the value of togetherness and love in their relationships (Ching & Ching, 2022).

Participant 1 views it as somewhat aligned to his definition of a standard family because of the title, which is about the importance of family. However, Lay also has doubts about the unity in the poster and that the individuals in the poster are distant. He has speculated that the children might be busy with their own lives, causing them to spend less and less time with their parents. Lay pointed out that family life should involve shared time and togetherness, which was missing in this representation.

Participant 2 says that because it showed an extended family, including grandparents, which they felt was a fuller portrayal, the participant felt that it more closely matched their ideal of a family. Bliss pointed out that the experience of grandparents, who treasure spending time with their grandkids and love seeing them grow, is highlighted in this poster. They talked about how their own parents try to see their kids and grandchildren on a regular basis and enjoy seeing them.

Participant 3 says that the movie poster "Family Matters" does not align with her definitions of an ideal family, but she has acknowledged that the poster shows a family and has pointed out the distance between parents and their children. She emphasizes that an ideal family should be together, embracing one another and maintaining a strong connection, with the note that the idea of people getting old may find themselves alone. The missing aspect is the identification of a lack of physical and emotional closeness.

The three participants view the "Family Matters" movie poster in different ways based on their personal conceptions of an ideal family. Participant 1 believes the poster fits the concept of a typical family since it highlights the value of family while criticizing the lack of unity and emotional intimacy, arguing that spending time together is essential for a genuine family connection. Participant 2 values the depiction of an extended family, especially bringing to the foreground grandparents' responsibility to create intergenerational bonding and value time with grandchildren, resonating closely with their own family life. On the other hand, Participant 3 regards the poster as out of sync with her vision of a perfect family, focusing on the lack of physical and emotional intimacy and warning about the solitude that aging persons will experience. Collectively, these views highlight diverging values, togetherness, multigenerational contact, and emotional bond, essential to diverging concepts of family life. The finding aligns with the study of Aassve et al. (2024), which emphasizes the multifaceted nature of family conceptions, focusing on relational aspects such as excellent communication among immediate and extended family members, intergenerational contact, and emotional relationships. Moreover, Jabbari et al. (2023) stressed that the role of family is to hold on to each other, especially in the aspects of emotional, physical, and economic support in achieving a secure relationship. As added by Thomas et al. (2017), family relationships can be complicated at times, but it is essential to check the health and well-being of each member of the family to help them overcome certain experiences or situations.

**Figure 4** Miracle in Cell No. 7 Movie Poster



## Miracle in Cell No. 7

The story revolves around Joselito "Lito" Gopez, a mentally challenged man played by Aga Muhlach, who is wrongfully accused of kidnapping, murder, and rape after a tragic accident involving the daughter of Defense Secretary Emmanuel Yulo. Lito is imprisoned in Cell No. 7, where he befriends fellow inmates who help him maintain a relationship with his daughter, Yesha, played by Xia Vigor. Despite their efforts to prove his innocence, Lito is sentenced to death, but years later, his daughter, now a lawyer, works to clear his name (Gabinete, 2019).

Participant 1 criticized the poster for not fully aligning with their family standard, citing the absence of a mother figure and the father as the sole remaining parent. They compared the 2023 poster, which also featured a father figure, to highlight the imbalance in family structure.

Participant 2 believed that because it showed a father and daughter, it fit his idea of family. He understood the poster's emphasis on the value of a father-child bond by recognizing the love, concern, and exemplary fatherhood it displayed. However, he personally grew up with an extended family and would have preferred to see such a depiction in the poster as well.

Participant 3 highlighted the joy and happiness in a family, emphasizing the bond shared, even without material wealth, and the connection, even in difficult circumstances, as key elements of family strength.

Participants' views on the poster's depiction of family reveal a nuanced interplay of personal values, family structures, and societal norms. It depicts discomfort with the poster's portrayal of a single-parent household, highlighting the absence of a mother figure, which agrees with the findings of Pribesh et al. (2020), indicating that children living with two biological parents often experience better educational outcomes due to higher resources and lower stressors. This perspective also reflects in the findings of Elsayed (2024) about the broader societal teachings that emphasize traditional family structures as ideal. However, the poster fits the idea of family by emphasizing the father-child bond, which is consistent with studies highlighting the importance of parental involvement in child development.

