

# EXPLORING OFFENDERS' TRIGGERS: A CASE STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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## ABSTRACT

*Violence against women and children remains a grave violation of human rights, necessitating a deeper understanding of the factors influencing offenders. This case study, conducted in the Philippine context, investigates the motivations behind individuals violating laws protecting women and children. Employing semi-structured interviews, the study reveals that physical assault with threats and verbal degradation are prevalent forms of abuse. Factors such as work exhaustion, intoxication, impressionability, and unfounded accusations emerge as key influences on offenders. Government interventions, including commitment to spiritual aspects and sports participation, aim to address these issues. Findings underscore a persistent occurrence of abuses despite existing Anti-VAWC laws. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive education programs by law enforcement, coordinated efforts among government agencies and NGOs, and the reinforcement of government interventions by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. Ultimately, understanding offenders' realizations, particularly in fostering repentance and empathy, is crucial for combating violence against women and children.*

**Keyword:** *Violence against women and children, Abuse, Offenders*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and children are the most prominent violation of human rights today and even in the earlier years. It originated from the patriarchal social order providing that women are weaker than men. Children on the other hand are regarded as the most dependent sector in the society. With this, they also become victims of the abuses and maltreatment. Inequality still prevails even in these years knowing the fact that general progressive trend of cultural, racial and as well as sexual boundaries being not implemented globally (Oxfam International, 2021). The prevalence the violence against all the women same as through with their children is very extensive that even the international community has been brought on to declare this action as a public health and a human right controversy worldwide (Guedes et al., 2016). There are a lot of factors affecting those people who violates the law on the protection of women and children. This is important for it highlights the offenders an opportunity to reflect to themselves why they are still violating knowing the fact that there is already a law which penalizes them.

In the Philippines, total of 629 cases in 2022 were already reported concerning to the violence against the women, however, people are unaware of the reasons why the so called offenders are doing so (Philippine Information Agency, 2023). The Violence against Women and Children is still alarming even if there is already a joint force of the government agencies and the non- governmental organizations (Balahadia, 2022). Base on the data reported by the National Demographic and Health Survey (2017), one out of four reported having suffered physical and sexual violence. Another data from the Philippine National Police provided that 38. 54% of the 108. 675 cases of domestic violence were physical abuse, with these statistics, it is making as the most common.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to explore what influences the offenders in violating Anti-Violence against Women and Children (Anti-VAWC) Law. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What type of abuse committed by the offender?
2. What influences the offender to violate anti-violence against women and children?
3. What are the interventions provided by the government?
4. What are the realizations of the offenders in the commission of the violation of Anti-VAWC law?

## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Robert K. Merton's Strain Theory, (1938) state that certain strains or stressors increase the likelihood of crime. These strains lead to negative emotions, such as frustration and anger. The strain theory explains that individuals may result to violence why perceive dysfunction between societal expectation and the legitimate means available to meet those expectation that can cause them; arising from various sources such as socio-economic disparities, familial expectation, or personal frustration becomes a motivating factors from offenders to engage in violent acts.

## 4 .SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

The study was delimited to the convicted offenders of Anti-VAWC law who are still serving their sentence and formerly convicted who are done serving their sentence in Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and Ilocos Norte Provincial Jail. This study was conducted in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte during First Semester, Academic Year 2023-2024.

## 5 .SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

**Offenders.** The study can benefit the offenders by fostering empathy as well as raising awareness with regards to the legal consequences of their actions. It also provides opportunities for rehabilitation which primarily aims to address underlying issues which contributes to violent behavior.

**Women and Children.** This research can empower women and children by shedding light on the factors influencing offenders.

**Students.** This will benefit the students in a way that they will be the one to help and uphold the advocacy against VAWC.

**Community.** This research will benefits the community which guides for safer and more supportive environment. Further, it helps create a culture of intolerance towards violence against women and children.

## 6 .DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Offenders Triggers.** One of the things that affects the offenders which can lead to discomfort, frustration or aggression. Influences that drives the offenders to engage in criminal behavior.

**Offenders.** This refer to an individuals who has been charged of Violence against Women and Children.

**Violence.** This refers to the actions being inflicted by the offenders of Anti- Violence against Women and their Children. It is one of the major health and development issues which has important implication to the growth of the society. Violence is any act that troubles and violates women making them endure pain physically, emotionally, psychologically and mentally.

## 7. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

All over around the world, VAWC is an alarming problem being experienced by manu women. This goes from physical abuses leading to life destroying consequences like emotional and worst, to death (Claus et. al., 2017).

Violence against women and children affects the lives and well-being of individuals globally (Lacanilao, 2023). United Nation on the Elimination of violence against women defines violence against women as physical, sexual, psychological violence which occurs in family, which includes battering, sexual abuse in household and practices that are harmful to women which relates to exploitation. The study aims to determine the abuse committed against women and as well as the factors affecting violence against women and children.

Quantitative method was applied in the study and descriptive design was used in the research paper which aims to describe the situation during the time of study. Further, it gathers quantifiable information which was used for statistical analysis. Results of the study revealed that physical violence such as hitting, kicking and slapping are the common abuse that were being committed by the offenders. These violent acts immediately causes bodily suffering and injury. Various forms of physical violence represent direct acts of aggression that can cause physical pain (Silverman, 2017).

As to the factors, lower levels of education, history of exposure to child maltreatment, witnessing family violence were found out. Women with low levels of education is vulnerable to become victims of violence. These inequalities hinder women's economic independence and overall empowerment, contributing to gender-based economic disparities. Additionally, the study revealed that the limited access to education between women, which emphasizes an educational gap which leads to prohibit both personal and professional development, limits socio-economic opportunities, and perpetuates gender inequality.

