

# Lifting the Abused and Disparaged: Lived Experiences of Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD)

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of Chief Investigators of Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) in the Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) District of Bohol. Specifically, sought answers to the following questions: the experiences of the informants, strategies employed in addressing the problems encountered, and aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of service in handling cases of domestic violence?

Utilized was the phenomenological and qualitative approach in this study employing methods as interviews as key process in data gathering. They were ten selected chief investigators of WCPD section, four of them had been interviewed individually and the remaining six are the members of the Focused Group Discussion (FGD). It is a conceptual convenience sampling where they chosen from the municipal police station that have most populated municipality and more cases of domestic violence were reported. The study locale is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District of Bohol and focused on the identified police station: Bilar, Garcia Hernandez, Jagna, Mabini, Alicia, Candijay, Carmen, Guindulman, Pilar, and Sierra Bullones. I used an Interview Guide aided with the voice recorder for the basis of transcribing the response of the informants. Utilized the Colaizzi's method a phenomenological analysis procedure in analyzing the responses of the informant during the conduct of interview.

For the experiences of the informants as Chief Investigators of Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) themes formulated were positive experiences: Fulfillment in Restored Justice and Elation in Victims Gratitude. Negative experiences: Disillusionment in Abandoned Cases and Exasperation from Outsider Condemnation. For the strategies employed by the informants, formulated themes are: Illumination through Public Mobilization, Protective Altruism, Discretion in Sensitive Disclosure and Resilience Through Empowerment. For the aspirations of the informants, themes are: Procuring Resources for Advocacy, and Revitalizing Proficiency.

It is suggested that in order to avoid repetition of cases desistance and victimization, perpetrator must undergo several community service and series of lecture, enhance victim support program through budget allocation and establishment of facility and provide additional program like skills training and livelihood program to support nonearning victims of domestic violence in generating income.

**Keywords:** Criminal Justice, Lived Experiences, Chief WCPD Investigator, Phenomenology, 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District of Bohol, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined Gender-Based Violence as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women. It includes threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Also, it includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, the threat of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. In the analysis of World Health Organization (WHO), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Medical Research Council in 2013, 30% of women has experienced abuse physically and sexually over 80 countries worldwide. Among

these countries, 24.6% belongs to West Pacific region, 37.7% in Southeast Asia and 37% within Eastern Mediterranean area (World Health Organization [WHO], 2016).

The Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) was established by law to administer cases involving crimes against chastity, sexual harassment, abuses committed against women and children, and other similar offenses. It covers the different abuses within the smallest society in the community, which is the family. In other words, domestic violence refers to violations against women and children. In addition, it showed that family, economic, and social factors already occurred in the community that caused the existence of violence against women and children in different settings (Bernarte et al., 2018).

Violence against women occurs also in families, which is the building block of the community. Due to different factors, this also affects how the society sees women and how the society works. We recommend establishing studies involving how the family setting contributes in the rising cases of violence among women within the household and how it can be eliminated. Home should be a safe place for women and their families. It is significant to explore more about violence against women to formulate much stronger strategies to combat this issue.

There is a gap with regards in mitigating the issue of domestic violence in as the victims who file a case in the proper authority because of the abuse and violent acts from their partner but before the case will brought to the prosecutor's office, victims will file a desistance in order to discontinue the case file against their partner.

As a criminology instructor, I got inspired to conduct this study in order to explore the lived experiences of Chief Investigators assigned in the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD); how they handle cases against abuses and violence; to determine some intervention program offered by the authority as well as the government to address the issue of domestic violence. The researcher can share this study with the students, community, law enforcer and even to the interventionist "social worker" so that they will cooperate each other to strengthen program, and enhance awareness campaign against domestic violence to have a better and safer place to live.

## **Theoretical Background**

This study is anchored on the Self-efficacy of Albert Bandura (1977) supported by the Competence Motivation Theory by Susan Harter (1978) and the Team Performance by Bruce Tuckman (1965).

The self-efficacy theory explains that individual's belief in their ability to influence outcomes through their actions. It plays a key role in motivation, learning, and emotional well-being by shaping how people face challenges, persist, and recover from setbacks. High self-efficacy fosters confidence, while low self-efficacy may lead to avoidance or fear of failure. Bandura (1977) identified four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social encouragement, and emotional regulation. These factors shape personal confidence and resilience, making self-efficacy crucial across fields like education, health, and organizational development (Bandura, 1997).

The Competence Motivation theory suggests that people are motivated by a desire to demonstrate competence in meaningful tasks. Success and positive feedback boost self-esteem and drive further engagement, while failure or lack of recognition diminishes motivation. The theory highlights the role of self-perception, social validation, and supportive environments in fostering growth and has been applied in fields like psychology, education, and relationships (Harter, 1978)

The Team Performance Model outlines five stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Introduced in 1965 and revised with Jensen in 1977 the model shows how teams evolve as they establish goals, manage conflicts, build trust, and focus on achieving objectives. The forming stage involves goal setting and role identification; storming includes conflicts as members compete for positions; norming establishes trust and collaboration through norms and roles; performing is characterized by focus and cohesion; and adjourning marks the team's disbandment after achieving its goals, often involving

reflection (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). This model highlights the importance of navigating each stage to strengthen group dynamics and performance.

### **Legal Basis**

The Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 (RA 9262) mandates the punong barangay to respond to reports of VAC and VAW, including by issuing a Barangay Protection Order. The Act also precludes the use of any form of amicable settlement in cases including mediation, settlement, conciliation, or arbitration.

Under the Philippine Constitution, Article II, Sec.12, “The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic and autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception”.

Child protection legislation centers on the Anti Child Abuse Law (Republic Act 7610) criminalizes child prostitution and other sexual abuse, child trafficking, child pornography, and other acts of neglect, abuse, cruelty, or exploitation. The Law also imposes mandatory reporting duties on the head of any private or public hospital, as well as the attending physician or nurse to report suspected child abuse within 48 hours. There is also a mandatory duty imposed on government workers including teachers, probation officers, law enforcement, and others whose work involves dealing with children.

### **Related Literature and Studies**

This article discusses how the criminal justice system often fails to properly address the complexities involved in domestic violence cases. It highlights the gaps in law enforcement and court procedures, suggesting a more victim-centered approach. The authors argue that many victims of domestic violence face significant barriers in accessing justice, including fear of retaliation and a lack of support services. They recommend specialized training for police officers and judicial staff to better understand the trauma experienced by victims. The article emphasizes the need for a coordinated response between the justice system and community support services (Bennett & Williams, 2018).

This study examines the role of male peer support in perpetuating violence against women, arguing that social networks often play a critical role in shaping abusive behaviors. It suggests that addressing male peer groups could be an essential strategy in preventing domestic violence. By understanding how these networks validate abusive behavior, the study calls for targeted interventions that challenge social norms and promote healthier relationships. The findings support educational programs aimed at altering the behavior of male adolescents and adults in social settings. The authors advocate for community-based prevention efforts that engage men in the fight against domestic violence (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2017).

The intersection of forced sex and intimate partner violence, providing critical insights into the severity of this form of abuse. The article demonstrates that victims of forced sex in domestic violence situations are at higher risk for physical injury and psychological trauma. The authors emphasize the need for law enforcement officers to be trained to recognize and respond to cases where forced sex is a part of intimate partner violence. Additionally, they highlight the importance of healthcare providers in identifying victims and offering appropriate interventions. Their study also calls for the development of comprehensive policies to address these issues within the context of intimate partner violence (Campbell & Soeken, 2020).

They explore the psychological and emotional effects of witnessing domestic violence on children. They argue that children exposed to intimate partner violence experience long-term consequences, including difficulties in forming relationships and increased risk of becoming victims or perpetrators themselves. The article emphasizes the need for a multidisciplinary approach in addressing the needs of children who have witnessed domestic violence. It advocates for mental health professionals, educators, and social workers to collaborate in providing trauma-informed care. The study also stresses the importance of early intervention to break the cycle of violence in families (Wolfe & Jaffe, 2017).

This review summarizes various intervention strategies for addressing intimate partner violence, highlighting their effectiveness and challenges. The authors discuss the limitations of traditional interventions, such as shelters and restraining orders, in providing long-term solutions for victims. They argue that integrated approaches, including legal, psychological, and social support, are more successful in addressing the complex needs of domestic violence survivors. The study also emphasizes the importance of offender accountability and rehabilitation as part of a holistic intervention strategy. The authors call for more research into innovative intervention programs that can effectively address both the immediate and long-term needs of victims (Rothman & Hathaway, 2019).

The 2017 Philippine National Demographic and Health Survey shows that 27% of ever-married women experienced physical, sexual, and/or emotional violence by a spouse during their lifetime and 15% experienced such violence in the past 12 months. Among all women (15-49 years old), 17% had experienced physical violence since age 15 with 73% of cases against ever-married women perpetrated by a current or former husband/partner and 51% of cases among never-married women perpetrated by a parent or step-parent. Among all women (15- 49 years old), 5% had experienced sexual violence and the most common perpetrators were current or former husbands, partners or boyfriends. Only 34% of women who experienced physical or sexual violence sought help through formal systems.

A recent national VAC study estimated at 62.8% lifetime prevalence of psychological violence primarily in the home or community environments (65.2% among boys and 60.4% among girls). This study found that two thirds (66.3%) of Filipinos experienced some form of physical violence during childhood (66.6% of boys and 62.5% among girls) and this was primarily in the home or at school usually in the context of punishment and discipline. Further, 21.5% of children (24.7% of boys and 18.2% of girls) between the ages of 13 and 18 years experienced some form of sexual violence during their childhood primarily in dating or home contexts. Approximately 60% of respondents experienced bullying or other peer violence (70.5% of boys and 59.8% among girls) and 43.8% experienced some form of cyberviolence during childhood (45.3% of boys and 42.2% of girls). Very few of these experiences of violence were disclosed or reported and few respondents knew where to seek help

A review of research at the NCTSN investigated the role of a use and trauma experienced by young people in the development of aggressive behaviour. They described the role of PTSD in perpetuating violence by disrupting the daily lives of young people and often triggering the reliving of trauma, thus impacting on behaviour. They also believed that exposure to violence and abuse and pervasive feelings of not being safe would encourage the use of aggressive behaviour in young people through adjusting to feelings of living under 'chronic threat'. It stated that "violent victimization is a warning signal for future violent offending (Siegfried et al., 2004).

