



# THE BURDEN OF MARITAL VOWS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ILOCOS NORTE

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**Abstract - This study determined the life experiences encountered by married women in terms of domestic violence in Ilocos Norte regarding the issues of being abused. This study utilized qualitative research. Purposive sampling was used as a sampling method to look for in-depth knowledge and detailed information from the chosen six (6) participants to know and assess their experiences in design through interviews, specifically, phenomenological, wherein it sought to understand and describe the universal essence of phenomena and investigate the experience of domestic violence by married women in Ilocos Norte.**

**Findings show that the married women experienced three types of violence: physical assault, emotional distress, and financial deprivation. In addition, results showed that seeking assistance from others, distancing oneself from harm, condoning family intact, and disregarding traumatic experiences are their coping mechanisms that enable them and their families to function in everyday life. And lastly, initiating communication and remorselessness are the ways in which their partner reconciles with them.**

**This study concluded that married women who are victims of domestic violence experienced various types of violence. However, despite the burden that they experienced, they were able to cope. Moreover, most of the partners of the participants did nothing and asked for money to reconcile with their wives after the commission of domestic violence, so it can be concluded that there is a need to develop an action plan in order to overcome the abuse that the married women experienced. A plan that can help them copewith the trauma they faced and help them heal from their past experiences physically, mentally, and financially.**

**Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that 1) The Department of Social Welfare and Development may create a health care unit inclusive only of victims of domestic violence that can cater to physical and psychological treatment and may coordinate with the Technical Educational Skill Development Authority to train and enhance the skills of those victims of violence in order for them to generate additional streams of income. 2) The non-governmental organization may organize a group wherein women can share their experiences, stories, to inspire and motivate their fellow victims.**

**3) The Department of Social Welfare and Development, and counselors may provide more choices, such as which welfare programs they may continue with, and methods to ensure that women and their children are safeguarded when they do decide to leave an abusive home. 4) All concerned agencies of the government may adopt the action plan created by the researchers of this study to bring significant changes to the lives of the victims of violence and to have a domestic violence-free country.**

*Key words: Domestic Violence, Married Women, Battered Women, Phenomenological, Abusive Relationship, Phenomenological Study, Physical Assault, Emotional Distress, Financial Deprivation, Violence Against Women*

## I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

### Introduction

Domestic abuse is a behavior pattern employed in every relationship to acquire or keep authority and control over a significant other. This includes any conduct that terrifies, threatens, terrorizes, manipulates, injures, humiliates, or wounds another person (United Nations, 2020).

Physical violence is only one aspect of domestic violence. Domestic violence refers to any actions used with the intent of dominating or controlling a husband, partner, girlfriend/boyfriend, or close member of the family. Abuse is a learned behavior; it is not brought on by rage, mental health issues, drugs, alcohol, or any other commonly cited justifications (ACESDV, 2019). Domestic violence is an abuse of power that preys on the victim's dependence, intimacy, and trust to leave them defenseless. It is defined as any influence over another individual that is physical, psychological, emotional, or financially motivated, (Tougas, et., al, (2016).

Domestic violence is an attempt to control another person's behavior. It is an abuse of power that preys on the victim's dependence, intimacy, and trust to leave them defenseless. It is defined as any influence over another individual that is physical, psychological, emotional, or financially motivated. Domestic violence, often known as domestic abuse, is any behavior carried out with the intention of dominating a husband, partner, girlfriend, boyfriend, or close family member, (Murray, et al., 2018).

Domestic abuse is one of the forms of violence that is rampant today. Domestic abuse can affect everyone. It can happen everywhere that someone close to you has authority over you, not just in your home or in a romantic relationship. In all countries on earth, women are responsible for providing the majority of the care for kids as well as the elderly. Women have played a variety of roles in society; they are courageous, strong, and succeed in high-level positions just like men do, yet women continue to face domestic abuse and violence.

The National Demographic and Health Survey reports that 19% of women over 15 years old have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Regional rates vary, but it is interesting to note that the National Capital Region had one of the lowest rates of spousal, sexual, and physical violence within the past year the survey was conducted. One out of four ever-married women between 24 and 49 years old has experienced spousal violence. The most common form of violence they have experienced is emotional, followed by physical, then sexual. Among the women who have experienced spousal violence, 37% have sustained injuries. In terms of occurrence, spousal violence was found to increase as the number of children increased and to decrease as wealth increased. The results also show an intergenerational effect wherein women who have witnessed spousal violence between their parents are more likely to experience spousal violence themselves (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018).

Physical violence is described as being hit, slapped, kicked, or physically hurt by someone. The survey found that 17% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence. Younger women (15–19) are less likely to have experienced physical violence compared to older women (40–49). However, the difference is fairly small, as 13% of younger women have experienced physical violence compared to 18% of older women. Similar to the results of spousal violence, women in the lower wealth quintiles are more likely to experience physical violence compared to those with more wealth. Among currently or previously married women, the most common perpetrators were their current or former husbands or partners. For the never-married women, the most common perpetrators of physical violence were a parent or stepparent (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018).

For reporting behavior, NDHS (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) found that among the women who have experienced physical or sexual violence, only one out of three (34%) sought help to stop the violence. 25% of the women have disclosed the incident to someone but did not seek help, while 41% have never sought help or told anyone. This means that 3 out of 5 women suffer in silence. The survey found that women in the age group of 20–24 are the most likely to seek help. However, only six percent of the women sought help from the police, a figure quite close to seven percent (Palermo et al., 2013).

#### *Background of the Study*

The phrase "domestic violence" refers to actions done against a close friend, family member, or other members of the household. Attacks against a domestic partner that are physical, sexual, mental, financially, emotionally, or other (Findlaw's Team, 2018). Injuries such as wounds and bruises are two of the recognized bodily consequences of violence. Physical abuse is when someone intentionally acts violently or aggressively against another individual with the goal of causing physical harm to them. The psychological impacts of abuse, including trauma and its expressions, typically stay the longest. Emotional abuse is also known as psychological abuse (American Psychological Association, 2023). According to Follingstand and Dehart (2002), Emotional abuse is the deliberate undermining of a person's sense of security and self-worth. It frequently takes place in situations where there are imbalances of power and control. It includes other forms of psychological abuse as well, such as seclusion, humiliation, threats of damage, and abandonment. In intimate partner relationships, emotional abuse targets the victims' psychological and emotional health and is frequently the start of physical violence (Karakurt & Silver, 2013). The control of funds, expenses, financial accounts, payments, and borrowing funds, on the other hand, might be considered economic abuse.

Limiting access to and usage of items like transportation and technological devices, which enable us to earn a living and stay connected, as well as owning property and necessities like food and clothing, can also be considered part of this. It can include destroying items and refusing to contribute to household costs (Postmus, J.L., L.A., 2020)

Many women throughout the world suffer from the disturbing issue of violence against women. It can range from minor physical assaults to serious life-ending effects including emotional instability and death. Although the constitution offers equal protection to all regardless of gender, Filipino women are not free from this widespread problem. People cannot ignore the truth that many poor women faced abuse at the hands of their cruel husbands.

