

FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF BATTERED MEN IN THE PHILIPPINES

Marjorie Z. Poticano¹ and Christopher F. Sasot²
1Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Philippines
2Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

By using Foucauldian analysis to examine how respondents and society viewed battered men, what their subjectivities entailed, what practices they engaged in, and the institutions that were influencing them, the study sought to identify the dominant discourses regarding Filipino battered men. The study identified four discourses, including namely: men must be tough/dominant, men as providers and problem-solvers, battered men as nakakahiya, and male victims are helpless. Positions like men being matapang, macho, dominant, padre de pamilya, providers, victims of financial abuse, nahiya, under de saya, helpless victims, and advocates from these discourses. Their subjectivities were influenced by these positions, which led them to believe that men must suppress their feelings to avoid displaying vulnerability, that they must always prove something to society, and that male victims are helpless in the Philippines. Therefore, these subjectivities influenced specific practices such as remaining mum about one's abuse, concealing their emotions, and just tolerating abuse at the expense of female partners. Contrarily, some people have practiced advocating for their rights as victims and amending the current law to protect male partners while having subjectivities regarding helpless victims in the face of the law. Those that have influenced the discourses are the institutions of society, family, relationships, and law.

Keywords: Battered Men, Matapang, Nakakahiya, Under De Saya, Padre De Pamilya.

1. INTRODUCTION

Men are frequently under social pressure to "be men" in the conventional sense. Their mental health suffers when they ignore, suppress, or dismiss feminine characteristics¹. Men are more likely to get harmed or ill than women are, and they are less likely to seek help when they do because traditional masculinity promotes risk-taking behavior while discouraging care-seeking or health-enhancing behavior². In Australia, Walker et al.³ looked into men's experiences with intimate partner violence committed by women. Physical, sexual, verbal, coercive controlling and manipulative behavior patterns were reported by participants. When relatives and friends learned of the assault, they were shocked, supportive, and minimized. The process through which male victims of female-perpetrated partner violence seek assistance is complex and variable, according to Machado et al.⁴, and it can considerably contribute to further poor outcomes because of various institutional, cultural, social, and organizational issues. The results also shed light on societal problems that male victims may have believed to be responsible for their lack of resources and male victimization. A recent study in the United Kingdom on the profiles and needs of abused men found that most callers reported being used by female perpetrators, most of whom were still their current partners, and many of the men were fathers. Most men sought emotional support, practice, and practice services⁵.

Like most other nations, the Philippines has laws protecting women and children against domestic abuse, according to Tacio⁶. These laws, however, do not support domestic violence committed by an abusive party against a male partner. A study conducted by Zabala⁷ on the experiences of Filipino battered husbands revealed that the participants have a variety of lifestyles, tense experiences, responses, and coping mechanisms. They exhibited tension, anxiety, sadness, sadness-esteem, and social acceptability. Because of these negative consequences, seeking professional advice and supportive networks is advised. In another study, Gonzales and Wright⁸ examined the echoing stigmatization regarding abused men refined in literature from the colonial period to postmodern Philippine society, and their research showed that male characters were silenced and battered.

Emiliano "Nano" Manahan, a proponent of ending domestic violence, asserts that 12 to 15 out of every 100 couples in the Philippines experience male abuse⁹. Fidel Nograles, a representative for Rizal, is promoting the inclusion of battered partners and husbands, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, in the law that criminalizes domestic violence against women and children. The Violence Against Women and Their Children needs to be reviewed to establish the Violence Against Partners and Their Children to recognize that abuse can occur against any gender¹⁰. Additionally, the Diego Silang Movement (DSM), led by co-founder Rom Factolerin, advocates for the repeal or amendment of the VAWC, claiming that the law is one-sided and fails to protect fathers' rights by granting sole custody of children to the mother even when abuse has not been proven¹¹.

One famous discourse about battered males is that they are ashamed to confess that their female partners have abused them, which may keep them from seeking assistance¹². Several more men silently suffer from various forms of assault because of an overwhelming sense of shame¹³. As per Edwards¹⁴, as it should be, the main topic of discussing public global discussion gender equality debate is the oppression of women. Correspondingly, the Center for Social Justice¹⁵ in the United Kingdom pointed out that the stigma associated with domestic abuse increased when a complainant is a man, and the perpetrator is a woman. As an outcome, men are perceived by society as the offenders and women as the victims. Since society views men as dominant and incapable of becoming victims, admitting to having been mistreated by women is thus humiliating.