## 8. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGNS

Qualitative Research is used in this study, which is a structured way of collecting and analyzing data obtained from different sources (SIS International Research, 2021). It is more exploratory which is dependent on the collection of information thru verbal, observational and behavioral data that can be interpreted in a subjective manner. Case study was the design used. This design is an in-depth study of an individual or group of individuals (Sacro, 2020). It is used to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context.

## 9. PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

This study addresses the following key components: types of abuse committed by the offender which is explored in case 1; case 2 delves into the influence affecting the offender to commit abuse; followed by case 3, which scrutinizes intervention programs provided by the government, and lastly; case 4 which delves into the realizations of the offenders.

### 9.1 Case 1: Abuse Committed by the Offenders

As corroborated with the statements of the participants, they inflicted physical assault which form part as an abuse on the part of the victims. This implies that it is making as the most common abuse committed by the offenders. This was supported by the result of the study from National Demographic and Health Survey (2017) that physical abuse as the most common abuse committed by the offenders with its data reported that one (1) out of four (4) is through physical abuse. Verbal abuse can often lead to emotional abuse on the part of the victim. This indicates that a harsh word will fall as an abuse to women especially when it becomes worse. This was aligned with the results of the study of Harned (2001) which explored the prevalence of emotional abuse, which includes verbal abuse. It sheds light on the significant occurrence of verbal abuse among young adults. . It only means that a harsh word will fall as an abuse to women especially when it becomes worse. With these responses from the participants, they were not able to identify that their actions are already an abuse on their partners as well as their children.

As to participants narrated that;

*“I was able to cause physical abuse to my wife”*

Another participant also mentioned that;

*“I speak bad words and I threw a pot lid*

*against and same as through by beating her”*

### **9.2 Case 2: Influence Affecting the Offenders to Violate Anti-Violence against Women and Children**

In the study of Bernarte (2018), various factors within the family that affects the violence against women are marital instability and conflicts of partners which further leads to physical abuse and as well as the economic abuse wherein it also involves the rapid alcohol intakes. Pphysically exhausted from work leading to the commission of abuse unveils an intense exploration. It sheds light on the alarming consequences where the burden of exhaustion transforms into a breeding ground for abusive behaviors, particularly directed towards vulnerable individual such as women and children. (Lee Kao, 2020). This finding brings attention to the detrimental outcomes when constant fatigue leads to mistreatment of vulnerable individuals like women and children. As individuals became immerse in the effects of intoxication, a profound shift in behavior often occurs, raising questions about the influence of substance on ones propensity for violence.

As to participant 2, because of jealousy, he can no longer control his anger such until time that he uttered harsh words towards his partner as he stated that;

*“I can no longer control my anger to my partner because of jealousy wherein jealousy is temporary insanity that’s why it influences me to commit abuse”*

Another participant also stated that;

*“I was influenced by my colleagues”*

### **9.3 Case 3: Interventions Provided by the Government**

The interventions provided by the government to the offenders is through sports. With the response from participants, this means that sports participation plays a vital role to him while he is inside the jail. This implies that by engaging himself in sports, he can be redirected into something positive which aids him in overall formation. As from him taking part in sports, he do not only learn about technical sporting aspects about also to the personal and social values, attitudes, and behavior. This was supported by Meek and Lewis (2013) in their study which provides that engaging in sports lead to perceived benefits in terms of the positive impact on prison which improves the attitude as well as the behavior of offender. Moreover, other participants revealed that there is a regular religious devotion which makes it as the intervention that he was engaged in while he is inside the jail. This serves as their moment to reflect which somehow links to their character formation. The result was supported by Flanagan (2007) with his statement that spiritual practices are linked to the formation of character and nurture of a life of virtue. As to all participants stated that they engaged in religious and sports activities.

### **9.4 Case 4: Realizations of the Offenders**

Sumter and Clear (2018) point out that religious programming may play a role in reducing recidivism of offenders who take advantage of those programs. From the statements made by the participants, it became clear that faith-based programs inside institutional correction pay a lot of lessons and changes individual perspective into fundamental behavior which helps them to reform and feel regret for their past deeds, which inspire them to embrace the value of women and children and to love and cherish them enormously. Further, by attending mass, the participants were able to learn with regards to the biblical words shared by the different sectors. With regards to the realization gained by the offenders from their experiences through the interventions, sense of repentance is one of the factors that are taken by the violators to make them realized and sincerely regretted about their aggressive actions.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

Physical assault associated with threat and verbal degradation not only inflict a lasting trauma and deeply harms individual but it also lead to an abuse that violates the law. It subjected to threats that leave them feeling intimidated. Acts that cause individuals to become isolated or feel degraded can result in lasting impacts on them and their entire family. Alcohol intoxication and anger arousal have both been implicated in the occurrence of

aggression, and the ability to regulate one's emotions may interact with both alcohol intoxication and emotional arousal to predict aggression wherein aggression is the precursor of violence and individuals prone to aggressive behaviors are more likely to commit violence. Intervention programs may be an effective approach in reducing re-offending. Regret offers a chance to learn from mistakes and establish positive intentions for the future. However, it's crucial to take corrective action before reaching the point of regret, as once it's past, there's no going back.

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Family members may normalized family counseling services to help them navigate challenges, resolve conflicts, and build stronger connection through individual and group sessions. Counselors provide a safe space for open communication, offer tools for conflict resolution, and guide families in developing coping mechanisms.
- The implementing bodies of Anti-VAWC Law may encourage positive masculinity. It sets out to engage men in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities while promoting the health and well-being of women and children.
- Educational institutions may use technology to organize virtual workshops or webinars on conflict resolution, anger management, and community building to make violence prevention more accessible.

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