As the researchers tried to identify the types of domestic violence experienced by married women, their coping mechanisms with the abuse, and the things their partner does to make amends with them, they hoped to increase awareness of domestic abuse victims' rights to be free from fear and empower all married women who experience domestic abuse by helping them gain confidence through ongoing education on how to deal with or cope with their situation. This was done to increase awareness that domestic violence against women is a major violation of their human rights and that they should be treated fairly and justly. In addition, it aims to broaden each reader's understanding of the idea of violence against married women and how it affects them, and it provides knowledge on how the appropriate authorities, individuals, etc. should treat those victims of domestic violence without instilling further fear in them.

The abusers who are unaware of the current research study will also benefit greatly from this study. They learn from this how pervasive and harmful domestic abuse is. By pressuring the authorities to impose stricter laws and penalties for domestic violence offenders, it might help the province become free of domestic violence.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Generally, this study aims to have an in-depth analysis of the life experiences of a married woman who suffered pain, injury and maltreatment that resulted in domestic abuse in Ilocos Norte.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following:

- 1) What type of domestic violence was encountered by married women?
- 2) What is the coping mechanism used by married women from domestic violence?
- 3) What does their husband do to reconcile with them after being abused?
- 4) What action plan can be developed to help married women overcome domestic violence?

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The following are the theories used in the study;

#### *Learned Helplessness Theory*

When a person encounters stressful, unmanageable events repeatedly and refuses to take charge when the opportunity arises, they develop learned helplessness. Even when change is conceivable, individuals no longer attempt to do so since they have "learned" that they are powerless in that circumstance. When someone has this experience and realizes they have little influence over the world around them, they get demotivated. Even if a chance to improve their situation emerges, they choose not to take advantage of it (Leonard, J., 2022).

The connection between the theory of learned helplessness and our study is the way married women respond when they are maltreated by their spouses. Some women choose to stay with their abusive husbands for the sake of their children and to prevent their family from being separated. The inability of abused women is referred to as learned helplessness,

either to put an end to the violence or to get out of the abusive relationship. The married women learned to put up with the abuse because they considered it something within their control. Learned helplessness also causes the cycle of abused married women to become defenseless, and as a result, they are accepting or allowing what happens or what their husbands do without active response or resistance.

#### Help-Seeking Theory

Help-seeking theory has been defined as the process of energizingly asking assistance from health care professionals or from reliable community members, including comprehension, direction, therapy, and general encouragement when feeling stuck or coming across stressful situations (NCBI, n.d.).

In relation to this study, the victims of domestic violence seek the help of others, specifically from their family, friends, and neighbors. They go to those who they know can help them after being abused; they seek assistance from others for their fear to disappear and for them to forget the abuse that their partner did to them. The people whom they seek help from advice them with regards to the things that they should do to their husband and what they can do to forget the abuse.

#### Conceptual Framework

The study adopted the Input, Process, Output, and Outcome (IPOO) model. An Input-Process-Output-Outcome model is a functional graph that identifies the processing task required to convert inputs to output and its outcome. It defines the relevant objectives for the research process and maps out how they come together to draw coherent conclusions (Swaen, 2022).

The inputs to this study were the type of domestic violence encountered by married women, their coping mechanisms, and the ways their husbands reconcile with them after being abused. As for the process, the researchers collected, interpreted, and analyzed the gathered data using thematic analysis. Based on the findings, the researchers have come up with an action plan entitled "Ilocana a Naundor" to help married women overcome domestic violence as the output of this study. Further, the desired outcome is to reduce domestic violence and maintain harmonious relationships between husband and wife.

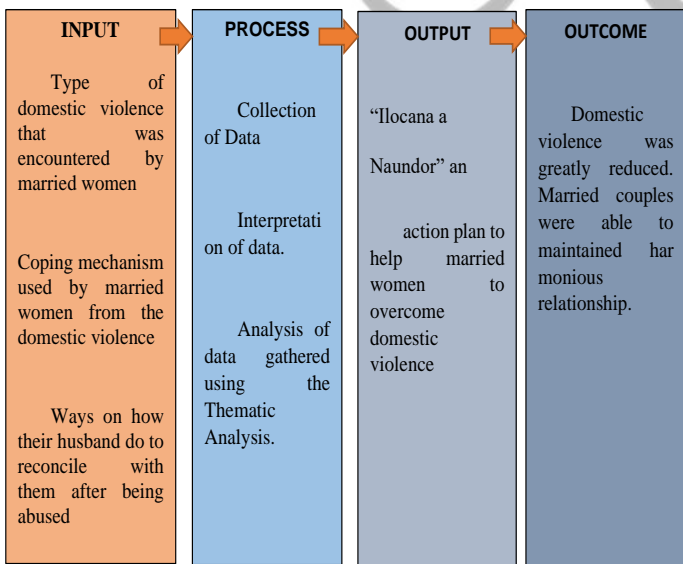


Figure 1: Research Paradigm

#### Significance of the Study

This study provided a better understanding of the life experience of a legally married woman in terms of domestic violence in Ilocos Norte. This study may benefit the following:

**Married Women.** This study might help them maintain their good relationship after being educated about the negative impact of living in an abusive home or living with an abusive husband. It is also a very big help for them to cope with the act of violence and overcome the situation.

**Philippine Commission on Women.** This study might make them improve their policies, programs, and projects that increase the well-being of women.

**Students.** This study helps the students gain a better understanding of domestic abuse, and it also helps them

discover ways or steps to avoid domestic abuse, especially for married women in their early age.

**Teachers.** This study helps the teachers as their guide in teaching the students about domestic abuse of married women and the experiences of married women about domestic abuse.

**Researchers.** This study serves as a basis for all researchers to get information about the life experiences of married women in terms of domestic abuse.

**Future researchers.** This study may serve as a reference in conducting a study related to the life experience of married women in terms of domestic abuse.

#### Scope and Delimitations

The research study was conducted during the first semester of S.Y. 2022–2023, where it focused on the life experiences of married women who are victims of domestic violence in Ilocos Norte, specifically in Pasuquin, Vintar, Piddig and Dingras. The study is limited to knowing what types of violence they encountered, their coping mechanisms after being abused, and the means their husbands used to reconcile with their partners. The participants of the study were limited to six (6) legally married women who are victims of domestic violence.

#### Definition of Term

This study defined some terms that were tackled throughout the study to give further in-depth knowledge to anyone.

**Abuse.** It is defined as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person. It is when one person purposefully hurts another (Tracy, 2021). These are violent acts against another person. It can be in the form of physical, emotional, or economic domestic violence.

**Coping mechanism.** These are ways in which external or internal stress is managed, adapted to, or acted upon (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984). It is the approach used by married women who are victims of domestic violence in order for them to cope with the dreadful experiences caused by their husbands.

**Counseling.** When a person gets direct advice from a therapist or has a chance to let go of unpleasant emotions, it opens the door for good personality development. It is also defined as a way or process to release the emotions or problems of the victims of domestic abuse in order that they might be able to deal with and cope with their situation and free themselves from abuse.

**Domestic violence.** It is an ongoing cycle of violent conduct employed by one party in every relationship to acquire or keep authority over another intimate partner (FindLaw, 2018). This involves physical, emotional, and economic abuse of their partners that affects their lives.

**Economic violence.** It refers to acts that make or attempt to make a woman financially dependent (RA No. 9262). It is the deprivation of the rights of an abused married woman to have their own separate source of income and to have control over all the things that money can buy that makes the wife economically dependent on their husband.