Thus, this qualitative research study aimed to provide deeper, more profound information about the internal dynamics of Filipino battered men's relationships with their abusive female partners by uncovering the fundamental belief systems embedded in their narratives and the larger culture that creates these discourses. It sought to identify the positions within the identified lessons that affected people's subjectivities. On a broader scale, the investigation aimed to provide insights into individuals who are socially stigmatized, deemed fragile, and undeserving of care.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The topic of battered men in the Philippines was investigated using a qualitative methodology and a specific type of discourse analysis known as Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA).

The text responses from the open-ended questionnaires were analyzed using the six stages of Foucauldian discourse analysis postulated by Willig¹⁶, which are:

Stage 1: Discursive Constructions

The researcher identified different methods for conversing about the study's topic, which was an analysis of abused men in the Philippines.

Stage 2: Discourses

This comprises both constructional similarities and differences. Also, to place these constructs within larger discourses or perspectives on the world.

Stage 3: Action Orientation

This provides a more thorough analysis of the contexts where the constructs were concentrated.

Stage 4: Positionings

This concentrates on the respondents' positions in their narratives and the privileges and responsibilities that have been attributed to them within pertaining discourses.

Stage 5: Practice

This deals with the actions that are carried out by respondents or brought possible within the discursive constructs.

Stage 6: Subjectivity

The respondents' self-perceptions and thoughts in connection with the specific discourses and subject positions are the focus of this stage. This looks at the link between discourses and subjectivity.

Tradition of Inquiry and Data-Generation Method

The researcher obtained consultation from two professionals who are both Registered Psychometricians and Psychologists for the self-made questionnaire. Following the consultation procedure, the researcher emailed a letter of intent for the study to the co-founder of the Diego Silang Movement. The questionnaire, consent form, and letter were all reviewed and approved by him. To distribute the link to the members of the organization, the researcher created a Google form link for the online survey questionnaire. Reading the consent form, answering the survey questions, and inquiring all took the participants approximately an hour. After 50 people had responded, the Google form link was disabled. The responses provided were handled with extreme discretion and confidentiality.

Sources of Data

The online survey questionnaire was the primary data collection tool, which the researcher coordinated with the co-founder of the Diego Silang Movement to disseminate to its members. An online survey questionnaire is a set of questions designed expressly to obtain information about a certain audience or group of individuals. The interviewees will easily have access to the material through an internet connection¹⁷. The benefit of this survey instrument is that it is relatively inexpensive and generally convenient, which generates a high response rate. Participants may respond to questions on their own time and at their leisure. Respondents are more likely to open up since they are not immediately giving their answers to another person¹⁸.

The researcher also used it since it was suggested by the co-founder as an efficient way to achieve the quota for response rates and was also beneficial to the respondents because most of them were not upfront about their abuse circumstances. The researcher thought it was practical since the respondents could quickly fill out the Google form without fear of being identified and their associated challenges as men in Filipino culture.

Instrumentation

Two professionals who are both Registered Psychometricians and Psychologists assessed the study's self-made questionnaire to determine whether it was ethically sound. The questionnaire

was divided into two sections: demographics and assessment of internal dynamics in the relationship.

The demographic profile of the respondents is included in the first section and will include information on their age, socioeconomic situation, level of education, occupation, and religion. The second section was segmented into 10 questions that were important for the analysis of the internal dynamics of battered men relationships and were expected to take an hour to complete.

Ethical Considerations

Before the start of the investigation, the researcher obtained the required ethical certification to perform the study responsibly. Informed consent was provided in the first section of the Google Form, and participants were obligated to comprehend their rights as respondents and the research conditions before consenting to participate.

Because the respondents are a minority group, they are not obligated to provide their real names, or any personal information asked. There are no known risks associated with their participation in the research, other than the chance that they found some of the questions difficult and experienced emotional discomfort while recalling their experiences.

The Data Privacy Act of 2012 protects respondents' rights as citizens, thus their responses to the survey questionnaire will not be disclosed to anybody other than the researcher, advisers, critics, and panel members. In addition, their identities were labeled "anonymous," and the data from the study, including participant information, were kept in a protected document.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The respondents admitted to having been abused in a variety of ways by their female partners. They indicated that since these assaults are seen as merely normal behaviors for women and are not taken seriously, their partners do not genuinely view them as abuse. When men say that certain activities shouldn't be mentioned in public, they share the same viewpoint that women do. Examples of abusive language include the following:

"Insulting languages, shifting the blames, playing always the victim, and outburst of unpredictable anger".