**Figure 5** Isa pang Bahaghari Movie Poster



## Isa Pang Bahaghari

The story revolves around Domeng (Phillip Salvador), a former seaman who has been missing for 20 years and is presumed dead. When he returns, he tries to reconnect with his estranged wife, Lumen (Nora Aunor), and their three children: Andy (Zanjoe Marudo), who has turned to drug dealing; Peter (Joseph Marco), a waiter embroiled in a wrongful accusation; and Dolly (Sanya Lopez), a single mother working as a bar dancer. Domeng's efforts are aided by Rey (Michael de Mesa), his dedicated best friend who has had unspoken affections

for him since their youth. Rey plays the character of the selfless buddy who bridges the family's deep wounds while acting as a mediator. The film explores themes of love, atonement, and reconciliation in the midst of personal and societal turmoil (Bautista, 2020).

Participant 1 found the depiction of family life in the poster complicated, he mentioned that in the poster, it is shown that the father has a mistress that could be a member in the LGBTQ+ community, which he claimed that it does not align with his personal standard of a family based upon his religious values. He also mentioned that this is a bias rooted in Catholic morality, considering the concept of adultery in the given situation. Also, he stated that the poster lacked the presence of children, which he finds essential for the family to provide joy and unity.

Participant 2 mentioned that the poster portrayed infidelity, which is against his religious beliefs, making it unaligned with his standard of a family. Furthermore, he believed that the ethically complex structure of a family and the lack of children were incompatible with his vision of a full family.

Participant 3 acknowledged the poster despite its diverse roles and apparent struggles within the family, especially the issue of gender and the standards of society. She recognized the presence of a father, mother, and children; however, she felt that the poster implied a sense of conflict, making it unaligned with her standard of what a family is. Yet despite all this, she still believed that a family could remain intact even with the evident struggles, as long as there is acceptance of each other's flaws and differences.

Participants' views on the poster's depiction of family reveal a complex exchange of personal values, religious beliefs, and societal norms. Two of the participants expressed the portrayal of infidelity, aligning with their religious standard that emphasizes fidelity and traditional family structures. This discomfort reflects a broader societal teaching that often views infidelity as harmful, as not indicating that more religious individuals may perceive certain behaviors as constituting infidelity due to their beliefs. One participant, however, highlighted the potential for family resilience despite conflicts, emphasizing acceptance as a key factor. This perspective aligns with the findings of Maddock (2022), suggesting that families can navigate diverse challenges, including those related to gender and societal expectations, by fostering acceptance and understanding. The result of Dela Cerna and Cosido (2020), which revealed that a man with infidelity with gay men was described as emotionally invested, would reciprocate intimacy and commitment, which is considered a functional relationship.

**Table 2. Insights of the family can be shared with the community in general**

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Strengthening family relationships through values, balance, and communication</b>	<p>Problems should be handled <i>within the family</i> and not exposed externally.</p> <p>Emphasis on keeping family matters internal and sacred.</p> <p>Importance of balanced time between work and family, especially parental attention toward children.</p> <p>Recognition of how modern life and financial demands strain this balance.</p> <p>Highlighted as key to dealing with imperfections, flaws, and healing relationships.</p> <p>Encouragement of love-driven justice, not violence.</p> <p>Scripture-based guidance is seen as essential in forming values and perspectives.</p> <p>Promotes faith as a moral compass in family decision-making and personal growth.</p> <p>Acknowledgment of diverse family structures</p> <p>Embracing real-life struggles rather than idealized family portrayals.</p> <p>Advocacy for thoughtful, respectful use of social media, especially in sharing family values.</p> <p>Teaching children digital responsibility and mutual respect online.</p>



**Strengthening family relationships through values, balance, and communication.** This highlights the role of religion, media, and society in shaping family values. It involves influences such as faith, media representations, and community support. These factors help promote strong family relationships and positive values. It also emphasizes the need for realistic portrayals of family in media. As mentioned by the participants.