**Emotional violence.** It refers to acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering to the victim, such as, but not limited to, intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, public ridicule or humiliation, repeated verbal abuse, and mental infidelity (RA No. 9262). It is a type of violence that affects the emotions of the victims of domestic abuse caused by verbal insults or threats.

**Life experience.** It is a set of events, conditions, and perceptions that occur during a lifetime. Life experiences include, but are not limited to, life events (Azevedo, 2017). It is also defined as the things that are encountered in life that are either good or bad. Experiences that may be a trauma or a lesson.

**Married Woman.** They are the ones who have contracted marriage, which is recognized as such by the law, and are the victims of abuse caused by their husband.

*Physical violence.* It refers to acts that include bodily or physical harm (RA. No. 9262). It is a type of violence that involves using physical force to hurt another person.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES AND STUDIES

This chapter focuses on the different articles, pieces of literature, and studies that are related to the present study and serve as the foundation of this study. The study cited personal experiences, opinions, and thoughts that are relevant to the present study.

### *Domestic Violence*

Domestic violence needs to be seen as a social phenomenon and not a private family matter (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005; Shipway, 2004). Globally, violence against women is seen as a valid violation of human rights and a serious danger to the physical and mental well-being of women (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). It is becoming clearer now that the definition of 'partner violence' is not limited to physical violence only; it also includes psychological, emotional, financial, and sexual abuse (Rhatigan, Moore & Street, 2005).

### *Republic Act 9262 Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004*

RA 9262 is an act defining violence against women and their children, providing for protective measures for victims, and prescribing penalties to the perpetrators (RA 9262, March 08, 2004).

VAWC includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

*Physical Violence* refers to acts that include bodily or physical harm;

*Sexual violence* refers to an act that is sexual in nature and is committed against a woman or her child. It includes, but is not limited to: a) rape, sexual harassment, acts of lasciviousness, treating a woman or her child as a sex object, making demeaning and sexually suggestive remarks, physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim's body, forcing her/him to watch obscene publications and indecent shows, or forcing the woman or her child to do indecent acts and/or make films thereof, forcing the wife and mistress/lover to live in the conjugal home or sleep together in the same room with the abuser; b) acts causing or attempting to cause the victim to engage in any sexual activity by force, threat of force, physical or other harm, or coercion; c) Prostituting the woman or child.

*Psychological violence* refers to acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering to the victim, such as, but not limited to, intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, public ridicule or humiliation, repeated verbal abuse, and mental infidelity. It includes causing or allowing the victim to witness the physical, sexual, or psychological abuse of a member of the family to which the victim belongs, to witness pornography in any form, to witness abusive injury to pets, or to unlawful or unwanted deprivation of the right to custody and/or visitation of common children.

*Economic abuse* refers to acts that make or attempt to make a woman financially dependent, which includes, but is not limited to, the following: a) withdrawal of financial support or preventing the victim from engaging in any legitimate profession, occupation, business, or activity, except in cases wherein the other spouse or partner objects on valid, serious, and moral grounds as defined in Article 73 of the Family Code; b) deprivation or threat of deprivation of financial resources and the right to the use and enjoyment of the conjugal, community, or property owned in common; c) destroying household property; d) controlling the victims' own money or properties or solely controlling the conjugal money or properties.

### *Responding to Intimate Partner Violence against Women*

Studies of the relationships between intimate partner violence, health status, and use of health care by married women have shown that women who have experienced violence are more likely than non-abused women to seek health care (Ansara and Hindin, 2010; Black, 2011), even if they do

not disclose the violence. A health-care provider is often the first contact for survivors of intimate partner violence like physical violence, emotional violence, economic violence, and sexual violence, and women living with partner violence identify health-care providers as the professionals they would most trust with disclosure of abuse (Feder et al., 2006).

### *Emotional Abuse and Mental Health of Women in Abusive Marriage in Communities in Gwagwalada, Federal Capital*

One of the most common forms of intimate partner violence is emotional abuse (Heise et al., 2019). It is also known as psychological abuse (Follingstad and Dehart, 2000). It is the intentional degradation of a person's sense of safety and self-worth, and it frequently takes place in connections where there are imbalances of power and control. It includes other psychologically abusive practices as well, such as seclusion, humiliation, threats of damage, and abandonment.

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2018) argued that women in intimate partner relationships have suffered psychologically aggressive behavior by their intimate partners. 4 out of every 10 women have experienced one form of coercive control from a romantic partner in an intimate relationship. Globally, married women have experienced in an intimate relationship a threat of physical harm from a partner (NCADV, 2019). Emotional abuse takes the form of verbal assault, control, dominance, and the use of intimate information to degrade a partner (Follingstad, Coyre, & Gambone, 2005). Emotional abuse in intimate partner relationships is aimed or targeted at the emotional and psychological wellbeing of victims, and it is most times the precursor to physical abuse (Karakurt & Silver, 2013). Emotional abuse can be equally detrimental to the health of a victim as physical abuse (Crozier, 2017).

### *Economic Abuse within Intimate Partner Violence*

One of the greatest impacts of economic abuse is that it creates economic dependency on the perpetrator. Studies have consistently demonstrated that economic dependence is the primary obstacle victims face in attempting to leave abusive relationships (Kim & Gray, 2008). Economic abuse, and in particular employment sabotage, affects the victim's ability to gain and maintain stable employment. Victims of employment sabotage report having difficulty concentrating at work and performing on the job (Tolman & Wang, 2005). In addition, IPV is associated with job loss, unemployment, and employment instability. Research documents the detrimental impact of IPV in the short term and the impact past IPV experiences have on sustained effects on employment stability over time (Adams et al., 2013).

### *The Zonta Club of Ilocos Norte*

A local women's organization is advancing the cause of fellow women through a series of actions against gender-based violence. ZCIN, in partnership with various local government units and other interest organizations, rounded up the two cities and 21 municipalities to promote greater awareness about stopping violence against women and children. Based on cases filed for violations of RA 9262, or the so-called anti-violence against women and children's act, they reported that they have also observed an increase, which shows that more women are not afraid anymore to fight for their rights. Although there are still some women who are not yet that aware or liberalized, at least more and more are becoming aware of their rights and saying no to violence against women. Further, the conviction rate remains low, apparently due to economic reasons (The Ilocos Times, January 25, 2017).

### *Battered women: A Socio-Legal perspective of their Experiences in Nairobi*

Most respondents stated that they did not seek legal assistance because they were afraid that if their complaints were treated seriously by the authorities, it would result in marital conflict, a fine, and/or imprisonment, which many respondents despised because it would not only restrict access to resources but would also have a negative effect on the well-being of the entire household. It was also emphasized that divorce or separation would have an impact on children's socialization and development since the children would be humiliated by other children in school, which would have an impact on their

academics and, by consequence, their future. As a result, it is not surprising that few women seek legal assistance.

One important reason frequently claimed was that legal staff, particularly police officers, the majority of whom are men, were extremely unpleasant and unfriendly to battered women whom they accused of being guilty of the violence. Some claimed to have been solicited for money (which they did not have in the first place) or sexual favors, after which they abandoned legal action. Several women described being compelled to return to their dangerous houses. "Action is taken only after some people have been slain."

"The police are very indifferent to abused women," and in most situations, they do not take spouse violence seriously. "They constantly support informal punishments by urging the two parties to reconcile," one responder remarked. It was found that law enforcement personnel persuaded battered women to withdraw their accusations for the sake of their children. "The lady is asked how she would cope if her husband (the breadwinner) is in jail." The attitudes and procedures of the police tend to undercut the abused woman's determination, thus discouraging most women from pursuing legal remedy (Ondicho, Tom G., 2000).