-Respondent 3

"The typical 'female toy thing and blaming you for e things that you can't control".

- Respondent 5

"Beating, almost everything. Defamation. "

- Respondent 8

"Unpaid debt, verbal abuse, and threatening to spread secrets/rumors about me. "

- Respondent 12

"Being cursed at and being cheated on. "

- Respondent 13

"Financial and mental and emotional abuse. She used our children to get what she wants."

- Respondent 24

"Cursed, beaten, kicked, yelled at."

- Respondent 37

"Trauma, she is hurting me when she gets too angry and sometimes she is hurting herself."

- Respondent 43

The statements made it quite evident that respondents face various forms of abuse. Verbal abuse involves their partners using words to threaten and exploit them to control them. And it aims to intimidate, isolate, or manipulate others by insults, humiliation, and ridicule. The next type of abuse is perceived as being one in which men shouldn't make a big deal because they always need to be tough: mental and emotional abuse. Emotional discomfort is used as a tool of control and manipulation in these abuses. In this abuse, the victim's thoughts are manipulated through the use of threats, accusations, and other subtler techniques. Also, financial abuse, in which the female partner controls or limits the victim's access to money, assets, and resources in this type of abuse. Lastly, the physical abuse in which these deliberate actions put a male partner through physical pain, trauma, injury, or other physical suffering.

Being a battered man in the Philippines is something tragic and utterly powerless based on the negative discourses that have been identified, which have been influenced by society and the country's current law. The four discourses uncovered in this study are: men must always be strong, men are providers and problem solvers, battered men as nakakahiya, and male victims are helpless in the Philippines.

Men must always be tough/dominant

After looking at the responses of battered men, the main discourse that emerges is that men should always be tough. Men within this discourse of being always tough are positioned as matapang (tough). Because of this position, their subjectivities are affected by assuming that they must maintain a façade of mental and physical toughness while suppressing their feelings and emotions. When asked how they view men in today's society, some of the respondents claimed that men should bury their emotions and not cry easily, even when confronted with difficulties. The following discursive constructions show this discourse broadly:

"In today's society, being a man, crying is unacceptable, and expressing how one felt could be viewed as weak or whining wasn't given a platform to share how they felt but instead were quickly told to move past it and be told to stay strong."

- Respondent 3

"Hiding your emotions from other people because as a man you must be brave and not to cry easily, so whenever there is a problem, you prefer to be alone and keep quiet. It's very thought-provoking because you don't know how to deal with something especially, they know that you have to be tough, and you don't give up because you're a man"

- Respondent 6

“As a man, it is difficult to express our feelings because we are a man because it is customary in society that being a man is being strong, so we need to look strong at all times”.

- Respondent 33

Men refused to ask for help from other from authorities, even when their female companions were abusing them, because they claimed that men must always act like men and be strong. These subjectivities were affected because of societal and cultural norms. They were worried about being perceived as weak and vulnerable. Since they are afraid of being judged, men who have been abused just hide their sufferings as victims. These discursive constructions of hesitation to ask for help because of a need to look tough and a concern about being criticized are demonstrated by the statements:

“Men are men. The feeling of "machoness". Fear of being bullied, fear of losing support, fear of being left, fear of losing their children and maybe to avoid humiliation.”

-Respondent 2

"It's because of the mindset of our society between man and woman. Our society has set its minds on gender roles and gender capacity. Especially with the social and cultural norms that we have, once you become deviant from one of those norms in terms of "manhood" or "masculinity", there is no specific punishment, but the emotional impact is too huge to really affect you. So, the tendency, we, men, we used to hide and keep it within ourselves.”

-Respondent 26

Besides this, the stigma and discrimination towards battered men persist in the Philippines, even in the present. Being the victim of a woman will be perceived as being out of the ordinary if it happens to a man. Men are expected to be dominant in relationships and to be macho in the eyes of the culture. One respondent went to the point of suggesting men reevaluate their sentiments about speaking out about abuses in case they are only just illusions. The topic statements indicate the discursive constructions within the discourse that man must always be tough:

“Because we are Filipinos, that's the only way you'll be told that you're being dramatic or it's just your illusion, so it's better to just hide it.”

- Respondent 10

“The culture in the Philippines is different. If you are a man, you are expected to be the dominant in the relationship. The macho image is very prevalent.”