A review of literature conducted by the NSPCC identified a wealth of research indicating children affected by abuse and neglect is at a greater risk of underperforming at school and achieving poor academic success. The studies reviewed were predominantly undertaken in America, with the review identifying that 'surprisingly little research' has been taken into this phenomenon in Britain, despite considerable interest in the academic achievement of young people (Cawson et al., 2002).

They review examines how men's attitudes and behaviors can contribute to preventing intimate partner violence. They discuss various prevention programs aimed at changing male attitudes toward violence and promoting healthier relationships. The study shows that engaging men in the prevention process can have a significant impact on reducing violence. It also underscores the importance of education in challenging traditional notions of masculinity that often normalize aggressive behaviors. The authors recommend that future efforts include more targeted approaches for male youth, as they are crucial in changing the culture of violence (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2019).

A literature review examines the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, particularly within the context of intimate partner violence. They highlight effective prevention strategies, including education programs for both men and women. The study points to the importance of bystander intervention and the role that community education can play in reducing instances of sexual violence in domestic settings. It also reviews

intervention programs for victims, emphasizing the importance of trauma-informed care. The authors call for more comprehensive policies that integrate prevention and support efforts for those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault (Koss & Gidycz, 2018).

The most convincing evidence of work on effectiveness of sexually abused children as a study by (Cohen et al., 1996), where pre-school children received 12 sessions of therapy in conjunction with their non-abusing parent

(Ramchandani & Jones, 2003).

The study focuses on early intervention programs that aim to mitigate the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children. They find that such programs, which include mental health support and social skill development, can significantly improve outcomes for children. The review shows that children who receive intervention at an early age are less likely to experience behavioral problems or become involved in future violence. The authors advocate for the integration of such programs in schools and community organizations. They also highlight the need for policymakers to allocate more resources to support these interventions (Tolan & Dodge, 2020).

This article investigates the growing use of technology in domestic violence, particularly in controlling and stalking behaviors. Baker and Lewis (2016) discuss how abusers use digital tools, such as smartphones and social media, to monitor, intimidate, and manipulate victims. The study highlights the need for law enforcement and victim support services to understand the role of technology in abuse. It advocates for new laws and policies to protect victims from tech-based harassment. The authors also call for more training for professionals working with victims of domestic violence to recognize and respond to tech-related abuse.

Described the physical problems associated with PTSD as a result of maltreatment. It can cause a child's stress adaptation system to be overwhelmed, resulting in overstimulation of the amygdala which may explain recurrent traumatic memories and excessive fear and emotional memory processing, increased dopamine levels contributing to overgeneralized fear, hyper vigilance, and paranoia. In addition, the norepinephrine system is one of the stress response systems in the body and when this system is affected it results in feelings of flight or fight in a child causing heightened anxiety, arousal, and hyper vigilance of potential dangers and elevated levels of cortisol, affecting the hippocampus and corpus collosum communication between both brain hemispheres. Children with PTSD have lower levels of serotonin, which is associated with symptoms such as aggression, suicide, obsessive and compulsive behaviours, and depression. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in children can lead to increased release of endogenous opiates, which can cause psychic numbing, avoidance of traumatic reminders, and diminished sensitivity to pain. Finally, the stress caused by PTSD suppresses the immune system resulting in other potential health problems or illnesses (Cohen et al., 2002).

The study explores the relationship between substance abuse and domestic violence, noting that substance use can exacerbate abusive behaviors. They review several studies showing that alcohol and drugs are often involved in domestic violence incidents, both as triggers and as coping mechanisms. The article stresses the importance of addressing substance abuse in domestic violence interventions, suggesting that integrated treatment programs are more effective than separate services. The authors also point out the importance of understanding how addiction affects both the perpetrator and the victim. They argue for a more comprehensive approach that addresses both the substance abuse and the violent behavior in these cases (Johnson & Dawson, 2021).

In the review of PTSD literature found that psychosocial problems included disorganized or insecure attachments, chronic and long-term anxiety that affects overall functioning of a child, social deficits, depression, and poor family functioning. They examined PTSD from a family-systems perspective and described contextual risk factors, the impact of PTSD on family subsystems, evidence supporting family systems interventions, and narrative family therapy (Bernardo & Pernice-Duca, 2010).

The effectiveness of victim support services in domestic violence cases. They found that comprehensive support programs, including psychological counseling and legal assistance, significantly improved survivors'

ability to recover and navigate the legal system. This highlights the importance of integrating multiple forms of support for victims to help them regain control of their lives after experiencing violence (Brown & McClelland, 2019).

A trauma-informed approach in domestic violence interventions led to better outcomes for victims. Their study revealed that law enforcement officers trained in trauma-informed care were more effective at gaining cooperation from survivors and ensuring they felt safe throughout the investigative process. This suggests the importance of law enforcement training in understanding the psychological impact of domestic violence (Davies et al., 2021).

The role of shelters in the recovery of domestic violence victims. They found that access to temporary shelters significantly reduced the likelihood of victims returning to abusive situations. Their findings emphasize the need for shelters to provide not only safety but also a supportive environment where victims can access legal advice and emotional support (Graham & Lutz, 2020).

The impact of legal advocacy for domestic violence victims. They found that victims who had access to legal advocacy services were more likely to pursue long-term legal action and report further abuse. This indicates that integrating legal support into domestic violence cases can increase the likelihood of successful prosecutions and long-term protection for survivors (Hughes & Jones, 2018).

A study on the role of education in preventing domestic violence, particularly in schools. They found that educating students about healthy relationships and the legal consequences of domestic violence helped to reduce the incidence of abuse later in life. This suggests that early intervention and education can be crucial in preventing domestic violence by shaping attitudes before they become ingrained (Smith & Hesse, 2017).

States that it is not known why the academic and intellectual performance of children who have experienced abuse is impaired, but speculates that intellectual impairment may be caused by the result of physical abuse, such as injury to the brain, or from malnourishment, dehydration, or failure to thrive caused by neglect. It is also believed that the range of psychiatric conditions that often occur as a result of abuse, such as PTSD, depression and anxiety, cognitive distortions, dissociation, low self-esteem, and a number of behaviours such as self-esteem and eating disorders, contribute to problems experienced at school (Widom, 2000).

Violence against children affects a significant portion of youth around the world. Emergencies and natural disasters escalate the risk due to weakened child protection systems and disruption of preventive mechanisms. Most families affected by natural disasters, especially those in lower socioeconomic status, face greater social and economic pressure. The families that are more vulnerable to loss of food and shelter commit violence against children more frequently.

On the other hand, while the rate of violence increases in emergencies, the reported rate of violence is less than the actual rate due to lack of required infrastructure and reporting mechanisms. The emergency housing increased risk of some types of child abuse. The history of exposure to violence, parental substance abuse, poverty, and child labor were predictors of increased violence against children in emergency situations. Sexual violence against girls after conflicts and physical violence against boys after emergencies are common forms of violence. Poverty as another predictor exposes children to more violence due to limited family economic resources and support. Given the identified predictors of violence, humanitarian organizations can come closer to providing appropriate plans to reduce the risk during and post disaster (Seddighi et al., 2021).

It demonstrated that children who were victims of abuse presented worse cognitive function and deficits in motor skills, expression and language reception during their growth. Healthcare professionals therefore have a social commitment towards detecting and notifying suspected cases of child abuse, and should be prepared to identify it. The case presented here has only evolved for 18 months, but apparently does not present any developmental deficit (Prasad et al., 2005).

Team Resilience During Team Development Working with Persons Who Committed Sexual Offenses” claimed the themes that emerged were: connection as the cornerstone of team resilience; leadership as a source

of trauma or resilience; arousal as a trigger for intrusiveness and avoidance; shaping and norming as the most resilient stages; storming as the main trauma stage; and performing and complacency (Mulholland, 2020).

Neglect is the most common form of abuse that significantly affects children during their development stages. Neglect includes leaving a child unsupervised, failure to feed the child adequately, failing to cloth the child properly, and failing to provide medical care to sick children (Briggs & Hawkins, 2020).

Neglect can be defined as the intentional and non-intentional actions of the parents. Physical neglect leads to emotional neglect in the case of children. However, the perception of child neglect as a form of child abuse differs across cultures and beliefs. For instance, some cultures consider neglect as a way of encouraging children to become tough and learn to depend on themselves (Gelles & Cornell, 1983).

Worth nothing is the fact that psychological maltreatment is a form of child abuse. Children have different understanding of various cognitive and interpersonal responses of parents to their needs. Parental attention may significantly affect children psychologically (Leeson & Nixon, 2011).

Child abuse has different definitions across different individuals and societies. This explains why there are variations in the penal code definition of child abuse across different countries (Marshall & Goddard, 2020).

Raising women's knowledge of domestic abuse, improving stakeholder cooperation, providing the PNP and DSWD with more training and seminars on effective counseling, and allocating public monies for victims' emergency needs and temporary housing (Gudmalin, 2017).

This factor and it affects, are difficult to identify because it integrates with other factors that affect the emotional attachment of children to their parents. Additionally, child abuse can exist as the non-organic failure to thrive. This results from that inadequate attachment between parents and other children. This arises despite enough provision of food and security (Doherty & Berglund, 2008).

Most of the researches about child abuse focus on the victims who get assistance in shelters. However, this may provide inaccurate data on child abuse cases, because not all victims receive assistance from the state of origin and victims of child abuse do not want to be identified and they are reluctant to cooperate in the study and to tell their tale (Council, 2014).

Criminological knowledge on the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases remains scarce. There is less research about child abuse from the point of view of the law enforcers. Research data about the assessment of victims of the child abuse, the investigative technique employed by investigators and challenges encountered by WCPD officers in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases that lacked evidence basis because so little high-quality research has been done on the topic (Wright et al., 2006).