#### *Coping with the Experience of Intimate Partner Violence Among South African Women: Systematic Review and Meta-Synthesis*

One of the most prominent conceptualizations of coping is presented by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). They describe coping as thoughts and behaviors that people use to manage the internal and external demands of situations that are perceived as stressful. Further, a distinction is made between emotion- and problem-focused coping. Whereas the former refers to regulating the distress connected to the particular problem and, thus, perceiving the situation as unchangeable, the latter refers to using strategies that manage the particular problem and, thus, perceiving the situation as amenable to change. Another division frequently stated in the coping literature is the one between coping styles of an adaptive or healthy nature and those of a maladaptive or unhealthy nature. However, there is a great difference in study findings when it comes to categorizing coping behaviors as either adaptive or maladaptive. This mainly depends on the type of stress or problem studied, the intensity and frequency of the problem, the study population, and cultural factors.

Globally, many researchers have addressed the coping responses of women experiencing IPV. The findings of these studies suggest that women use many coping strategies to manage substantial stress, escape reality, leave the violence in their lives, and establish safety for themselves. To identify coping responses that are mostly and rarely used, a systematic review was conducted by Rizo, Givens, and Lombardi that examined 48 papers of studies conducted among female U.S. citizens.

The authors found that the most common forms of coping included religious or spiritual coping, resisting the abuser, wishful thinking, trying to become more independent, maintaining relationships with others, and talking to others, as well as leaving the abuser. Among the least commonly used coping responses were substance abuse, self-criticism, legal services, and seeking formal support (police, medical personnel, or a counselor). The participants in this study also rated the more frequently used coping responses as more helpful than the less frequently used coping responses. Contrary to the helpfulness ratings found in the described review, research and experts agree that seeking help from formal as well as informal sources constitutes an adaptive coping strategy. Additionally, hope, spirituality, and humor were found to be adaptive coping responses. In contrast, substance abuse is considered a maladaptive coping response and may result in poorer health outcomes for the person. Other maladaptive coping responses include mental disengagement, denial, and avoidance (Sere Y., Roman, 2021).

#### *Violence Against Women in the Philippines*

According to the study of Violence Against Women in the Philippines, physical violence was described as being hit, slapped, kicked, or physically hurt by someone (Philippine

Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). The study found that women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence. Younger women ages 15–19 are less likely to have experienced physical violence compared to older women. Similar to the results of spousal violence, women with lower wealth are more likely to experience physical violence compared to those with more wealth. Among currently or previously married women, the most common perpetrators were their current or former husbands or partners. For the never-married women, the most common perpetrators of physical violence were a parent or stepparent (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018).

This study also mentioned that victims of intimate partner violence rarely pursue a criminal case against their abusive partner. Instead, they prioritize moving to a safer place and making new arrangements for their own work and their children's schools. Many victims are economically dependent on their abuser, which could also prevent them from leaving the relationship. The legal process is costly and time-consuming, both of which many victims cannot afford. Nonetheless, when women ultimately choose to seek government services for protection and justice, they face various problems and obstacles within the system that further discourage them from pushing through (Santos, 2009).

#### *Lived Experiences of Battered Women in Ozamiz City, Philippines*

Filipino women can also be victims of this domestic problem, especially since a Filipino family is patriarchal and expects wives to be submissive to their husbands (David, 1994; Hune & Nomura, 2003).

There are several factors associated with battered women. First, some husbands traditionally view their wives as mere possessions (Wallach et al., 2010). The males believe that family heads should be respected and served by their wives (Wallach et al., 2010). Second, the influence of substance abuse such as alcohol and prohibited drugs resulting in mental misconceptions proves to be unfavorable to women (Subodh et al., 2014; Wilson, Graham, & Taft, 2016). Third, physically abused women have a feeling of worthlessness as an indication of poor self-esteem. Battered women are usually prohibited by their husbands from interacting with friends and families or participating in social activities. Last, battered women believe that they cannot survive without their husbands, on whom their families rely for support. In this regard, family considerations prevail over the personal desires or interests of women or mothers (Estrellado & Loh, 2013; Jack, 2014; Loke, Wan, & Hayter, 2012).

Women could not undermine the welfare of families by putting an end to a marriage (Reich et al., 2014). One of the major problems among physically abused women is a lack of empowerment. Most battered women are unable to handle situations. Battered women believe that they have no control over their situation and consequently become submissive toward their abusers—the husbands (Cortes, 2013).

On the other hand, battered women may manifest Stockholm Syndrome, a condition that refers to "traumatic bonding" (Reina, Lohman, & Maldonado, 2014) and "terror" (Henriot, 2001) with one's abusive partner. This syndrome connotes a strong emotional attachment that is developed in a relationship defined by two reasons: inequality of power and irregularity of positive-negative regard. The inequality of power produces a power mechanism wherein the inferior and superior partners become progressively reliant on each other.

In a relationship where battering occurs, bodily and emotional abuse by the superior partner forges and upholds the inequality of power. The alternation of reinforcement and punishment creates a cohesive emotional attachment between the victim and the abuser. Battered women may have coped with the perceived inescapable violence by traumatically bonding with their abusers, as indicated by their verbalization of a profound love (Henriot, 2001; Reina et al., 2014).

According to Roeie Fajardo-Jarilla (2020), domestic violence is a long-standing and contentious issue in the Philippines. Despite having several laws protecting women and

children from violence and historically a strong movement for women's rights, Philippine society still largely regarded domestic violence as a "family problem" that can be settled in the confines of the home and did not see it as very urgent to rescue and protect the victims of abuse.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods and procedures employed in the course of the study. It specifically includes the research method, participants to the study, sampling procedures, instruments and validation of the instruments, data gathering procedures, as well as the treatment of the data.

#### *Research Method*

The researchers used a qualitative research method in the analysis of the life experiences of married women who are victims of domestic violence. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is the opposite of quantitative research, which involves collecting and analyzing numerical data for statistical analysis. It is commonly used in the humanities and social sciences, in subjects such as anthropology, sociology, education, health sciences, history, etc. (Pritha Bhandari, 2020).

Moreover, this research study applied the phenomenological research design, wherein it sought to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon and investigated the everyday experiences of human beings. It seeks to know the life experiences of married women who are victims of domestic violence and provides deeper understanding and insights regarding their life experiences in domestic violence. According to Alvesson & Skoldberg (2009), the phenomenological perspective would give us the focus that we wanted on the interviewees' own, lived experiences, while in combination with the hermeneutic perspective, it would facilitate the analysis process as it would give us the opportunity to section the material and look at "the parts and the whole" separately as well as getting a better understanding of the connections between them.

#### *Population and Locale of the Study*

The participants that were chosen as the participants in this study are those legally married women who encountered domestic violence in the province of Ilocos Norte, specifically, two (2) participants from Dingras, Ilocos Norte, two (2) from Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte, one (1) from Piddig, Ilocos Norte, and one (1) from Vintar, Ilocos Norte.