- Respondent 16

The discourse of men must always be tough and is considered both positively and negatively. Men who seem harsh are viewed positively in the Philippines because they are following the imposed stereotype of men's gender roles. On the other hand, the pressure to appear brave always has hurt men, to the point that they are striving to conceal what they are feeling. As it will be interpreted as a sign of weakness as a man, they hide the abuses in their intimate relationships from other people as well as society. Their position in the discourse presented affected their subjectivities. They must conform to cultural norms to have things sorted. If they just act in a way that men are expected to act, it will be favorably perceived in the country. This might be considered as the reason why

battered men are not transparent about things that are happening in their relationships, especially things that would make them seem weak to societal structure. As demonstrated, respondents decided to stay in the relationships because they feel a sense of belonging if they preserve the aforementioned behaviors, such as appearing tough in the face of the violence they face, and a sense of fitting in if they follow the cultural standards to be approved in society.

Men as providers and problem-solvers

The second discourse is about men as providers and problem-solvers in their household and in relationships. Within this discourse men are expected to be responsible to financial issues and be the one who solves major problems that will arise throughout the relationship. If they do, it will be seen as positive but not to be praise of since it is just expected of them. One respondent stated that as a man, he thinks that society has a lot of expectations and responsibilities including the perceived gender role of being accountable for the whole family. The discursive construction of the discourse is shown in the statements:

"Being a man in this society I feel like I'm just an object. I have to work hard and make people around me happy, especially my family."

- Respondent 24

"There are many responsibilities and also, it seems like all the people that surround me are expecting too much from me. You are the one who holds to your entire family; you must not be weak and you must act according to your gender roles in your society that is in line with social norms."

- Respondent 26

"A man will support the family."

- Respondent 39

"That a man should always be strong in facing problems no matter how difficult it is, we should always be able to handle it alone".

- Respondent 48

Another respondent in this discourse claimed that men must consistently have something to prove and must achieve success in life to avoid social criticism. Although the respondent acknowledges that these things are anticipated of them, it is also apparent from his response that he felt heavy and pressed by these obligations.

"It feels heavy because getting older comes with responsibility and having to prove something so other people don't say anything. You must have a job, you must have achieved something in life, you must have proven something first and only conform to what others think is right rather than your wishes."

- Respondent 6

In this discourse, men are also obligated to take charge of the financial commitments in intimate relationships since society and their female partners assume that men are the ones who manage

responsibility for such things. Another respondent even said that these expectations are making women more dependent on men.

"The effect is that women rely too much on men."

- Respondent 9

"I was not able to save money more than I should have because I am the one shouldering the expenses on our dates, bills, etc. That I need to be rich to accept me in the relationship. I must need to provide everything."

- Respondent 18

Because of the demands placed on them by society, men also suffered financial abuse from their female partners. This financial commitment only mainly affects them, and it serves in their partners' favor.

"Financial abuse by giving e-load or some extra cash to someone (ex) will try to give even I have nothing to give."

- Respondent 7

"I, who am still working, will prepare what I need to eat before going to work. She has no money of her own and everything is hers, including the ATM card."

- Respondent 28

From the statements given, they are complaining about being positioned as responsible for financial obligations in the relationship. These statements arise when they are asked what types of abuse they have encountered in their relationship. This is because they are afraid to be judged, which is why they are not open about it.

Another respondent in the discourse of men as providers claimed that despite suffering from the many kinds of domestic violence, he continues to be with the abusive partner because of his family. He will just put up with it since it will benefit the children. This revealed the respondent's actions and decisions because of his subjectivity, which compels him to deal with the problem even in the face of abuse.

"I love my children and I can do everything for them to give them a good life."

- Respondent 39

In summary, the discourse of men as providers and problem-solvers in households and relationships is evident in the discursive constructions of participants. They claimed that one of the responsibilities held in high regard by men in society is that of the family head and that they must exert high responsibility and accountability in meeting the requirements of their respective families. The responses indicate they perceive themselves as always being able to contribute economically, handle financial hardships, and need to be capable of maintaining decent work to generate this revenue.

Another position of them being victims of financial abuse by their female partners comes into play because of their position in the discourse. Because they believed that society told them that was the reality—men as providers—it had an impact on their subjectivities and their choices to just be

on it. They begin to feel pressured and protest about it, but they won't discuss it openly since doing so would further their characters as irresponsible men.

Battered Men as Nakakahiya

The third discourse describes battered men as nakakahiya (embarrassing) which positioned them as nahihiya. This discussion focuses on the uncomfortably disclosed victimhood and help-seeking practices of battered men. In their statements, they acknowledge being battered and submissive by their female partners and feeling ashamed of others as well as themselves.

"It is very gay to admit being battered."