This research therefore aims to fill the research gap because law enforcers fighting against child abuse are not much given importance. There is a need to document the lived experiences of the police officers handling cases of child abuse and the challenges encountered by law enforcers in the fight of child abuse, to lessen this phenomenon, which has been the scourge of humanity since olden times, but has now adapted to the digital age. The output of this study may be used as a basis for the Philippine National Police women and children protection desk in handling cases related to child abuse.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized the qualitative research method employing the phenomenological approach. Specifically, this study will use a husserlian descriptive phenomenological approach to explore the live experiences of the Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD). Phenomenology is recognized as the most appropriate approach in this present study as it focused on human phenomenon and its importance, especially in to criminology as a field of discipline.

Transcendental phenomenology examines the contents of experience as being transcendent to the intrinsic mental structures of consciousness. Instead of the experience's object, intentionality is explained in terms of its contents.

Transcendental or psychological phenomenology is more concerned with describing participant experiences than it is with the researcher's views. Additionally, emphasis is placed on Husserl's idea of epoche (or bracketing). The investigator must make space for based on the description of the lived experience provided by the participant in the research study, and must adopt a novel perspective toward the topic under examination. Although rarely entirely attained, the term "transcendental" refers to a state "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time." The researcher must be conscious of the necessity for bracketing and focus as much as possible on the participant's description.

The goal of phenomenological research is to describe the "lived experiences" of a phenomenon. As this requires a qualitative analysis of narrative data, the methods to analyze its data must be quite different from more traditional or quantitative research. The participants can describe their lived phenomenal experiences which provide and comprise the data in a phenomenological study.

The first principle of analysis in a phenomenological study set some emerging strategies to allow the method of analysis to follow from the nature of the data itself. In all cases, however, the focus is on a deep understanding of the meaning of the description. To get at the essential of the experience, a common approach is to abstract out of themes. These are essential aspects "without which the experience would have not been the same," discovered through a thoughtful engagement with the description of the experience to understand its meaning. The meanings can be implicit, and need to be made explicit with thematic analysis.

## **Research Environment**

This study was conducted in the selected towns of the third (3) district of Bohol specifically in the police station of the said location and focused on the Chief Investigators designated in Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) as they are the personnel in charge in dealing with the victim of domestic violence and conduct proper confirmation, investigation and process the filling appropriate case before the court.

The province of Bohol is a first-class province divided into 3 congressional districts, comprising 1 component city, 47 municipalities, has 1,109 barangays and its capital is Tagbilaran City. According to the 2020 census, it has a population of 1,394,329 with a land area of 4,821 km<sup>2</sup> (1,861 sq mi) and a coastline 261 km (162 mi) long, Bohol is the tenth largest island of the Philippines.

Bohol's 3rd congressional district is one of the three congressional districts of the Philippines in the province of Bohol with a land area of 2,187.54 km<sup>2</sup> (844.61 sq mi). It has been represented in the House of Representatives of the Philippines since 1916 and earlier in the Philippine Assembly from 1907 to 1916. The district consists of the southeastern municipalities of Alicia, Anda, Batuan, Bilar, Candijay, Carmen, Dimiao, Duero, Garcia Hernandez, Guindulman, Jagna, Lila, Loay, Loboc, Mabini, Pilar, Sevilla, Sierra Bullones and Valencia

## **Research Informants**

The informants of this study are ten (10) selected Chief Investigators who are designated in the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) as they are the personnel in charge in dealing with the victim of domestic violence, conduct proper investigation and process the filling appropriate case before the court with at least five (5) years of service as a member of the PNP and at least three (3) years as Chief Investigators of WCPD.

The participants will be divided into two sets, where four (4) informants were undergo comprehensive in-depth interviews who are from Garcia Hernandez, Guindulman, Mabini, Bilar and six (6) who are from Alicia, Candijay, Carmen, Jagna, Pilar, and Sierra Bullones are subjected to focus-group discussions.



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## Research Instrument

The researcher utilized an interview guide in conducting in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions, aimed at uncovering the work life of the informants. This guide undergo rigorous validation processes, including review by the adviser, the panel of experts, and the dean of the graduate school. It includes informed consent procedures to formally invite participants and ensure their voluntary and unrestricted provision of information crucial to achieving the research objectives.

The first part of the questionnaire deals with the experiences of the informants in handling cases of domestic violence. The second part delves into the strategies employed by the informants in addressing the problems encountered in handling cases of domestic violence, and the third part explores the aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of service in handling cases of domestic violence. The interview was directed then supplemented by field notes and voice recorder to accurately document the responses of the informants.

## Research Procedures

Once the ethics committee approves, the researcher requested a schedule for the focus group discussion and individual in-depth interviews. Following this, the researcher met with the informants in a location where they feel safe and comfortable. During the meeting, the researcher explains the objectives, procedures, privacy measures of the study, and the rights of the informants. When the informants agree to participate in the interviews, the researcher asked each informant to sign the informed consent form. The signed form will serve as proof that the informants have consented to be interviewed.

**Data Collection.** The researchers of this study sent a transmittal letter to the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Cebu requesting permission to conduct the study. Upon approval of the transmittal letter the researcher sent the letter to the Provincial Director of the Police Provincial Office (BPPO) and request also permission to allow the researcher to interview the target informants of this study in order to gather or collate reliable and concrete information that can help to realize this research. Then, submitted the research document to the University Research Committee for the issuance of the Protocol Approval.

During the conduct of the interview the researcher used the interview guide validated and approved by the panel of the research and with the aid of voice recorder, field notes in the gathering of data each question having a designated code and each informant are also given code to maintain the confidentiality of their information.

**Data Analysis.** The information gathered from the informant's interview which in the local dialect spoken during the actual interview and to be translated into English for general understanding. The researcher utilized the Colaizzi's method a phenomenological analysis procedure in analyzing the transcript information from the responses of the informant during the conduct of interview.

**Ethical Consideration.** To ensure that the ethical consideration has been properly address, the paper are submitted for ethics review or interview guide validation to the panel of this study. This is to make sure that the information to be gather and the respondents involve will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The researcher observed considerable courtesy and rapport in dealing with the involve offices/police station and the informants by providing all the necessary documents for their references. Considering that during the conduct of the study the informants had also activity, their limited time with the study was respectfully considered.

This study considered with outmost confidentiality of the respondent's responses. All information gathered must only be use within this study. It was also discussed with the informants before the interview conducted that they have the right to withdraw or decline should they decide to. This section outlines how the study complied with the fundamental principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy.

**Beneficence.** In this context, the goal is to improve the Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) well-being by making sure that their involvement in the study advances their professional growth or deepens their comprehension of drug enforcement-related issues. To promote a sense of personal fulfillment and professional development, the researcher should work to establish an environment where agents feel appreciated and respected for their expertise and experiences.

**Non-maleficence.** The researcher must be mindful of potential maleficence, avoiding any harm or negative consequences that could arise from their research activities. This includes protecting the Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) from potential risks such as psychological distress or breaches of confidentiality. A strong ethical protocol should be put in place by the researcher to protect participants' emotional and mental well-being and guarantee that their rights and privacy are protected at all times during the research process.

**Justice.** To ensure that all Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) have an equal opportunity to engage in the research and that their contributions are valued and acknowledged appropriately, justice requires fairness and equity in the treatment of participants. The researcher should strive to represent the diverse perspectives and experiences within the PDEA accurately, avoiding any biases or prejudices that could compromise the integrity of the research findings.

**Autonomy.** This refers to the Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) freedom to choose whether or not to freely participate in the research after receiving all the information they need. The researcher should obtain voluntary and informed consent from all participants, clearly explaining the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study, and providing assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. To guarantee that their autonomy and agency are respected throughout the research process, the informants should feel free to withdraw from the study at any moment without fearing reprisal or other negative outcomes. By upholding these principles of ethics will allow the researcher to work with Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) on a qualitative study, which will eventually broaden understanding in the field of drug enforcement.

**Trustworthiness of Research.** Trustworthiness in qualitative research is established through four key components: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. This has become an essential concept because it allows the researcher to describe qualitative terms' virtues outside the parameters that are typically applied in this qualitative study. The researcher invited the informants to participate in this research about their Lived Experiences of Chief Investigators designated as the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) in handling domestic violence. The informants were adequately informed of the purpose of the study.

**Credibility** of the study is the top priority of this research. The researcher personally conducted the interview with the utmost respect to the informants. Information from the interview and observation session was kept confidentially at all times and be used only for the attainment on the main purpose of this study.

**Transferability** of this research is determined by the researcher allowing the readers to whether or not this study could be transferred to the context or circumstances – by providing copies of the interview guide to the panel for validity.

**Dependability** the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. Thus, the research design may be view as an example. Such in-depth coverage also allows the reader to assess the extent to which proper research practices have been follow. So as to enable readers of the research report to develop a thorough understanding of the methods and their effectiveness, the text should include sections devoted to the research design and its implementation, describing what was planned and executed on a strategic level.

**Confirmability** of this study is by seeking approval from the Provincial Director of the Bohol Police Provincial Office (BPPO) informing him and the concerned the Chief of Police of the Police Station and the Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) for the conduct of the study. It includes the full consent of each participant as they were provided individually an Informed Consent Form.

They signed the form indicating their full consent and willingness to participate to the said research project. The interview guide was explained and narrated in their spoken dialect in full description for a better understanding to every informant on the different questions that which answer to the main purpose of this researched.

To ensure the trustworthiness and the veracity of the data of the research endeavor, the study undergone the validity and reliability are relatively foreign to the field of qualitative research. The information gathered during the interview was recorded confidentially and no one else can access to the information that being documented. The whole processes of the interview were voice-recorded but no one else was identified by any names of the informant on tape. The documented voice and put into compact disc were kept in the Graduate School office of the University of Cebu-Main campus and only the Chairman of the research can access the disc. The disc will be destroyed after the study has been accepted.

**Bracketing and Reflexivity.** As someone new to conducting qualitative research, the researcher's limited training in this area may influence the analysis's depth. This research, which explores the lived experiences of Chief Investigators of the Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD), requires a careful acknowledgment of potential personal predispositions. This increases intricacy and necessitates continuous reflection and self-awareness during the study process. Recognizing and mitigating of potential influence of personal biases on data collection, analysis, and interpretation is crucial to uphold the research's credibility and thoroughness.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study presented the data with an empirical method through a phenomenological approach. Consistent with this, it includes the full description of all the informants, all statement from them were properly documented being recorded, transcribed on their local dialect and translated to English for the general understanding. Significant statements of the informant during the conduct of interview are reflected the important lived experiences of the chief investigator assigned in the Women and Children Desk (WCPD) section in the Third Congressional District of Bohol.