The researchers used purposive sampling to look for in-depth knowledge and detailed information from the chosen six (6) respondents to know and assess their experiences regarding the issues of being abused. Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling. This sampling method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives, (Kassiani Nikolopoulou, 2022)

#### *Research Instrument*

The main instrument that the researchers used to collect data from the participants was an interview guide. It was used to collect data on the domestic violence encountered by married women, their coping mechanisms, and further, the ways their husbands reconcile with them after being abused. In addition, an audio voice recorder device was also utilized during the interview process to record all the verbal responses of the participants in order for the researchers to double-check if there were any statements that might be useful to the study. According to Conrad (2001), in-depth interviews are a central method of qualitative data collection, characterized by the researcher asking participants a series of open-ended questions or raising topics for discussion. The goal here is to obtain narrative in the participant's own words. Researchers often use tape recorders or similar devices and then transcribe the tapes into written textual data. One of the benefits of this kind of

interviewing is that it allows the researcher to be sensitive to participants and adjust the interview to new paths in the research inquiry; in-depth interviews have been used to study experience.

#### *Data Gathering Procedure*

In the conduct of this study, the research adviser approved the letter and interview guide questions that were prepared by the researchers for the conduct of their study. After receiving approval, the researchers handed the letter to the participants and requested their consent as well as the time that would work best for them. An interview was then conducted thereafter, and it was done privately. The confidentiality of the information acquired was then discussed with the support of significant studies and theories. After that, the researchers analyzed, interpreted, and translated the data they had collected.

#### *Treatment of Data*

The researchers used thematic analysis in analyzing the data gathered. According to the University of Auckland, School of Psychology (n.d.), thematic analysis (TA) is a widely used qualitative data analysis method. It is one of a cluster of methods that focus on identifying patterns of meaning across a data set. Researchers used this type of analysis as a means to gain insights and knowledge from the data they gathered. The method enabled the researchers to develop a deeper appreciation for the group or situation they were researching.

It can be used to analyze qualitative information and to systematically gain knowledge; thus, the following scheme was adopted:

*Transcript of the Data.* The data gathered from the answers of the participants. Data from conversations on an audio recorder and a written record was transcribed.

*Coding of Data.* The researchers encode the data using electronic devices. The researchers compare and find similarities in the answers of the participants.

*Code Validation.* To ensure the integrity of the codes, that they have not been misinterpreted, and that they are free of researcher bias, the ideas developed were reviewed by more than one person. The researcher read and re-read the data, double-checking the codes for consistency and validation. The integration of the codes from the data becomes the codebook from which themes emerge.

*Themes/Frameworks identification from the codebook.* The researchers were able to identify the themes, sub-themes, and patterns that emerged from the coded data. Themes that emerge from patterns, such as conversation topics and vocabulary.

*Information consolidation, finalize theme name.* The researchers finalized the name of each theme, wrote its description, and illustrated it with a few quotations from the original text to help communicate its meaning to the reader.

#### *Ethical Considerations*

As the researchers conducted this study, they took measures to protect participants from harm, including creating an informed consent form (Appendix A). Participants were given a copy for their own safekeeping and reference. They were also informed that participation in this study is on a voluntary basis. They had the right and power to refuse to answer any questions and were able to refuse at any time during the interview. When the participants agreed to participate in the study, the researchers went to every participant's house to explain in detail the purpose of the study. They were to be interviewed in their available time, and they were asked to choose a private and quiet venue that was convenient for them. They then made an appointment to meet with the participants to conduct the in-depth interview in the place they had chosen.

Participants were informed of the consent process and of their right to confidentiality. The participants were informed that all documents produced from the interview would be confidential. Transcripts were stored in a locked cabinet at one of the researcher's houses, to which he only had access. The audio record and transcripts were destroyed and deleted after

the study was completed, which is when this study was accepted by the school as meeting the requirement for completion.

It is also important to note that the participants were not provided with any monetary compensation, gifts, or anything else that would cause them to give biased and untruthful answers.

#### IV. PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter focuses on presenting the data gathered from the participants as well as detailing the codes and themes that emerged from their answers. It also includes the interpretation and analysis of the collected data.

##### *Types of Domestic Violence Encountered by Married Women*

The victims of domestic violence experienced a multitude of abuses from their spouses. Based on the data gathered, the following themes were established as to the type of violence endured by married women:

##### *Physical Assault*

Physical assault occurs when an individual intentionally uses force or violence upon an intimate partner or other family member, attempting to cause injury, harm, or pain. (Melinda & Jeane, 1999).

The participants claimed that they were often physically assaulted by their partner. This includes the batter, smack, and thump. Participants also disclose that alcohol exacerbates the aggressive behaviors of their partner and the oppressive maltreatment they experience.

This is supported by the statements of participant number 2.

*“Physical mabartektay dangdangrannak. kugtaran ken nukua”*      *lalo no asawak, Dannugen, tilpakennak*

(I was physically abused. Especially when he is drunk, he always hurts me. I was punched, kicked and slapped.)

Participant number 6 also claimed that;

*“Physical nukua, dandanugen ken tungtongpaennak no masursuron”*

(When he is extremely angry, he will hit and slap me, causing grievous bodily harm.)

In addition, participant number 3 stated:

*“Nang-nangruna dayta physical kaniak maam ta pinang bugbugbogna kaniak naapektaran daytoy physical ko...kanayon nga disuanna latta daytoy bagbagik maam basta kabilennak”*

(Especially physical abuse, ma'am. The way he beats me affected me physically. There is always physical harm every time he beats me.)

There are several factors associated with battered women. Most commonly, the influence of substances such as alcohol and prohibited drugs results in mental misconceptions. (Subodh et al., 2014; Wilson, Graham, & Taft, 2016). It is not surprising that most of the victims of physical abuse in marriages are women. There is a great discrepancy in physical strength between couples, and women are often at a disadvantage. In addition, given that the abusers are under the influence of substances like alcohol, it would be hard to reason with them as

their judgment is impaired and they have little to no self-control. The findings show that physical assault cannot be avoided when it comes to abuse; this violence is always encountered by victims of abuse.

##### *Emotional Distress*

Domestic violence comes in many different forms. Sometimes it is not enough that these types of occurrences stop at physical violence; they often also involve the abuser lashing out and barraging the victim with hurtful words and threats. This type of abuse causes significant mental suffering or distress that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling. Persons affected by domestic violence are often fearful, anxious, stressed, and depressed. Emotional distress can occur when someone places someone "in fear of continued harassment." (Amy Edwards, 2023).

The participants detailed that their spouses had frequent violent verbal outbursts. When they are discouraged from their vices and when their requests are denied, it often results in yelling in anger and the use of profanities and invectives.

This result is further proven by the statements of participant number 4.

*“Anawaek nukua ket pagsawsaw-annak met nukua iti dakesen kada bugka-bogkawannak nukuan ma'am, pagsawsaw-annak iti dakes kada ilunlunodnak “dika pelang matay” “nagado nga masaom” kunkonana nukua ma'am, isu met nukua diay agib-ibitnak nga adaywan isuna”*

(When I try to dissuade him, he starts to shout curses at me. He curses me and tells me to "die." I always cry whenever I hear him shouting at me.)

Further, participant number 5 stated:

*“Pinang bagbagana iti madi nasisita a banag pinang lunlunod na kanyak kada bugka bugkawan nak nukwa”*

(Saying inappropriate words to me, the way he wishes me misfortune, and always yelling at me.)