- Respondent 7

"Because it is embarrassing, and I think I can handle it.."

- Respondent 23

"Nothing would be worse if people would know that you are under your girlfriend or as they say, I am afraid of my wife. That's a big blow to our men's pride that, in just one blink, we will immediately follow what our partners' wants."

- Respondent 26

"Having to experience that is shameful as a man."

- Respondent 28

One participant remarked in the aforementioned statement that being called "under de saya" is something that will seriously impact their sense of masculinity. The literal English translation of this Filipino idiomatic expression is "under the skirt," and it denotes that the male partner is submissive to the dominant female partner. This is one of the derogatory labels that are being used in the Philippines to refer to and ostracize battered men.

As men, respondents suggested that it shouldn't be discussed openly with others. They present themselves as basically someone who will stay silent in this situation. Even if he informed others, one participant thinks the public would not believe him as a man. This position of being embarrassed after their subjectivities to speak up about it.

"I don't want to talk about what happened to me and I'm ashamed to talk about it. Maybe they will question me why or not they just believe".

- Respondent 12

"Thus, it is so embarrassing to speak up that I am being abused by a woman and I am not sure if they (the public) will believe me".

- Respondent 16

Another point raised throughout the discussion is that when respondents are asked why they did not come forward as victims, complain to authorities, or seek professional treatment, they simply do not consider it because they believe they are defenseless as men. One respondent contended

that men will never win a lawsuit against a woman and that this will only damage their relationship with their children.

“Avoid confrontation of the law and save myself from embarrassment - family scandal.”

- Respondent 15

“So, I will sue her? Will go to barangay? I pity about my children. That's right they have one ex con parent. 'If I retaliate, no matter what the result is, that's not justice or anything 'when my children are asked at school where is your mother/father, what will they answer, my mother/father sent me to prison? I hope the legislators think carefully first, they are not all self-righteous. And again, man won't win over the woman now”.

- Respondent 19

Being positioned as defenseless victims, another position arises, they perceive themselves to have low self-esteem. They have addressed how being battered men and helpless cases in this culture has influenced how they view themselves. Their self-esteem is weakened because of their encounters, as is their feeling of not being acknowledged when they attempt to complain about it.

“My self-esteem went down to the floor, and I did not tell someone that I am being abused by a woman because it is so embarrassing.”

- Respondent 16

“It's degrading. Nakakawala ng pagkalalaki and most especially 'yong sense of self ko has been reduced.”

- Respondent 26

“I will feel belittled if I try to fight back for myself because they will side with my wife and not me.”

- Respondent 48

In essence, respondents face humiliation as men if they talk about it to others and come out as victims. This discourse prompted them to position themselves to make the issue a hidden one. Due to their positions of concealment about the abuses and feeling helpless about them, their subjectivities were also impacted, and they felt that their self-esteem and pride as men had been diminished.

Male victims are helpless

The fourth discourse that surfaces from battered men's statements is that men in the Philippines are helpless victims. How the country's society treats men as victims is unfortunate and intolerable, based on the respondents. They also addressed how the current anti-VAWC law primarily works to women's benefit. They indicated that even when they are the ones who are abusive, women always have the anti-VAWC law on their side. Women remain to be recognized by the law as helpless victims of men. The following statements illustrate the discursive constructions of this discourse:

“If you go to a police station particularly children's and women's desk. They already have a predetermined action that is the man's fault. Even if a woman complained that she was raped only to prove in the end that it was not. The downside, the man was jailed, and his reputation was ruined even after being proven of innocence. There is a study in America that laws against domestic violence are counterproductive for men”

- Respondent 21

“Because if you fight to protect yourself and the woman is hurt, they have a law that can be used. As men, if it's just verbal abuse and you go to the police, you'll be laughed at. Meanwhile, the girl just goes to VAWC and makes up a story, and they fight.”

- Respondent 24

A few respondents attempted to defend themselves against being abused by women but ended up being perpetrators because they concluded that the law always protected women. One participant even indicated that the process of coming out as a victim not only causes him stress but also hurts the education of his children.

“When I first fought, I ended up in prison. So, now my children's education is ruined, I'm distracted from work, I can't do anything, I just let it go as long as I and at least my children have a sane parent, that's okay.”.

- Respondent 19

“I seek help but once I tried the DSWD, so biased, they don't listen to what you say because you are a man.”

- Respondent 20

Being positioned as helpless victims made battered men in the country feel hopeless since they were compelled to acknowledge their case after realizing how they were always seen as perpetrators. Their decisions and subjectivities were so affected that they just discontinued seeking support. One of the respondents even expressed how depressed and inadequate he feels as a victim.