From the recorded response of the ten (10) informants that being transcribed and translated, I created the following ten (10) emergent themes that best describe the responses of the informants, from the formulated thirty (30) cluster themes that being re-group on the extracted two hundred ninety-nine (299) significant statement with their corresponding formulated meanings.

### Experiences of the Informants in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence

#### Positive Experiences

1. Fulfillment in Restored Justice
2. Elation in Victims Gratitude

#### Negative Experiences

1. Disillusionment in Abandoned Cases
2. Exasperation from Outsider Condemnation

### Strategies Employed by the Informants in Addressing the Problems Encountered in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence

1. Illumination through Public Mobilization
2. Protective Altruism
3. Discretion in Sensitive Disclosure
4. Resilience Through Empowerment

## **Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of Service in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence**

1. Procuring Resources for Advocacy
2. Revitalizing Proficiency

I meticulously endeavored to present and expound the emergent themes in every sub-problem that respond to the experiences of the informants as chief investigator of the Women and Children's Protection Desk (WCPD) in handling domestic violence and cases against women and children.

### **Experiences of the Informants in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence**

Upon receiving a complaint in women and children protection section, as chief investigator they performed their duty to cater and process the complaints of their clients. The investigator prepares necessary documents and pieces of evidence to support for the complaints in order to file appropriate charges of the perpetrator. The informants encounter positive and negative experiences in their journey in helping their clients, provide service and restore justice.

#### **Positive Experiences**

**Fulfillment in Restored Justice.** This theme reflects the experiences of WCPD Chief investigators as they navigate the process of handling cases, particularly when these cases successfully progress to the court. The WCPD Chief investigators, achieving this milestone is a significant accomplishment, as many cases they work on are sometimes withdrawn or dismissed. When a case they diligently prepared reaches the court, it brings them immense happiness and satisfaction, validating their efforts and dedication. Furthermore, it reinforces their belief that justice is being served for the victims, giving meaning to their hard work and reaffirming their commitment to their role. This categorical theme is strengthened through very cooperative chief investigators as they respond through this given statement.

I inquired from the informant 4 about his positive experiences in handling cases against women and children and she said thus;

Kuan once maka dawat kog notice sa prosecution pa lang daan basta inag abot sa resolution nako nga ma forward na ang case ngadto sa court very satisfied na jud ko ana malipay najud ko jamo ana mo Ingon kog "YES" labi na kung tagduha duha ka kaso akong e file (FGD4:SS13). (Once I receive a notice from the prosecution, even at that stage, and especially when the resolution comes, and the case is forwarded to the court, I already feel very satisfied. I'm genuinely happy and often say, 'YES!'—even more so when I'm able to file two cases at the same time).

Informants 2 of the focused group also stated that if the cases filed forwarded to the court it is fulfilling as part of the perpetrator. She said, thus

Whereas kung ang case gani ma forward na sa court then naa nay warrant of arrest then ma arrest na ninyo ang mga suspect kay mao jud na ang fulfilling nga part sa investigator (FGD2:SS13). (Whereas, when the case is forwarded to court, and a warrant of arrest is issued, and you're able to arrest the suspect, that's the truly fulfilling part of being an investigator).

As informant 9 of the individual interview cooperatively shared his experience as I asked question regarding the positive experience during handling cases against women and children.

Kanang time nga ma arrest namu ang among gi filelan mao jud nay makita nato nga proof ba, or malipay me nga atlast kanang among effort among kahagu kay dili baya pud lalim nga mag build kag case (IDI3:SS7). (That moment when we arrest the person, we filed the case against is when we see the proof. We're happy because, at last, all our efforts and hard work paid off. It's not easy to build a case).

**Elation in Victims Gratitude.** This theme highlights the profound emotional connection between the chief investigators of the WCPD and the victims they assist. When client's express appreciation for the investigators'

efforts, it reinforces the investigators' commitment to seeking justice and providing support during the victims' most challenging times. The victims' gratitude serves as a testament to the investigators' dedication and compassion, creating a sense of fulfillment and purpose in their work. In turn, the investigators reflect this gratitude, recognizing the mutual trust and respect that has been built through their shared pursuit of justice and healing.

A cooperative informant shared on his clear voice that sound proudly to our ears the feelings she feels as informant 2 stated his statement;

As a WCPD officer for the longest time seeing the victims and their family members they are satisfied sa among nahatag nga service this is fulfilling and rewarding (FGD2:SS7). (As a WCPD officer for a long time, seeing the victims and their family members satisfied with the service we provide is both fulfilling and rewarding).

One of the members of the focused group in the person of informant 5 he also narrates his experiences regarding to experiences when their victims are thankful, informant 5 stated as she response to the given statement.

Every time I can hear “thank you” is enough for me because helping others is my passion and I swear to help them with all my means. Malipay na jamu ko og ma satisfied napud ko nga matabangan ang victima unya kanag magpasalamat sila dako na kaayo nako og kalipay nga wala pa usik akong paningkamut nga nasatisfied pud sila sa akong gibuhat sa akong trabaho (FGD5:SS5). (Every time I hear a “thank you,” it’s more than enough for me because helping others is my passion, and I swear to do everything I can to assist them. It makes me truly happy and fulfilled to help victims, and when they express their gratitude, it brings me great joy. It reassures me that my efforts haven’t gone to waste and that they are satisfied with what I’ve done in my work).

The informant 8 of individual interview emotionally revealed her experience, she said that; kindly

Naay uban nga maghilak na gani sa pagpasalamat kay mao lagi nakuhaan sila og tunok sa ilang kahimtang nga gidapatan o gi abusan sa ilang pares. Maong happy kaajo ko o kami nga makita sila nga na solbad ilang problema (IDI2:SS6). (There are times when they even cry in gratitude because we were able to help them get rid of the 'thorns' in their situation, being abused or mistreated by their partners. That’s why I, or we, are so happy to see that their problems have been resolved).

## Negative Experiences

Disillusionment in Abandoned Cases. This theme captures the informants' reflections on the challenges and setbacks they faced while handling cases involving women and children. These challenges often left the informants feeling unhappy and dissatisfied, as they had invested significant effort and dedication in pursuing justice for the victims. Despite their commitment to filing and progressing cases in court, they experienced frustration when victims unexpectedly decided to withdraw or desist from pursuing the case. This situation not only undermined the informants’ hard work but also highlighted the emotional and systemic hurdles involved in addressing such sensitive cases.

One of the informants in focused group in person of informant 3 shared her negative experience, as she said thus;

No. 1 kung ang imong client gusto magpatabang pero in the end dili na interested magpadayon sa kaso, tungod sa kalangan wala kunoy kwarta, wala kunoy mo supporta nila tungod ma uwaw sila or gi blame sila sa ilang mga paryente nganong na ingon ana sila (FGD3:SS22). (No. 1, is when your client initially wants help, but in the end, they lose interest in continuing with the case. This often happens due to delays, lack of money, or because they feel embarrassed and are blamed by their relatives for what happened to them).

Another informant from the focused group also confirmed her same negative experiences when their client did not pursue the case, as informant 4 response to the given statement;

Ika duha kanang kung nagprepare nako sa mga documents sa kaso, inag abot sa kuan sa prosecution kanang preliminary investigation usually man gud tagsa ranang mag inquest proceedings ang systema sa Pag file kasagaran man gud nahitabo dugay na regular filing jud na siya so ana inag abot dana inag file didto mo execute bitaw ig desistance ana Murag kog manlumo ko ana Labi na kay naa nimo ang kahagu (FGD4:SS16). (Secondly, it's when I've already prepared all the documents for the case, and by the time it reaches the prosecution—especially during the preliminary investigation—since most cases are filed through regular filing instead of inquest proceedings, it takes time. Then, when the case is finally filed, and they execute a desistance, it feels really disheartening, especially knowing all the effort you've put into it).

Informant 6 of the focused group also give her sentiments on the negative experiences in preparing cases against women and children, as she stated with a cooperative and clear voices sharing his experiences, and he said;

Mao mao rajud me sa uban nga ang maka discouraged namu mga WCPD investigator kanang nahuman na ang mga documents og dokdok arun ready na e file ang kaso pero mo atras na sila dili na mopadajun (FGD6:SS7). (Exactly, it's the same for us as WCPD investigators. What really discourages us is when we've completed all the documents and the case is almost ready to be filed, but then the client backs out and decides not to proceed).

As I inquired from the informant 10 about the negative experience she encountered in her works as chief investigator of WCPD, as the informant said;

Kana bitawng mo anhi ra sila karun nga nahitabo ngani ngana, mag hilak hilak kay kuan unja og ato ng e file kay mo atras. Mao jud nay among maka discourage, kay naay mga effort na nga gi himu, ga investigate nami, unya dili na bitaw modayun pagka sunod adlaw mo atras na (IDI4:SS5). (It's when they come to us and start crying, saying something happened, and we prepare to file the case, but then they back out. That's really discouraging for us because we put in effort, we investigate, and then the next day, they decide not to proceed).

Exasperation from Outsider Condemnation. This theme highlights the challenges faced by investigators when handling cases involving crimes against women and children, as shared through the informants' negative experiences. While investigators diligently prepare the necessary documents and evidence to support their clients' complaints, external pressures often undermine their efforts. These pressures may come from individuals attempting to persuade victims to withdraw their cases or political entities intervening to halt investigations. Consequently, victims sometimes yield to these influences, resulting in their withdrawal from the case, which is disheartening for investigators who have already invested significant time and effort in preparing the case for filing at the fiscal office.

The informant 2 shared his statement on the interruption of other people on the case, as the informant said that;

Usa pud jud kana bitawng nag effort naka arun maka file ang case pero naa bitaw silay mediation mahitabo between ra hinuon nila which is bati ba kay mura kag ma blind as investigator nga gi buhat na nimo tanan at the end of the day nag sabot ra diay sila (FGD2:SS16). (Another thing is when you've put in all the effort to file the case, but then a mediation happens between them. In the end, they settle things on their own, which feels disheartening as an investigator. It feels like all the work you've done is for nothing, and it's like being blind-sided when, at the end of the day, they just come to an agreement themselves).