Lastly, participant number 6 revealed:

*“no masursuron ket pukpokawannak nga permi nga agsasaot dakes lalo no mabartek isuna”*

(When he is angry, he yells at me, cursing me, especially when he is drunk.)

Domestic abuse is defined as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading, and violent behavior (Women's Aid, 2022). Being exposed to a constant tirade of threats and malicious remarks, especially from a spouse, can cause severe emotional distress. Emotional abuse can feel as destructive and damaging as physical abuse and can severely impact a person's mental health. The victims often cower in fear, unsure of what they need to do, and more often just cry as a response to the abuse that they are experiencing. The victims not only suffer physical harm but also emotional harm where it also affects their normal way of thinking that is caused by the trauma they have experienced, as supported by the study Entitled: "Emotional Abuse and Mental Health of Women in Abusive Marriage in Communities in Gwagwalada, Federal Capital" Emotional abuse can be equally detrimental to the health of a victim as physical abuse (Adikwu, V.O., 2017). Physical and emotional abuse can elicit comparable reactions, but psychological abuse can be more difficult to identify and even flee from, and victims of emotional abuse frequently receive little assistance in their efforts to leave the partner who is assaulting them due to a lack

of supporting information (Crozier, 2017). Emotional distress at home among the many possible causes of emotional distress are personal or environmental factors, such as experiencing relationship problems with partners, other family members, or friends undergoing major life changes, such as moving home or having a child, living in a neighborhood that faces inequity and a deprivation of resources, having a low income, experiencing discrimination, feeling lonely or isolated, having debt, or having an unhealthy lifestyle.

#### *Deprivation of Financial Support*

Financial abuse is a lesser-discussed tool used in abusive relationships. It is not as well known or understood as other forms of abuse, but it is actually very common. In fact, abusive relationships also involve some kind of financial abuse. An abuser may take control of all the money, withhold it, and conceal financial information from the victim (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2017).

According to the participants, their husbands are unwilling to provide sustenance for the family, or on the rare occasions that they give financial assistance, it is often insufficient. participant

The result proves this through the statement of participant 5, who stated:

***“no ipadasko dumawat  
ibagak nga para kadagitoy masapol  
balay kunak ket ungtan nak nukua  
maam ngem mangted met nukua nu  
dadduma ngem bassit lang nukwa”***

(He gets angry when I try to ask for money for our daily needs. Sometimes he gives, but not even enough.)

Deprivation of financial support as economic abuse was also supported by the statement of participant number 2, as she stated:

***“haannak nukua ikikkan ti kuartak  
no makasueldo isuna tapno igatang  
ti agserbi kuma ditoy balay”***

(He doesn't give me money after he receives his salary, even just to pay for the expenses in the house.)

Based on the statements of the participants, their experience also involves creating economic dependence on the perpetrator. It is characterized by male partners who have absolute control over financial resources, keep financial resources, or refuse to contribute financially to their female partners, thus leading women to complete dependence for their most basic needs and satisfaction.

One of the greatest impacts of economic abuse is that it creates economic dependency on the perpetrator. Studies have consistently demonstrated that economic dependence is the primary obstacle victims' face in attempting to leave abusive relationships (Kim & Gray, 2008). It is unfortunate that victims of abuse are often treated as hostages. Their abusers often have leverage over them to keep them complacent and obedient, and in most cases, denial of basic needs and not providing financial support is another way abusers show their power. It can also be observed that most of these types of abuse happen in low-income households where the husband works and the wife is stuck at home taking care of the kids. It just creates a trap where the victim has no one else to depend on but the abuser and has no other way of providing for herself or her kids.

#### *Coping Mechanisms of Abused Married Women*

Living with domestic violence is exceedingly complicated, so victims develop coping strategies that enable them and their families to function in everyday life. Some coping strategies serve the purpose of keeping the victim and their children as safe as possible, even under the constant looming threat of abuse, while others serve as a distraction and repress the maltreatment that they are going through.

#### *Seeking help from others*

Sometimes it can be hard to recognize and admit that someone is in an abusive relationship, but once all the tell-tale signs of abuse keep happening, it is important to know that help is available. Fortunately, some of the participants that we talked with had someone to talk to and ask for assistance from others. This is supported by the statements of participants 1, 3, and 4.

As participant number 1 stated:

***“Mapmapannak nukua agpapa  
doktor idi maam. Ammonatay  
doktor nga mabugbugbognak  
ma'am ta kanayonnak mapan agpa-  
checkup kaniana no  
dangdangrannak tay asawak”***

(I consult my doctor every time I need medication for my wound. The doctor is aware of my abuse issues and the fact that my spouse has harmed me repeatedly.)

Further, participant number 3 said:

***“Mapmapanak kenni kabsatko  
makisarsarita ken agpapaisalakanak  
ta agkakaasideg kami iti balay”***

(I asked for help from my siblings and neighbors.)

Then participant number 4 corroborates and mentioned:

***“Agpa-patulongnak met kadaydiay nga  
karrubami kasi isu ti kanayon nga  
mang-tultulong kada mangbagbaga  
kaniak no ania't ubraek no haan met ket  
isuda iti mangpakpakalma kanyak no  
diay permi iti butengko nukuan ma'am,  
isuda iti umuna a pagtarayak nukua  
ma'am”***

(I asked for help from my neighbor because she always helped me, gave advice on what to do, and consoled me every time I felt afraid.)

It is always hard to describe and let other people know about abusive situations, but asking for help and seeking guidance from anyone, may it be a family member, friend, or neighbor, is the first step in trying to break the cycle of abuse that they are personally experiencing. Although it is unfortunate to think that the abuse is so grave that someone has to go to the hospital for it, it is also good that they have a professional checking their physical well-being and that they care enough about themselves to get their injuries treated.

The study of Sere, Y. (2021), entitled "Coping with the Experience of Intimate Partner Violence Among South African Women: Systematic Review and Meta-Synthesis," stated that women use many coping strategies to manage substantial stress, escape reality, leave the violence in their lives, and establish safety for themselves. The most common forms of coping include having the victims of domestic violence talk to others after the abuse. This implies that the victims of domestic violence here in Ilocos Norte seek help from those they know and trust the most, who can help them lessen the pain, maltreatment, and suffering that they experienced from their husband. In the Help-Seeking Theory, it suggests that people follow a series of predictable steps to seek help for their inadequacies, it is a series of well-ordered and purposeful cognitive and behavioral steps, each leading to specific types of solutions. This further implies that victims of domestic violence mostly seek help from their family, friends, and neighbor.

#### *Distancing oneself from harm*

According to Layton, (2019) distancing oneself from harm encompasses actions and precautions taken to safeguard oneself from potential dangers or risks, ensuring a safer and more secure environment.

Distancing oneself from harm is one of the coping mechanisms of married women who have experienced domestic



violence from their husbands. Victims choose to distance themselves and get away from the perpetrators as soon as possible in fear of another one occurring.

According to the statement of participant number 4, she said:

***“Diay adaywak isuna ma’am  
innak nukua sadiay kuartomi”***

(I immediately distanced myself from him by going to our room.)

To add, participant number 5 mentioned that:

***“Awan, baybay-ak pelang idikua,  
no ngamin saritaan ti ado a tattao  
ket kaslang ad-adda makagulo”***

(I just forget what happened and let him be. It’s hard when other people start talking about the situation.)