“It's depressing if you could only be dead because you are stuck because no matter what you do and what she does to you, you still can't deny that she's still the mother of my children. So, I have no choice, especially since VAWC is still being abused by some of them. Others are just getting pregnant to get a child support.”.

- Respondent 19

The respondents' impression of the law as discriminatory, which demands reconsideration and amendment, is another discursive construction that appears in this discourse. Even though it would help both women and children, several argued that it should be modified to cover violence against partners of either gender.

“Actually, this law is better, but children and women are not the only ones who experience abuse. We experience physical abuse, emotional and mental abuse, and even sexual abuse.”

- Respondent 26

“This law is good to protect women and young people in our country from abuse, but I hope every case will be thoroughly investigated, because of this law, especially men are abused because women know that they are not allowed to retaliate. men because someone protects them, I hope there is a law for men as well”

- Respondent 33

“I hope there is something for men too because it's not just women who are abused, I don't see "equality and peace" in this law. We don't speak or open up, maybe it's embarrassing to others because of "pride" or others because they are still able to endure the pain because they love or protect them so much. "Because we're men, we can't physically hurt women" respect and that's how common men value women. That's why we tolerate or hide our feelings, that's and why there are few reports of male abuse, but maybe, this is just another proof that there are more men who commit suicide because we don't show our anger, or we do not reveal any secrets regarding or related to this..”

- Respondent 43

Respondents are experiencing the discourse that depicts men as helpless. They were made to feel helpless and positioned as hopeless. Because of how they regarded themselves to be in this position, they encountered depressed symptoms and did not resist them. Another viewpoint that some of them positioned to wanting to fight back for their rights as human beings and as victims who are men emerged within this discourse.

3. DISCUSSION

Men are expected to always be tough, which is the study's main and first discourse. The responses demonstrated that society has positioned them as being neither overly sensitive, delicate, nor prone to weeping. They also talked about male dominance ideology, which states that men should act like men, suppress their emotions, refrain from crying, and feel ashamed if they discuss the abuse they have experienced at the hands of their female partners. It was also apparent that this discourse caused them to feel under pressure, and as a consequence, they did not want to speak to anyone if there were ever situations in which they would be expressing their sentiments. They are in a challenging circumstance that has had an impact on their subjectivities, therefore, they are unable to express their emotions.

Men believe that by disclosing their struggles, they will appear soft and that others will view them as damaged¹⁹. Hagner²⁰ argues that further reasons include men's fear of being rejected, their belief that they can handle everything on their own, and their unwillingness to accept the truth about themselves. Machado et al. ²¹ found hurdles that men face while obtaining assistance, namely variations in the treatment of men versus women victims. Their research additionally showed that seeking help had a detrimental emotional effect on most of these men.

Low self-esteem is one consequence of abuse that happens to men. If he had previously exhibited indications of confidence, he might have been able to overlook the abuse²². Just as it impacts battered women, emotional abuse against men leads them to think less of themselves as individuals²³. According to Kolbe and colleagues²⁴, men suffer minor physical injuries,

diminished physical health, psychological issues like anxiety or a disruptive disorder, and a heightened intake of alcohol and/or illicit substances because of abuse by female partners. Similar to battered wives, Filipino battered husbands experience the same degrees of emotional, verbal, and physical abuse, but they are less likely to report it to law enforcement as highlighted by Zabala²⁵. The study referred to its participants as "TAKUSA." It is also a Filipino term with the longer meaning of "Takot sa asawa," which is the English translation of "Afraid of wives." The second discourse focuses on battered men's responsibilities as providers and problem-solvers in the household, society,

and romantic relationships. The specific responses, such as "Okay, need making responsible kasi padre de pamilya," "I was not able to save money more than I should because I am the one shouldering the expenses on our dates, bills, etc," and "Being a man of today should be more responsible, family-oriented and practical." made it clear that they see themselves as providers, just as a society, family and their romantic partners do, and feel compelled to be doing. Financial abuse, as evidenced by responses like "Financial abuse by giving e-load or some extra cash to someone (ex) bibigay kahit wala ibibigay," made it clear that this was a type of abuse involving the giving of money to someone who wasn't a part of the relationship, wouldn't benefit the respondent, and would only be in the abuser's favor.