As I inquired from the informant regarding to the negative experiences about the frustration in handling cases against women and children, informant 1 stated thus;

As investigator bitaw niya Ikaw grabe nimong trabaho sa imong trabaho unya e question ra bitaw ka niya wala sila kahibawo kung unsa ng trabaho nimu (FGD1:SS26). (As an investigator, it's frustrating when they don't

understand the work you do. You put so much effort into your job, and yet you get questioned, as if they don't know the challenges we face in our work).

Another informant of the focused group also gives his statement regarding to the involvement of other individual like politicians asking favor to dismissed the case, as the statement of informant 4 goes like this;

Ang number 1 nga ma discouraged ko kay kana bitawg una nay mga some dili man pud ingon mostly there are some instrances nga mag apil apil ang mga politicians, naka experience ko ana nga murag sa ilahang kuan mo duol nya mo tawag nato "uie ni kuan pwede bag ingani" mohangyo (FGD4:SS15). (The number one thing that discourages me is when some politicians get involved. I've experienced situations where they interfere, like approaching or calling me and saying, 'Hey, can you do this or that?'—trying to make requests or favors).

### **Strategies Employed by the Informants in Addressing the Problems Encountered in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence**

There are four themes that describe the different the strategies applied by the informants in addressing the problems encountered in handling cases of domestic violence.

**Illumination through Public Mobilization.** This theme reflects the proactive efforts of investigators in addressing and preventing cases of violence against women and children. A significant strategy involves conducting community information drives and awareness campaigns, aimed at educating the public about domestic violence and its prevention. These initiatives include lectures in both private and public schools, barangay visits, and fostering stronger police-community relations to empower local communities. Through these activities, informants share their experiences and insights, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and education in combating violence and building safer communities.

Informant 8 stated his experiences on the strategy they applied to prevent and address the cases of domestic violence and she willingly shared during the interview, she said that;

Conducted information drive, mag lecture og mag symposium me sa mga barangay, eskwelahan og sa mga kababainhan amo silang pahibaw on sa mga balaod, sa ilang rights arun ma empowered sila og arun dili napud sila dali dali ra nga abusaran (IDI2:SS12). (We conduct information drives, give lectures, and hold symposiums in barangays, schools, and for women's groups to educate them about the laws, their rights, and empower them so they won't be easily abused).

Informant 3 also shared what they do in combating cases against women and children, as she said.

Mo visit pud me og mga barangay, school mag conducts me og awareness sa school og barangay sa mga laws and Special Laws nga nag protect sa nga women and children (FGD3:SS35). (We also visit barangays and schools to conduct awareness programs about the laws and special laws that protect women and children).

Informant 9 also shared her experiences when I asked him regarding the strategies they employed to prevent and address cases against women and children, were informant 9 stated her statement thus;

Sa among municipality maam, sa among station ang amo gyung gina conduct is ang information, dissemination through lecture and distribution of fliers o instructional materials sa different barangays and school especially sa mga kanang women and children para ma aware sila sa ilang rights (IDI4:SS17). (In our municipality, ma'am, at our station, what we focus on is information dissemination through lectures and the distribution of fliers or instructional materials to different barangays and schools, especially to women and children, so they become aware of their rights).

**Protective Altruism.** This theme emphasizes the proactive measures taken to protect victims of domestic violence. When a complaint is received, investigators prioritize the victim's safety by promptly conducting rescue operations to remove them from harm. They assist victims in obtaining a Barangay Protection Order (BPO), which provides legal safeguards against further abuse. Furthermore, victims are brought to a temporary

shelter for refuge, and if no shelter is immediately available, investigators take extra steps to find alternative safe accommodations, ensuring the victims' protection at all costs.

Informant 7 as one of the individual participants interviewed shared on how they implement measure to safeguard the victims, as she speaks her statement like this;

Naa ta'y shelter nga pabutangan nila Women Crisis Center adto sila. Unya, kuan lang atimanun lang ang pakaon ingana or else ang oban dili na jod siya pabalikon sa place kung asa siya nag puyo adto sa siya namo ihangyo sa parente or asa (IDI1:SS21). (We have a shelter, the Women Crisis Center, where they can stay. We take care of their meals and needs. If not, some victims may refuse to go back to their place, so we try to arrange for them to stay with relatives or find another safe place for them).

On the focused group discussion informant 6 gives her statement on how they safeguard their victims of domestic violence, as she response trough the given statement.

If trouble transpires and if the perpetrator is at large, I coordinate immediately to MSWDO to rescue the victim for their safety. Unya tabangan ang victima mo secure og BPO arun ma protectahan sila sa posibling lain pang mahitabo. Dapat e rescue jud ang victima arun malayo siya sa perpetrator (FGD6:SS11). (If trouble arises and the perpetrator is at large, I immediately coordinate with the MSWDO to rescue the victim for their safety. Then, we help the victim secure a BPO (Barangay Protection Order) to protect them from any possible further harm. The victim must be rescued to ensure they are kept safe and away from the perpetrator).

Informant 10 of the individual interview narrates the strategies implemented and measures in order to prioritize the safety of the victim and she said;

If ever kabahin sa safety sa mga victims, depende ra sa sitwasyon, naay uban nga adto ra sa iyang family, naa puy uban nga adto sa DSWD. Amo ra silang ipahiluna arun ma safety ang mga victim (IDI4:SS9). (When it comes to the safety of the victims, it depends on the situation. Some may stay with their family, while others are referred to DSWD. We make sure to arrange the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the victims).

Discretion in Sensitive Disclosure. This theme highlights the measures implemented to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of data and information related to domestic violence cases. A key strategy is maintaining a separate blotter book, often referred to as the "pink book," which is distinct from the general investigation blotter to prevent unauthorized access. Additionally, closed-door meetings are conducted to ensure a discreet and private handling of sensitive information, reinforcing the secure nature of their approach. Access to the pink book or its information is strictly limited, with only legally authorized individuals, such as those with court orders, permitted to review its contents, as corroborated by the informants' statements.

Informant 5 cooperatively shared her experienced in ensuring the confidentiality of the information of domestic violence, as he said thus;

We do not allow anyone to see or divulge the blotter which is separate from general blotter. Naka lain jud na among blotter sa ubang blotter sa police station dili jud na pwede ipakita kita sa uban kay confidential kaayo na sa VAWC cases or complaint (FGD5:SS13). (We do not allow anyone to see or disclose the blotter, which is separate from the general blotter. Our blotter is different from other blotters at the police station, and it cannot be shown to others because it contains confidential information regarding VAWC cases or complaints).

Informant 7 stated her experiences how they ensure the privacy of the information in their blotter entry record which regards to the cases against women and children, she said that;

Limited ra jod na dapat kay atoa jong ge exercise ang confidentiality kay dili pwede nga e marites ang mga kuan, si kuan mao ni mao na ingana (IDI1:SS22). (It's really limited because we must exercise confidentiality. We can't allow the details to be shared or spread around, like saying, 'So-and-so did this, and that happened).

Informant 9 also narrate their practice in observing the confidentiality of the records and inform on complaint in connection to domestic violence to avoid divulging confidential matters, as she said.



As the WCPD investigator, ni follow jud mi anang gi state sa balaod RA 9262 Sec. 44 nga nag Ingon all records pertaining to cases of violence Against Women and their children, including those in the barangay shall be confidential and all public and private clinic or hospitals shall respect the right to privacy of the victim so amo ng gira observe gyud Kanang Naa sa balaod sa sec. 44 sa RA 9262 (IDI3:SS23). (As WCPD investigators, we strictly follow what is stated in the law, specifically RA 9262, Section 44, which states that all records pertaining to cases of violence against women and their children, including those in the barangay, shall be confidential. It also mandates that all public and private clinics or hospitals must respect the victim's right to privacy. We make sure to observe this provision in Section 44 of RA 9262).

Resilience Through Empowerment. This theme highlights the chief investigator's proactive approach in addressing the needs of victims, particularly women and children, through effective strategies aimed at preventing re-victimization. It reflects a commitment to equipping victims with knowledge and resources, enabling them to regain confidence and resilience. By focusing on empowerment, the investigator seeks to ensure that victims are better prepared to navigate future challenges and protect themselves from harm. Ultimately, the theme emphasizes a holistic and forward-looking approach to justice, prioritizing both immediate support and long-term prevention. Informants shared their experiences through this statement;

An active informant shared her statement with a humbly tone of voice as like that she is proudly to say their strategies conducted to enlightened their clients, as Informant 2 of the focused group respond through the given statement;

Kana pong empowering the victims so during mag conduct me ug dialogue sa nga victima so ato jd na sila e empowered kay kanang arun pud bisan victima na karun sila dili na balik balik ang repeated abused na bitaw nila, so aron to prevent ana so kinahanglan na nato sila nga e educate sa ug unsay angay og dapat nilang buhaton arun ma protektahan nila ang ilang kaugalingon (FGD2:SS25). (Empowering the victims is also a crucial part of our work. During dialogues with the victims, we make sure to empower them, so that even though they're victims now, they won't fall into repeated cycles of abuse. It's important to educate them on what they should and shouldn't do to protect themselves, so they can prevent further harm and take control of their own safety moving forward).

As I inquired from the informant regarding to the strategies and measure to prevent cases of domestic violence and to empower the women and children in their locality, Informant 8 stated thus;

Conducted information drive, mag lecture og mag symposium me sa mga barangay, eskwelahan og sa mga kababainhan amo silang pahibaw on sa mga balaod, sa ilang rights arun ma empowered sila og arun dili napud sila dali dali ra nga abusaran (IDI2:SS12). (We conduct information drives, give lectures, and hold symposiums in barangays, schools, and for women's groups to educate them about the laws, their rights, and empower them so they won't be easily abused).

Informant 9 of the individual interview proudly narrates the approach on empowering their women and children in the community, she said;

Para sa mga victims or sa mga women dapat ma empowered sila Kanang mag lecture ko sa barangay sa mga school, mag sige jud ko ingun dapat jud nga mga bae empowered ta dili ta mga dependent sa atong mga partner kay once nga empowered ta magkina unsa ang kalibutanan biyaan ta sa atong bana or pasakitan ta sa atong bana dili rata mo hilak, makaya nato ba Maka ingun tag ngano man diay mabuhi man ko og wala (IDI3:SS28). (For victims or women, they should be empowered. When I give lectures in barangays and schools, I always emphasize that women should be empowered. We should not be dependent on our partners, because once we are empowered, no matter what happens—whether our husbands leave us or hurt us—we won't just cry. We can handle it. We can say, 'Why should I cry? I can live without them).