A victim of abuse always feels ashamed. Oftentimes, they hide the abuse from other people and just keep it to themselves, like what happened with the participants. For some, it is hard to admit that they are being abused, and they often go out of their way to act like nothing happened in order to protect their family from embarrassment from other people, especially spreading rumors. This implies that the victims of domestic violence who experienced physical abuse do not want to leave their relationship to make themselves safe from harm; instead, they distance themselves and wait until the situation gets better until it ends in reconciliation with their partner. This is contrast with the findings of the study of Sere (2021) who found out that the victims of domestic violence leave the violence in their lives; leaving a violent relationship might be a good solution to not encounter any forms of violence anymore. If one person is in an unsafe relationship, he or she might be thinking of leaving.

#### *Condoning to keep family intact*

According to Raine, A., Loeber, R., (2006) condoning to keep family intact may involve disregarding or downplaying issues or conflicts for the sake of maintaining familial bonds.

There are many reasons why victims stay in a relationship, but the most common is staying for the children’s sake. Victims stay in fear of losing their children or to protect their children from harm and, in turn, tolerate the abuse they are experiencing.

The theme is justified from the statement of participant number 1, as she said:

***“Panpanunotek lattan dagita  
annakkon a babassit pay”***

(I just think of my children, especially since they are still young.)

In addition, participant number 5 states that;

***“Pagpasensia-ak latta  
maigapu kadagita annakmi ken  
haan nga mawara ti pamiliami”***

(I just endure the abuse due to my children since I don’t want my family to be broken.)

It is not uncommon for abused married women to prioritize the well-being of their children. It almost comes to a point where they rationalize the abuse and let it slide without consequences in fear of anything that happens to their children, whether it be physical retaliation, financial instability, or growing up in a broken family. It is not difficult to understand how leaving an abusive relationship may be an extremely challenging struggle for a woman who has been assaulted, given the brutality of the physical assaults of intimate partner violence. However, based on the data gathered by the researchers from the participants, they chose to stay in that abusive relationship in order to keep their family intact and

especially for the sake of their children. The result implies that the victims of domestic abuse still chose to stay with their abusive partner repeatedly, even when there is an opportunity to go and leave their partner. They do not want to leave their partner no matter how many times they mistreated them; they are used to their partner doing that to them, which is why even when there is an opportunity to leave their husband, they do not attempt to do it. They do this to prevent their family from being broken.

According to the study of Ondicho, T. G., (2013) entitled "Battered Women: A Socio-Legal Perspective of Their Experience in Nairobi," most respondents do not seek legal assistance because they are afraid of the consequences of their complaints; they are afraid that it might result in marital conflict, a fine, and imprisonment, which many victims despised because it might have a negative effect on the well-being of the entire household where divorce or separation may result, which can affect the development of their children. The victims were aware of the gravity of the situation, but they are still determined to keep their family intact just to make sure that their children will not have a miserable future.

The finding is also supported by the Learned Helplessness Theory, wherein this study states that the abused women do not attempt to make any changes to the situation where they are being maltreated by their husbands, even if there is already an opportunity for them to avoid or prevent that situation.

#### *Disregarding traumatic experiences*

Many of the victims continue to act normal and do their daily tasks in order to distract themselves and repress any traumatic experiences they may be having. They keep themselves busy to forget bad experiences and turn to work and childcare. Participants of the study continue to work in order for them to forget the dreadful experience; they also resume household responsibilities by disregarding abusive experiences from their husbands and keeping themselves busy to forget bad experiences. Thus, disregarding traumatic experiences is one of the coping mechanisms of the victims of domestic violence in order for them to cope with their everyday lives.

As corroborated by the statement of participant number 1, she said:

***“Ket ti ub-obrak pay a maysa tapnon  
maawan ken diak malagip dagitoy  
inub-obra na kaniak ket  
makiburborasnak iti bawang  
dagitay agpabpaburas ditoy bariomi  
maam”***

(What I do to distract myself from thinking about the abuses I experienced is I helped in the harvesting of garlic from my neighbor’s farm.)

Participant number 2 also added:

***“Ituloyko agubra latta nukua  
dagidiay maubra ditoy uneg balayen  
nu kasdiay a malpasnak a dangran  
kada pagsawsaw-an”***

(After the verbal and physical abuse, I received, what I did to cope was just continue doing household chores.)

Further, participant number 3 mentioned:

***“Innak aglaba kadagitay  
karrubami a kayat na iti agpalaba  
tapnon iti kasta, ket malipatak  
dagitay inub-obra na kaniak no  
dangdangrannak ken tapno adda  
pay pagsapulan payen iti kuartan  
isu innak aglablaba nukuan”***

(I do laundry in my neighborhood to forget what he did to me and earn money for our basic needs.)

***“Lalo ket adda dagidiay ubbing a mangliwiwa kaniak. Is-istimarek latta nukua isudan tapno maawan sakit nakemko ken asawak”***

(I try to distract myself by taking care of my children and forget about the resentment I feel towards my husband.)

Then, participant number 6 added:

***“Innak latta sumagad sango balayen kada agdaldalos latta ditoy balay ken innak latta nukua makitungtong karruba. no adda agpatulong kasla koma agpadaya ti arubayan innak latta met tumulong, isu kasla isu latta ti pangliwliwakon”***

(I just clean our backyard, do household chores, or go to our neighbor and talk to them. Sometimes, if there are events or occasions in the community, I just go and help. These are my ways to cope.)

The result implies that participants just do things to distract them, disregard the trauma that they went through, and continue to act normal for their kids and friends. Everyday things are a way to repress the awful abuse they experienced at home.

Despite the harmful experiences that the married women faced, they still managed to endure the pain that their husbands caused them. They were able to survive in that difficult situation, although they suffered maltreatment from their partners, which resulted in physical injuries and affected their mental health (Sere, 2021).

Victims of domestic violence cope by seeking assistance from others, distancing themselves from harm, condoning keeping family intact, and disregarding traumatic experiences. Through these coping mechanisms, it gives them the hope to live in their everyday lives even though they suffered grave harm from their partners. It lessens their burden of their situation and keeps them motivated to be stronger for themselves and for their family.

#### *Reconciliation with Partner*

According to Karen., Broenus, (2008) reconciliation refers to the restoration of fractured relationships by overcoming grief, pain and anger. A societal process that involves mutual acknowledgement of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behavior into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace.

In the aftermath of harm or grief, reconciliation aims to mend the connection. Their husbands try to reconcile with their partners through avoidance behavior, viewing the acts of battering as normal happenings, financial dependence, resolving through money, tolerating all his beatings, overlooking faults, and acting like it is not a big deal. When their husbands first approach them, everything returns to normal, and they act like nothing happened. There are also instances where the victims turn to their partners first when they need something, particularly when it comes to money or when their spouses provide them food. As a result, the participants decided to get back together with their partners.

#### *Initiate Communication*

According to First, M. B., (2013) Initiation of communication refers to the nonprompted and purposeful (i.e., intentional) communication between conversational partners that involves the transmission of a message. The message may be conveyed nonverbally, using a combination of eye contact, gestures, and vocalizations, or verbally, using a single phrase or a string of words.

After an abusive episode, the victim will often have to be very careful around the perpetrator. When things have settled down, the abuser overlooks faults and acts like it is not a big deal. The victim easily forgives the abuser with no

confrontation. When their spouses reach out to them, they are absolved of consequences or more often when the victim feels the need to approach their abuser in order to reconcile either by initiating conversation, giving into demands, and even offering money. This notion is established in the statements of the participants.