People are typically valued for working hard and supporting themselves. Yet, for men, that is insufficient. Men are responsible for both their obligations as well as the liabilities of their parents' and partners' families²⁶. This assertion is supported by the research participants' responses, where one said that he always forced himself to be responsible, to have something to prove, and to have well-paying jobs to prevent others from making comments about him being a man. According to a 2017 Pew Research Center study on the topic of men as providers, the majority of Americans do assume that men would be the primary revenue generator in a household²⁷.

The English equivalent of the Filipino expression "padre de-pamilya," which means "head of the family," states that men are supposed to be the household's figureheads and problem-solvers. In a traditional sense, Filipino fathers are breadwinners, constantly working to provide for their families, staying in their positions for a lifetime, and even going overseas²⁸. Similarly, respondents in the survey regard themselves as padre de-pamilya in the household, looking for the primary source of income, being dependable, and having to provide economically.

In their romantic relationships, the respondents were positioned as the financial providers, and so do their partners. They represented themselves as the ones who would pay for the expenses of the dates and/or take care of any financial issues that could arise throughout the relationship. A remarkable 78% of participants in a survey on love and money conducted by Money and SurveyMonkey agreed that men should pay on the first date. Interestingly, men (85%) were even more likely than women (72%), to think that men should bear the expense³⁰. In a related manner, a study from 2021 revealed that female respondents expected men to pay for the first and following dates when asked who should pay for the dates. The willingness of women to split the cost of a date was mixed but far from equal³¹. According to Lowe³², men pay the bills because they are interested, want to make an impression, and want to establish a relationship they like. In their households and personal relationships, most respondents considered themselves to be problem-solvers and providers, thus even when abuse did occur, most of them remained in such situations. The third discourse discusses battered men as nakakahiya (embarrassing). This signifies that the respondents believe it would be too embarrassing to acknowledge if someone found out they were battered men. This position in the discourse had a bearing on their subjectivities, particularly in

the Philippines, where they were less likely to reach out and disclose being mistreated by women out of a sense of shame. They just keep this hidden out of concern for their pride and machismo. Many men still experience shame, humiliation, and even emotions of emasculation at the thought of being beaten in a conflict by a woman³³. Similarly, according to Bates³⁴, males generally perceive receiving help for a psychological or emotional illness as a sign of weakness or embarrassment. Because they feel humiliated, fear that they won't be believed, or think that their partner will avenge them, men frequently hesitate to report abuse³⁵. The participants' constructions of the masculine identity and the accompanying behavioral standards were revealed to be a significant factor in Taylor and colleagues³⁶ study on the barriers to men getting help for intimate partner violence. The shift from a psychological state of denial to an accepted victim status was another issue with seeking treatment, and it was described as risky and difficult for one's self-image.

Traditional male stereotypes cause a variety of challenges that are harmful to all genders and, in the end, to people's well-being. These problems are caused by rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles that are learned during socialization and lead to personal restriction, undervaluation of others, or violation of one's own³⁷. Domestic violence and other forms of violence are greatly influenced by toxic masculinity. Men may choose to disregard or fail to acknowledge when they are the victims of domestic violence because they are conditioned to believe that they should be able to accept physical and emotional abuse, even in the face of the immense pressure society puts on them to respond in a different way³⁸.

The fourth discourse is about battered men as helpless in the Philippines. Respondents discussed how they believe that only women are privileged by the country's culture and laws. They discussed how the anti-VAWC law is discriminatory and how women just take full advantage of it. A few of them sought to report the abuse but were laughed at and neglected since they were men. Although while they agreed that this law might be very beneficial to women who are seriously assaulted by their partners and to the children, they felt it needed to be changed and amended to include men as well. Additionally, they discussed how the context influences their judgment not to contemplate approaching professionals for emotional support or authorities to report abuse since they believe that the culture in the Philippines supports women as victims. As per one participant, "If you go to a police station particularly children's and women's desk. They already have a predetermined action na kasalanan ng lalake." He is implying that he thinks there is already an established system of support for women and children, and that this system will always place the blame on men.

In the Philippines, patriarchy asserts social standards for gender norms, largely disregarding male victims in committed partnerships. Therefore, incidents in which men are the victims and women are the perpetrators in a relationship are considered unthinkable³⁹. Men's macho egos typically step in, stopping them from testifying to being mistreated, so they hide it to themselves⁴⁰. As said by Iso⁴¹, even though there are protections for battered men, the Philippines' most important domestic violence statute solely prioritizes the safety of women and children.