### **Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of Service in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence**

There are two themes that describe the objectives of the informants to improve the quality of service in handling

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cases of domestic violence and to life of the victims.

Procuring Resources for Advocacy. This theme highlights the aspirations of the chief investigator in the Women and Children Protection Section (WCPD) to enhance service delivery for victims of violence against women and children. It emphasizes the need for adequate facilities and proper fund allocation to ensure comprehensive and effective support. Additionally, it stresses the importance of improving the skills and qualifications of personnel assigned to the WCPD section to handle sensitive cases with professionalism and empathy. Ultimately, the goal is to create a well-equipped and compassionate system that addresses domestic violence and other related issues with utmost care and efficiency, as the informants respond through their given statement;

As one of the focused groups participants give her statement about their goals and longing for their station to have a temporary facility to be considered as shelter of the victims in domestic violence , as Informant 2 said;

Kung ang every municipality naa untay shelter for domestic violence kanang mga victims ba, victims of domestic violence but sadly wala jud ta so everytime nga naay mo report diri so back to residence jud sila og asa sila dapita (FGD2:SS28). (If every municipality had a shelter for victims of domestic violence, that would be ideal. Unfortunately, we don't have one, so every time there is a report, the victims are sent back to their residence or wherever they are staying).

Another informant from the focused group shared her statement that in the WCPD section must be added some personnel to be assigned just for the section in order to increase the implementation of the program widely in their area of responsibility, as Informant 4 response to the given statement;

Lami unta nga ang WCPD kuan Kanang dili duha ray mo handle kana naa koy kauban nga team naa juy team nga bisan compose rag 5 ana kay during mga conduct og lecture naay mama assist bitaw (FGD4:SS31). (It would be great if the WCPD wasn't handled by just two people, but rather had a team. Even if it's just a team of five, it would help during lectures because there would be someone to assist).

The informant 10 of individual interview humbly raised concern abot the facility and allocation of budget for utilization during the filing of case and to adhere the basic support to the victims, she said that;

Mao jud na among concern, nga matagaan tag sakto nga budget og facility para sa mga victim (IDI4:SS20). (That's really our concern, that we are given the proper budget and facilities for the victims).

Revitalizing Proficiency. The theme highlights the suggestions and recommendations provided by the informants to improve the WCPD's efforts in supporting victims of domestic violence. A key recommendation is the regular implementation of refresher or annual training programs for investigators. These trainings are intended to ensure that investigators remain informed about evolving trends, best practices, and any updates or amendments to laws related to domestic violence. By staying updated, investigators can enhance their skills, improve their approaches, and provide more effective support to victims, as they response through the given statement;

Informant 3 of the focused group also agree to the refresher training must be conducted for them to be always updated to the new trend regarding domestic violence is concerned, as she stated with a cooperative and clear voices sharing her statements, and he said;

Dapat naay training yearly ba or quarterly ba nga mag conduct og mga refreshment kay basin naay mga bag ong amendments ang mga balaod, Naa poy mga bag ong update makahitabo pud (FGD3:SS47). (There should be training conducted either yearly or quarterly to provide refresher courses. This is important because there may be new amendments to the laws, and updates on relevant changes could occur that we need to be aware of).

As I inquired from the informant regarding to her suggestions, and recommendations to enhance the WCPD section in helping the victim of domestic violenc, Informant 7 stated thus;

Sa amoang kuan lang continuous nga trainings ingana, refreshers, mga seminars kay kuan baya jod pod importante niya labina og naa po'y mga balaod nga ipangkuan bitaw ammend (IDI1:SS26). (For us, it's important to have continuous training, refreshers, and seminars, because it's essential, especially when there are new laws or amendments that we need to be aware of).

Informant 9 also shares her recommendation to enhance the section in giving aid and service on the victims of domestic violence, as she said.

As WCPD Investigator more training and seminar related to the designation kay Murag pinaka the best man nga bisan na trained nami ma'am Naa nami mga special seminar and schooling sa among sa designation hinaut Pwede nga more pa, mga refresher ingana, kay bisan nakahibawo nata sa atong trabaho lami man gud tong ma remind gud ta kay usahay makalimut (IDI3:SS27). (As a WCPD Investigator, I believe more training and seminars related to our designation would be the best, ma'am. Even though we are already trained, having special seminars and schooling for our designation would be great. I hope there can be more, like refresher courses, because even though we know our work, it's always good to be reminded, as sometimes we tend to forget).

## Data Analysis

### Experiences of the Informants in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence

#### Positive Experiences

**Fulfillment in Restored Justice.** This theme emphasizes achieving emotional and psychological healing for both victims and offenders by fostering accountability, dialogue, and mutual understanding. Based on the informants' responses during interviews, this theme highlights the importance of creating safe spaces where victims can share their experiences, have their voices heard, and feel validated in their feelings. Informants emphasized that restorative justice allows offenders to recognize the harm caused by their actions, take responsibility, and work toward making amends. This approach not only empowers victims by giving them a sense of agency but also offers offenders the opportunity for personal growth and change. The ultimate goal is to break the cycle of violence, restore trust, and ensure long-term healing for all parties involved.

The Self-Efficacy Theory, focuses on the belief that individuals can shape outcomes through their own actions. This concept plays a vital role in achieving success in restorative justice for domestic violence cases. Both practitioners and victims need confidence in their abilities to participate effectively. For practitioners, it means being skilled and assured in guiding discussions and interventions that encourage accountability and healing. For victims, it involves rebuilding their confidence and sense of control by engaging in processes that acknowledge their experiences and promote recovery. When everyone involved has strong self-efficacy, it builds trust and increases the chances of reaching meaningful solutions (Bandura, 1997).

Restorative justice, can help survivors of domestic violence feel more empowered and healed. In restorative justice, victims have the opportunity to meet with offenders, tell their stories, and take part in decisions about how the situation should be resolved. This process helps victims regain control over their healing and addresses emotional and psychological needs that the traditional criminal justice system may not fully consider. The study shows that restorative justice not only helps victims but also benefits offenders and the community, leading to lasting healing and reducing the likelihood of the offender committing further crimes (Dussich & Pinet, 2018).

A studied how restorative justice approaches, like dialogues between victims and offenders and community-based solutions, can help in cases of domestic violence. The study showed that these practices can give survivors a sense of fulfillment by focusing on their needs, holding offenders accountable, and allowing for open and meaningful communication. Survivors often feel more satisfied and emotionally healed through restorative justice than through the traditional legal system. However, the study also warns that these methods must be carefully planned to prevent power imbalances and ensure the safety of everyone involved. Overall, restorative justice can help survivors feel empowered and support their healing process (Ptacek, 2010).

The Relational Justice Theory, aligns well by prioritizing the repair and healing of damaged relationships over solely punishing offenders. This theory is especially applicable in domestic violence cases, as it emphasizes addressing the harm experienced by victims, tackling the root causes of the abuse, and encouraging perpetrators to take responsibility and make positive changes. It also highlights the role of community and support systems in creating a secure and supportive environment for victims, while facilitating the reintegration of offenders who show genuine efforts to change. This comprehensive approach often results in greater victim satisfaction, as they feel acknowledged and supported, and paves the way for lasting recovery and resilience (Van Ness & Strong, 2014).

**Elation in Victims Gratitude.** This theme highlights the profound emotional impact experienced by both victims and service providers when victims express genuine appreciation for the support and assistance received during the handling of domestic violence cases. Based on informants' responses during interviews, this gratitude often stems from victims feeling heard, validated, and supported through crisis intervention, counseling, and legal advocacy. Informants shared that witnessing victims' relief and acknowledgment of their efforts reinforces the sense of purpose in their work. This positive feedback not only strengthens the bond of trust between victims and responders but also motivates service providers to continue their commitment to providing compassionate, victim-centered care.

The Competence Motivation Theory, suggests that people are naturally motivated to show and feel capable in what they do, which brings them satisfaction and motivation. In dealing with domestic violence cases, this idea helps explain why responders, like WCPD officers, feel uplifted when victims show gratitude. When victims appreciate their help, it strengthens the officers' belief in their ability to handle difficult situations successfully. This recognition inspires them to stay committed to their work, creating a positive cycle that boosts both their emotional fulfillment and dedication to their role (Harter, 1978).

Victims of domestic violence show gratitude towards those who help them, such as police officers, counselors, or social workers. The research found that when victims expressed gratitude, it often helped improve their emotional well-being and gave them a sense of empowerment in their recovery. However, the study also pointed out that too much gratitude could sometimes hide underlying problems like fear or dependence on others, which could affect the success of long-term support. By recognizing these complex emotions, professionals can provide better assistance to victims without encouraging unhealthy reliance (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010).

A study how gratitude helps victims recover emotionally, focusing on the positive feelings or "elation" that gratitude brings. They found that domestic violence victims who felt grateful for the help they received from police or social workers became emotionally stronger and less stressed. This uplifting feeling gave victims a sense of hope and control over their lives, helping them see their situation in a more positive light. Encouraging gratitude in victims can improve their well-being and help them cope better, making it an important part of supporting them through their recovery (Watkins et al., 2003).

Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Psychology suggests that positive emotions, like gratitude, expand an individual's perspective and enhance resilience by developing lasting personal resources. In the context of domestic violence cases, victims expressing gratitude to officers or support providers can offer a sense of validation and satisfaction to the helpers, boosting their motivation and emotional health. At the same time, this positive interaction helps build the victim's trust in the support system, aiding their recovery. The mutual exchange of gratitude fosters an environment of growth and optimism, benefiting both victims and those assisting them. This theory underscores how nurturing gratitude and positive emotions can strengthen coping skills and build meaningful relationships (Fredrickson, 2001).