According to participant number 2, she mentioned:

***“No met makasangpeten paguniannak nukua isu paguniak met nukua isuna”***

(When he finally got home, he talked to me first, so I also responded.)

Participant number 3 added:

***“Sakami lang agmayatto manen no adda maitedko kaniana a kuarta nga aggapo sadiay paglablaba-ak”***

(We are good again if I give him the money I earned from doing laundry.)

Also, participant number 4 said:

***“Paguniannak met latta nukuan isu met diay paguniak met nga kasla awan napasamaken. adda met diay siak umuna a mangpaguni ma’am no adda diay masapol ko met ibaga no haan ket ipaubra”***

(I just responded as if nothing had happened when he talked to me. There are times that it is I who initiates the conversation because I need to say something or ask him to do something.)

After experiencing abuse, victims want to feel a sense of normality, they try their best to act normal and disregard what happened to them. The result of the study implies that by simply initiating a communication on both parties, the issue of abuse is swept under the rug as they try to act like nothing happened.

#### *Remorseless*

Every relationship that experiences domestic violence frequently goes through an ongoing pattern of behavior that makes it difficult for the victim to leave. In an effort to "make up" for the violence, the abuser could express regret, purchase gifts, or show more attention. A lot of people will make assurances that they will alter, that they will quit abusing others, or that it won't happen again. In order to convince the victim to continue the connection, certain guarantees are given. (Jennifer, Focht., & Amanda, Chu., 2020).

In some cases, however, offenders will not acknowledge what they have done and just continue on as normal. These cases are exhibited in the statements of the interviewed victims.

As participant number 2 stated:

***“Kasla awan lang kasi no malpasnak a dangran, tumalaw isuna, wenna mapan makiinom iti karrubami”***

(It is as if nothing happened; after hurting me, he leaves the house or goes out to have a drink with our neighbor.)

Participant number 1 added:

***“Haan nga agsor-sorry maam, ngem aguni met latta nukua ken paguniak met latta maam, ket daydiayen maam mayat kaminto manen”***

(He doesn't apologize; he just approaches and talks to me, and I respond and act as normal.)

Further, participant number 6 said:

*"No dadduma umaynak latta nukua asitanganen sanak pagunian. Adda pay nukua diay pangay-ayonan a gatangen nukua mapan nukua gumatang iti merienda mi ditoy balay sanak ayaban a mangan"*

(He comes and talks to me and brings some snacks for us to eat, which is his way of making peace with me.)

Despite promises that it "will never happen again," the abuser will not change in most cases, and the only way to stop the abuse is for the victim to end the relationship. A remorseless person feels no guilt; they do not feel bad at all, even if they have done something terrible. When someone is remorseless, he or she has no sympathy for those who have been hurt. Everyone makes mistakes and unintentionally hurts their partner, according to Jess Costello (2021). However, someone who lacks the emotional maturity to accept responsibility for their mistakes may try to blame something for everything, like being drunk or stress.

## V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the research summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study about the life experiences of married women who are victims of domestic violence.

### Summary

The study aims to have an in-depth analysis of the life experiences of a married woman who suffered pain, injury, and maltreatment that resulted in domestic abuse in Ilocos Norte. The findings present that married women lead different lives; each has their own problems, but battered women are living life in hard mode.

In this study, the researchers found out the different types of abuse that the participants experience based from the following themes emerged: 1) Physical assault, 2) Emotional Distress, and 3) Deprivation of Financial Support.

Married women cope with the trauma they faced and provide multiple insights into coping mechanism in order to gain a sense of normality in their everyday lives. Among these are themes: 1.) Seeking assistance from others; 2) Distancing oneself from harm; 3) Condoning to keep family intact; 4) Disregarding traumatic experiences. More often than not, they choose to distract themselves with chores, work, and taking care of their children in order to forget the abuse that they have experienced.

One of these reconciliation processes occurs when the victim or spouse 1) Initiate communication, and the spouse approaches them like nothing happened and is 2) Remorseless. Based on the interviews, after the abuse, their husbands would leave the house and return like nothing happened and approach them to talk again, without even any confrontation or dealing with the consequences.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the married women who are victims of domestic violence experienced various types of violence, such as physical assault, emotional distress, and financial deprivation. However, despite the burden that they experienced, they were able to cope. Moreover, most of the partners of the participants did nothing and asked for money to reconcile with their wives after the commission of domestic violence. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there was a need to develop an action plan in order to overcome the abuse that the married women experienced. A plan that can help them cope with the trauma they faced and help them heal from their past experiences physically, mentally, and financially.

### Recommendations

From the aforementioned findings and conclusion, the following are hereby recommended:

- The Department of Social Welfare and Development may create a health care unit exclusive to victims of domestic violence that can provide physical and psychological treatment.
- The Department of Social Welfare and Development may coordinate with the Technical Educational Skill Development Authority to train and enhance the skills of those victims of violence in order for them to generate additional streams of income.
- The Non-Governmental Organization may organize a group wherein women can share their experiences and stories to inspire and motivate their fellow victims.
- The Department of Social Welfare and Development and counselors may provide more choices, such as which welfare programs they may continue with and methods to ensure that women and their children are safeguarded when they do decide to leave an abusive home.
- All concerned agencies of the government may adopt the action plan created by the researchers of this study to bring significant changes to the lives of the victims of violence and to have a domestic violence free country.

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*Proposed Action Plan to Help Married Women to Overcome Domestic Violence: "ILOCANA A NAUNDOR"*

*Rationale*

Domestic violence stems from a desire to gain and maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Domestic violence can be mental, physical, economic, or sexual in nature. Violence against women is very out of control in our society. It should be noted in such matters that there are no layers in society that are free from violent influences in one way or another. It is important for us to realize that violence should never be the first choice to resolve a conflict because violence is never the answer.

This action plan showcases strategies that can be adopted to help victims. These activities are part of a holistic physical, emotional, social, and mental approach that aims to provide support to victims as they transition into their lives. It is expected that adoption of the activities with the help of various agencies mentioned in the plan could bring significant changes to the lives of the women affected by violence.

This action plan presents strategies and activities that help women cope with the trauma they face because of violence. Further, it also presents possible partners who can help the victims in various areas that might help them heal from their past experiences. This action plan has objectives that may help the victims of domestic violence physically, mentally, and economically.

*Objectives*

- Orient women on their rights as individuals and provide assistance to women who are victims of domestic violence.
- Provide education programs that can enhance the skills of every woman and help them start a new life.
- To establish a functional group where the members are composed of those who have been victims of domestic violence and create an organization where victims can be members.
- To encourage the victims of domestic violence to share their life experiences when it comes to domestic violence through a quarterly forum and create a hotline wherein women can share their stories to inspire and uplift the spirit of others.

*Strategies*

- Coordinate with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Philippine National Police to conduct a quarterly symposium discussing the rights of every person.
- Coordinate with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, PNP, and DSWD to organize skill enhancement training for married women who are victims of domestic violence.
- Coordinate with the DSWD and volunteers in order to create a functional group composed of married women who are victims of domestic violence.
- Coordinate with the DSWD, Women of Violence, and Speakers to have a quarterly forum discussing their experiences at the hands of their abusers and for them to uplift the spirits of one another.