In Cebu City, Councilor Gerardo Carillo stated that he established a domestic violence ordinance in the city that equally protects husbands who are mistreated by their wives. The complainant might ask the barangay captain for a Barangay Protection Order (BPO), which will restrict their abusive partners from staying in their conjugal home⁴². Lawyer Dexter Lacuanan argues that Philippine laws are prejudiced towards men when it comes to domestic violence. Lacuanan has defended men accused of domestic abuse by their wives in court under Republic Act No. 9262,

often known as the "Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act"⁴³. Because of this, the proposed "battered husbands" bill for Filipino battered men is initiated by Congressman Juan Fidel Nograles, which will consider women equally responsible for their actions against their male partners. The idea was established in response to a growth in the number of males reporting partner violence each year⁴⁴.

Three cases of partner violence were investigated by the Quezon City Police District Crime Laboratory, as well as another study investigating the abuse of six Filipino husbands. 4 out of the 6 participants reported that their spouses' violent behavior began with verbal attacks and put-downs, then progressed to physical violence as their verbal sparring became more heated. One of the victims described being hit "straight in the nose" by a "flying monoblock chair"⁴⁵. Men who sought help from the Diego Silang Movement were "not yet capable of speaking up publicly due to the stigma" associated with battered men as being "under the sea". Some of these men also sought legal or non-legal counsel, sending images of themselves with injuries to their faces or arms that they said were caused by their female companions⁴⁶.

The discourse in the Philippines regarding battered men being helpless is a negative discourse that must be reconstructed because victims are already suffering tremendously and exhibiting depressive symptoms. Fortunately, there is already a nonprofit organization working to advocate for abused men's rights by looking at the opposite side of the coin, which is always in favor of society. Their positions of helplessness depleted them and made them feel unfair to them, so they are making efforts to have their civil liberties as victims recognized and to be allowed to seek assistance without discrimination.

Lastly, three institutions that affected the positions, subjectivities, and behaviors of battered men were examined and identified. These institutions influence how the respondents' perceptions of reality have been established. First, respondents indicated that a major part of what they do, and their sufferings are impacted by how today's society views men, in which men must be strong, and provide, and also by how society perceives men as being dominant in the relationship. This pressure had a harmful influence on them because the structures of society saw them as abusers because of their gender. It would be a shame to reveal that they are the ones being abused by their female spouses, and it would be a big humiliation to everyone. Because they are frightened of being made ridiculed, disparaged, and judged to be fragile, they just give in to society's demands and conform to its expectations. Second, their familial institutions, where their fundamental family and romantic relationship are taken into perspective. Their families look to them as providers who can handle household issues, particularly financial ones. They concluded that they needed to do it also in their romantic relationships and be the ones who are solving problems. They also expect themselves to act as men in the relationship; it is not a manly thing to be feeble and cry over their female partners' abuses. Lastly, the existing law in the Philippines who are protecting women and children is also the institution that affected that battered men. Some of them already discussed that they went to the authorities but failed to receive the wanting help because of the law. Because of this, some of them are already helpless in their cases of abuse because they think that they have no right to speak as victims. After all, they will just be countersued. But the organization is doing its way to amend the law to also consider male partners as victims.

4. CONCLUSION

The experiences of Filipino men who had been battered by their female companions were brought into focus by the present study. Some of their unreported stories—which they find difficult to

discuss with society because of the stigma attached to them—were made into discourses. The common perception of men is that they must always be resilient, act as providers, and keep quiet if they encounter difficulties, which is also the dominant discourse of the study. Due to these demands, some of them are unsure if they are being abused, while others are certain they are but do not want to disclose it. There is a contradictory force between not wanting to experience the abuses from female partners and just following the dictation of the institutions since they are fed that it is the norm that must be followed. The respondents' perceptions of societal familial, and legal institutions had a direct effect on their subjectivities, which had a significant impact on their practices as men. This study contributed to the understanding of the discourses of Filipino abused men and how society molds them. Even though the discourses are already determined, all of them are perceived negatively by the respondents. They also want to know how they can change these discourses since they feel it to be a burden as men which made them feel helpless. The study acknowledges that it may take some time to reconstruct these negative discourses because of how strongly society views men. But every change always starts with a modest act of bravery, and the more determined one is, the more likely something is to become something that happens.

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Author's Note

Marjorie Z. Poticano, Eulogio “Amang” Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology, Cavite Campus (1), marjoriepoticano08@gmail.com, Block 3, Lot 35, Bayabas Street, Poblacion 4, General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite (1)

Christopher F. Sasot, Polytechnic University of the Philippines: Sta. Mesa, Manila, PH (1) cfsasot@pup.edu.ph (2)