Lay: *“Akoang na learn sakoang family namo is in terms of plan if naay problem never jud nako never jud na niya na paabot sa gawas... Importante jud ug kung naay problem sa pamilya lang sa or sa pamilya lang jud.*

What I have learned from my own family is that when it comes to handling problems, we never let them go beyond the household. It is very important to us that any issues remain within the family. If there's a problem, it should stay within the family circle and be dealt with internally.

Bliss: *“That's compromise, consistency, and commitment...I hope they will see things and then realize things. I think it will help out a community, and I hope that we will also affect how the world works.”*

Sis: *“Better talaga na they will get ano noh in front of the word of god or yung scripture um yun ipa pattern kasi kung mga general statements lang pwede siya kasi na it will only address a particular ano aspect.”*

It is truly better if they are guided by the Word of God or the Scriptures, serving as the foundation or pattern for their actions. Relying solely on general statements may not be as effective, as those tend to address only a specific aspect of the situation.

Faith is an important unifying force because it may overcome societal divides and create solidarity, particularly in times of crisis. This is evident in the proactive response of faith communities, who are often active in any efforts to extend help during disasters (Chavda & Chavda, 2025b). Furthermore, Chen (2024) states that cultivating inclusive environments, where diverse perspectives are acknowledged, valued, and respected, may harmonize the active support of both the broader society and the Church.

## CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that religious and married individuals generally uphold traditional values when defining a standard family, emphasizing unity, moral upbringing, and strong parental roles. Their perspectives are largely shaped by religious beliefs and cultural norms that highlight the sanctity of marriage and family life. Regarding MMFF posters, opinions varied based on content and perceived moral alignment. Some participants expressed concern over certain portrayals that challenge conventional family values, while others acknowledged artistic freedom but hoped for responsible representation. The research suggests that while religious and married couples appreciate creative expression, they prefer media representations that align with their values and reinforce positive family dynamics.

There are various ways in which faith, media, and societal support contribute to shaping family values. Participants have emphasized the unifying role of faith, which reinforces the importance of love, forgiveness, and acceptance within families. Additionally, they highlighted the significant impact of media in shaping societal expectations, emphasizing the need for authentic portrayals of diverse family structures and challenges. Most participants highlighted the value of open communication, balance, and commitment in fostering strong family bonds. Furthermore, they emphasized the responsibility of society, including religious institutions and online platforms, in promoting positive values and respectful dialogue. Lastly, these insights underscore that a supportive and understanding community plays a crucial role in nurturing healthier family dynamics, ensuring that both traditional and modern family structures are recognized and valued.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Couples must have open and honest communication because it builds trust and allows them to genuinely

understand each other. Setting shared goals, whether in financial, health, or personal development, can bring partners closer together and give them a similar purpose. Spending meaningful time together, not just being physically there but also actively engaged, strengthens emotional relationships. To sustain a strong and successful relationship, couples must strike a healthy balance between their separate needs and their life together.

2. Families must balance parenting obligations with developing their spousal bond. Making a conscious effort to prioritize both roles contributes to family harmony. Regularly thanking each member for the tiny things they do fosters a friendly and positive environment. Sharing meaningful moments and participating in activities that bring everyone closer together can boost resilience and strengthen family bonds.
3. Religious groups or communities have a unique role in helping families align their spiritual beliefs and values. Offering grace and tolerance during disagreements promotes forgiveness and healing. Programs that promote trust, polite communication, and compassion can give families a solid foundation and a sense of belonging in their religious community.
4. Government agencies, such as the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), can play an important role in promoting traditional family values and role models through film festivals. Meanwhile, the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) can encourage filmmakers to tell stories about the diverse range of family setups that exist today, such as single-parent households, LGBTQ+ families, extended families, and blended families, to ensure that media truly represents society's rich diversity.
5. Storytellers and filmmakers have the ability to influence how society views families. They provide audiences with relatable and encouraging models by depicting families in all of their diversity, including multigenerational relationships, parents caring for their children, and couples supporting each other through real-life problems. These authentic anecdotes can help normalize various family experiences and foster empathy.
6. Further research is needed to determine how faith, media, and social support systems influence family values and dynamics in various types of households. Such research will help us better grasp the intricate ways in which culture, faith, and community impact family life in today's society.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study will be available on request

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