## **Negative Experiences**

**Disillusionment in Abandoned Cases.** This theme reflects the frustration and emotional toll experienced by informants and support service providers when cases of domestic violence are abandoned by victims or the justice system. Informants during interviews often express that despite their efforts to offer assistance, support, and legal recourse, many victims lose faith in the system, fail to follow through with cases, or withdraw their

complaints due to fear, financial dependency, societal stigma, or lack of protection. This abandonment leaves officers and advocates feeling disheartened, as it hinders the pursuit of justice and the prevention of future violence. It underscores the need for consistent support, trust-building, and protective measures to encourage victims to remain engaged in the justice process.

Competence Motivation Theory explains that people are motivated to succeed and feel capable in activities they find meaningful. In domestic violence cases, this theory helps us understand why officers may feel disheartened when cases are abandoned. When they put in significant effort to gather evidence and build a strong case, only for victims to withdraw or stop cooperating, it can make them feel ineffective and frustrated. This feeling stems from a mismatch between their goal of achieving justice and the lack of resolution in the case. To prevent this, it's crucial to provide strong organizational support and adopt victim-focused strategies that help officers stay motivated and effective in handling these challenging situations (Harter, 1978).

Using the survey data from 1,000 adults in New York City and Baltimore, the researchers examined how experiences with intimate partner violence (IPV) shape people's views of police trustworthiness and legitimacy. The results showed that those who had experienced IPV particularly women and African American participants were more likely to distrust the police and view the legal system as lacking credibility. Importantly, the research revealed that greater trust in law enforcement was linked to more constructive responses to IPV. This suggests that when victims lose confidence in the police, they are less likely to report abuse or pursue legal action, ultimately leading to case abandonment due to disillusionment with the justice process (Fedina et al., 2019).

A study how law enforcement officers often feel disillusioned when working on domestic violence cases that end up being dropped or abandoned. This can happen when there's not enough evidence, when the victim withdraws, or due to challenges in the system. The study found that officers become frustrated and emotionally drained when these cases don't move forward, which can lead to a sense of disappointment. This feeling can affect their ability to stay compassionate and effective in handling future cases. The authors emphasize the need for better support and resources for officers to help reduce these negative feelings and improve outcomes for victims (Holmes and Copes, 2016).

The Frustration-Aggression Theory, offers a valuable perspective for examining the domestic violence. According to this theory, frustration resulting from unfulfilled goals can trigger aggression or emotional distress. In domestic violence cases, professionals such as investigators and advocates often face deep frustration when cases are dismissed, victims retract complaints, or systemic flaws obstruct justice. This persistent frustration can lead to feelings of disillusionment as they struggle with a sense of helplessness in breaking the cycle of violence. Such challenges can undermine their morale and confidence in the justice system, emphasizing the need for systemic improvements to maintain their dedication and prevent burnout (Dollard et al., 1939).

Exasperation from Outsider Condemnation. This theme expressed by the informants as a common challenge when handling cases of domestic violence. They explained that victims and even law enforcement officials often face judgment and negative opinions from outsiders, such as community members or family members, who may blame the victim or criticize the response to the situation. This external pressure can lead to feelings of frustration and isolation for both victims and responders, as it undermines efforts to support victims and address the root causes of abuse. Informants highlighted that such condemnation creates barriers to trust, complicates the healing process, and can deter victims from seeking help or participating in justice processes.

Self-efficacy theory, focuses on a person's confidence in their ability to perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes. In dealing with domestic violence cases, WCPD investigators may face criticism from outsiders who lack a complete understanding of the situation. This can cause emotional stress and reduce their confidence, making it harder to stay effective. However, when investigators have strong self-belief, they can rely on their experience and skills to overcome these challenges and continue helping victims. On the other hand, low self-confidence can lead to frustration and make case handling more difficult. Providing a positive environment with training and recognition can help build their confidence and keep them effective in their work (Bandura, 1997).

Criticism from outsiders, like the media or the public, affects professionals working on domestic violence cases, such as law enforcement and social service workers. The researchers found that when these professionals are criticized, it can cause frustration, burnout, and lower their effectiveness in handling these cases. Negative opinions from society can reduce their motivation, making it harder for them to provide proper support and make good decisions. As a result, they may become less emotionally involved in their work, which leads to less compassionate and less effective help for those in need (O'Donnell & Kaniasty, 2017).

External criticism, such as from the media, advocacy groups, or the public, can increase stress and frustration for people, including law enforcement officers. This external pressure can make professionals feel unsupported or isolated, which can affect how they handle sensitive cases like domestic violence. The study shows that when professionals face too many conflicting pressures, it can lead to burnout and less effective decision-making. The research highlights the need for strong support systems and a balanced approach to help professionals manage stress and improve their work with domestic violence cases (Foulk et al., 2021).

The Attribution Theory provides a relevant framework for understanding the theme in the context of addressing domestic violence cases. This theory explores how people interpret the causes of actions or events, often resulting in biased judgments. In cases of domestic violence, outsiders may wrongly assign blame to victims for "tolerating" abuse or criticize responders for their perceived shortcomings in handling the situation. Such external criticism can lead to frustration and discouragement among professionals, as their intricate and dedicated efforts are unfairly simplified or misunderstood. Research supports that these misattributions and a lack of awareness about the systemic and personal challenges in domestic violence cases contribute to stigmatization, ultimately impairing both victim assistance and the effectiveness of those working to help (Weiner, 1980).

### **Strategies Employed by the Informants in Addressing the Problems Encountered in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence**

**Illumination through Public Mobilization.** This theme reflects the idea of raising awareness and fostering community involvement to address and prevent domestic violence. During the interview, informants emphasized that public mobilization plays a vital role in empowering communities by educating them about the signs, impacts, and legal responses to domestic violence. Through awareness campaigns, information drives, and community outreach programs, the community becomes better equipped to support victims, report incidents, and hold offenders accountable. By shedding light on these issues and breaking the cycle of silence and stigma, public mobilization strengthens collective action, promotes early intervention, and creates a shared responsibility for preventing domestic violence within the community.

Tuckman's Team Performance Model, provides a clear process for addressing challenges in handling domestic violence cases through initiatives like "Illumination through Public Mobilization." The model begins with forming, where groups like law enforcement, community leaders, and advocates come together to set a common goal of addressing domestic violence. Next is storming, where the team works through differences in ideas or resource allocation. In the norming stage, members build trust and align their efforts, creating a stronger team dynamic. The performing stage focuses on action, such as running awareness campaigns, advocating for policy changes, and providing support services. Finally, the adjourning stage involves reviewing results, learning from experiences, and planning for long-term success. This process shows how teamwork can effectively solve complex problems like domestic violence (Tuckman, 1965).

The effectiveness of community mobilization in preventing domestic violence and providing support to victims. It emphasizes the importance of engaging local communities to raise awareness about domestic violence, which enhances the identification of cases and offers a system of support for victims. The study highlights that mobilization efforts such as public awareness campaigns and community-based programs can encourage victims to report violence and seek help, which otherwise might be suppressed due to stigma or fear (Dugan et al., 2003).

The impact of public awareness campaigns on the reporting of domestic violence cases in two urban areas. The study suggests that public mobilization through strategic communication such as media campaigns, educational

programs, and advocacy has a direct impact on reducing the underreporting of domestic violence incidents. The campaigns serve as a platform for discussing sensitive issues, educating the public on the legal rights of victims, and providing information on available resources, ultimately contributing to better handling of domestic violence cases (Lutz & Bender, 2010).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, is relevant to the theme as it highlights the interconnectedness between individual behavior and societal influences. This theory suggests that people are part of a network of relationships shaped by various levels, such as the microsystem (immediate surroundings like family), mesosystem (interactions between groups, like schools and communities), and macrosystem (overall societal and cultural norms). Public mobilization fits within this framework by utilizing the macrosystem to address domestic violence, promoting awareness, fostering community support, and advocating for policy changes. These initiatives aim to raise awareness of social issues and inspire collective action, leading to changes across different levels of society. By educating the public and mobilizing resources, such efforts tackle systemic problems and build a supportive environment for survivors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Protective Altruism.** This theme emerged as a vital concept in handling cases of domestic violence. Informants emphasized the importance of intervening with empathy and compassion to prioritize the safety and well-being of victims, even when challenges or personal risks are involved. Protective altruism was described as proactive efforts by law enforcement, social workers, and community members to create safe spaces, provide immediate assistance, and ensure that victims feel supported without judgment. Respondents highlighted that such efforts include offering crisis intervention, providing resources like temporary shelters, and fostering trust by showing genuine care and understanding. This approach builds a foundation for breaking the cycle of violence by empowering victims and reinforcing their confidence in seeking help.

Self-efficacy theory, explains that a person's belief in their own abilities to handle tasks and achieve goals is crucial for their actions and determination when facing challenges. In the case of "protective altruism," this belief can greatly influence how individuals, like police officers and social workers, deal with domestic violence cases. When these professionals are confident in their skills and knowledge, they are more likely to take action, provide necessary support to victims, and push for changes in the system. Building self-efficacy in these professionals helps them stay resilient and confident when managing difficult and emotionally demanding situations, leading to better results in handling domestic violence cases (Bandura, 1977).

This study explores the concept of protective altruism, which refers to the motivation to help others due to concern for their safety and well-being. They discuss how protective altruism can encourage individuals, especially bystanders, to intervene in domestic violence situations. Their findings suggest that those with a high level of protective altruism are more likely to act to stop violence and offer support to victims. This study is significant because it highlights the potential of promoting altruistic behaviors in individuals to create safer environments for domestic violence victims. The authors propose that by understanding and cultivating protective altruism, interventions can be designed to increase proactive bystander involvement in preventing domestic violence (Levine and Murnen, 2009).

A study examines how social workers' protective altruism influences their intervention strategies when handling domestic violence cases. They argue that social workers who display a strong sense of protective altruism are more likely to prioritize the safety and welfare of victims, which leads to more effective interventions. The study suggests that protective altruism can enhance social workers' engagement with clients, encouraging a deeper understanding of their needs and motivating social workers to take decisive actions, even when the risks associated with such interventions are high. The authors emphasize that training social workers to recognize and foster protective altruism could significantly improve the outcomes of domestic violence cases (Houghton and Spivak, 2011).

**Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis,** posits that when individuals feel empathy for someone in distress, they are driven to help alleviate that suffering, even if it requires personal sacrifice. In the context of domestic violence, law enforcement officers and other professionals displaying protective altruism are motivated by empathy for the victims' pain and a sense of moral responsibility to reduce harm. Their actions go beyond their duties, focusing on the well-being of the victims to ensure they receive the support and care needed. This theory

reflects the compassionate responses of informants in domestic violence cases, contributing to the victims' safety and recovery (Batson, 1991).

**Discretion in Sensitive Disclosure.** This theme focuses on the careful and ethical handling of sensitive information shared by informants, particularly in cases of domestic violence. During interviews with informants, such as victims, witnesses, or concerned individuals, maintaining discretion ensures their safety, trust, and confidentiality while gathering essential information. Informants emphasized the importance of creating a safe and non-judgmental environment, where they can share their experiences openly without fear of retaliation or stigma. They highlighted that handling their disclosures with sensitivity, by limiting the sharing of details only to necessary parties and ensuring proper protection, fosters trust and encourages continued cooperation. Informants also noted that discretion in sensitive disclosure strengthens the investigative process while prioritizing their emotional well-being and security.

**Tuckman's Team Performance Model,** which involves stages like forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning, is a helpful framework for addressing the challenges of handling sensitive disclosures in domestic violence cases. In these cases, different professionals such as police officers, counselors, and legal staff must work together to support victims and manage confidential information carefully. In the forming stage, team members figure out their roles and the importance of being discreet with sensitive information. During the storming stage, disagreements might arise about how to handle these disclosures, requiring good communication and understanding. As the team moves into the norming and performing stages, they develop better methods for maintaining confidentiality and handling disclosures respectfully. Finally, in the adjourning stage, the team evaluates their work and adjusts their approach for future cases. This model emphasizes the need for effective teamwork, communication, and sensitivity when dealing with sensitive issues like domestic violence (Tuckman, 1965).

In this study, explores how police officers exercise discretion in cases of domestic violence, particularly in the context of sensitive disclosures made by victims. The study finds that officers' personal biases, training, and departmental policies significantly impact their decision-making when dealing with victims of domestic violence. It argues that police discretion can both help and hinder the effectiveness of intervention, depending on how officers handle sensitive disclosures. The study suggests that officers should receive specific training on how to deal with sensitive disclosures, considering the emotional and psychological effects on victims (Bennett, 2016).

This study discusses the challenges faced by law enforcement when dealing with sensitive disclosures of domestic violence. The authors focus on the discretion exercised by officers when victims are hesitant to disclose the full extent of their abuse. The research highlights that discretion plays a critical role in the decision to arrest or offer alternative interventions, like referrals to shelters or support services. It also emphasizes the importance of officers being trained to handle sensitive disclosures to build trust and ensure that victims feel supported in sharing their experiences (Davis & Lurigo, 2017).

**Communicative Discretion Theory,** which emphasizes how individuals, especially those in vulnerable or sensitive situations, make careful decisions about sharing personal information based on factors like trust, privacy, and potential risks. In cases of domestic violence, informants such as police officers and social workers often use discretion when dealing with sensitive disclosures. They strategically manage how they collect, handle, and share information to safeguard the victim's safety and well-being while adhering to legal and ethical standards. This discretion plays a key role in encouraging victims to share details of abuse in a supportive, non-judgmental setting, reducing the risk of additional trauma (Bergström & Lichtenstein, 2021).

**Resilience Through Empowerment.** This theme emphasizes building strength and self-confidence in survivors of domestic violence by providing them with the necessary tools, resources, and support to regain control of their lives. During the interview, informants highlighted that empowering victim involves offering access to legal aid, counseling services, crisis shelters, and education on their rights. They stressed that helping victims understand their options and providing them with a sense of agency fosters resilience by allowing them to break free from cycles of violence. Informants also pointed out the importance of creating safe spaces where



survivors can share their experiences without judgment, as this strengthens their ability to heal, rebuild, and create a life free from abuse.

Self-efficacy theory, focuses on the belief that individuals have in their own ability to take the actions needed to reach specific goals. When applied to Resilience Through Empowerment in cases of domestic violence, this theory suggests that empowering victims by building their confidence can help them feel more in control of their situations and strengthen their resilience. Many victims of domestic violence feel powerless, so helping them develop self-efficacy is key in overcoming challenges, whether legal, emotional, or practical. Empowering victims in this way enables them to make decisions, seek support, and rebuild their lives, while also weakening the power imbalance in abusive relationships. By improving self-efficacy, victims are more likely to stand up for themselves and take steps to break free from the cycle of abuse (Bandura, 1977).

This study focuses on the ways in which empowerment strategies contribute to resilience among women who have experienced domestic violence. The study found that when women are provided with empowerment tools—such as decision-making skills, social support, and the ability to navigate systems such as the legal system and shelters—they are better able to cope with the trauma of domestic violence. This resilience is an ongoing process of healing and can be facilitated by community and institutional support systems that acknowledge and address the unique needs of survivors (Graham-Bermann et al., 2007).

This study examines the role of empowerment-based practices in domestic violence intervention programs. It emphasizes how these practices are designed to strengthen the autonomy of survivors and support their decision-making capacity. The researchers argue that empowerment-based interventions, including those that provide resources and advocate for systemic change, help survivors to not only cope with their experiences but also regain a sense of agency, which is crucial for resilience (Postmus et al., 2014).

The Ecological Systems Theory, is a fitting framework for the theme as it focuses on the relationship between individuals and their environments, asserting that resilience is fostered through the resources and support provided by one's community. In cases of domestic violence, this theory underscores the significance of a victim's engagement with various systems, such as family, social networks, and legal institutions, which offer critical resources, protection, and emotional support. Empowerment, an essential aspect of resilience, is cultivated when victims access these systems, allowing them to regain control, rebuild their lives, and develop coping mechanisms. The theory advocates for a comprehensive approach, combining legal, psychological, and community support, to help victims effectively navigate the complexities of domestic violence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### **Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of Service in Handling Cases of Domestic Violence**

**Procuring Resources for Advocacy.** This theme involves identifying, securing, and utilizing essential support systems and tools to strengthen victim assistance and intervention efforts. Based on informants' responses during the interview, effective advocacy relies on collaboration with community organizations, government funding, and partnerships with non-profits to ensure the availability of shelters, counseling, legal aid, and crisis support for victims. Informants highlighted that resource gaps, such as insufficient funding and lack of accessible services, hinder timely and adequate responses. Successful advocacy requires proactive efforts to secure these resources, whether through grant applications, public-private partnerships, or community engagement, to provide comprehensive support that empowers victims to escape cycles of violence and rebuild their lives.

Tuckman's Team Performance Theory describes how teams develop through five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. This can be applied to the theme in handling domestic violence cases. The theory emphasizes the importance of teamwork and how groups gradually improve their performance over time. In domestic violence advocacy, it shows how a group of professionals such as social workers, police, and legal experts must come together and work through these stages to secure the resources needed to help victims. By progressing through these stages, teams improve communication, resolve disagreements, and clearly define roles, ultimately leading to better support for survivors. This approach helps create a more organized and efficient system for addressing the needs of domestic violence victims (Tuckman, 1965).

This study discusses how resources, particularly funding, play a critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of advocacy for domestic violence survivors. The research examines nonprofit organizations that focus on supporting victims of domestic violence, highlighting how the procurement of financial resources influences the capacity of these organizations to deliver quality services. The study emphasizes that adequate funding allows for the hiring of specialized staff, provision of emergency shelters, and development of comprehensive programs that support victims in the long term. The study concludes that procuring sufficient resources enables advocacy groups to improve the services they offer, including legal assistance, psychological support, and housing (Wilson and Pollard, 2020).

It identifies how both government funding and partnerships with other agencies (e.g., healthcare, legal, and social services) are crucial to improving service delivery for victims of domestic violence. By analyzing data from several nations, the study demonstrates that procuring a wide range of resources, including training for professionals, can significantly improve the quality of services available to survivors. The study advocates for a collaborative approach to resource procurement, ensuring that different sectors are adequately funded and equipped to address the multifaceted needs of domestic violence victims (Martin and Roberts, 2019).

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), which posits that organizations depend on external resources to meet their goals and maintain operations. In the realm of domestic violence advocacy, RDT can help explain how agencies, such as law enforcement, shelters, and support services, rely on outside resources like funding, staff, and partnerships to improve their ability to manage domestic violence cases. The theory highlights the importance of forming strategic collaborations and managing resources effectively to achieve advocacy goals and enhance service quality. As noted by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003), organizations must manage their reliance on external resources to ensure their survival and success, ultimately improving their capacity to support victims of domestic violence.

Revitalizing Proficiency. This theme emphasizes the continuous improvement, learning, and skill enhancement of law enforcement officers and support services to respond effectively to the evolving needs of victims. During interviews with informants involved in domestic violence cases, responses highlighted the importance of ongoing training, capacity-building, and adopting innovative strategies to address the complexities of these situations. Informants emphasized that staying updated on legal frameworks, trauma-informed care, and victim advocacy ensures that officers and professionals can provide compassionate, efficient, and evidence-based responses. This theme underscores the commitment to refining investigative techniques, improving community outreach, and fostering collaboration among agencies to strengthen the overall response to domestic violence.

Competence Motivation Theory created by Harter (1978) highlights how believing in one's ability to succeed can increase motivation and performance. The theory explains that people are more likely to engage in tasks where they feel capable, which leads to improved self-esteem and motivation. When applied to improving the handling of domestic violence cases, the theory suggests that professionals like law enforcement officers and social workers are more motivated to offer effective help when they feel confident in their skills. This idea can be used to improve training programs, increasing the confidence and competence of those involved in providing support, which ultimately leads to better outcomes for victims.

The importance of ongoing training and development for professionals handling domestic violence cases. It found that specialized training programs helped enhance the proficiency of law enforcement, healthcare providers, and social workers in recognizing, responding to, and supporting survivors of domestic violence. These training programs fostered more informed, empathetic, and proactive approaches to case management, ultimately improving the quality of services provided to victims (Davies & Lyon, 2013).

The impact of interdisciplinary collaboration between law enforcement, medical professionals, and social service agencies on improving the outcomes for victims of domestic violence. The research revealed that revitalizing proficiency through collaborative, multi-disciplinary approaches resulted in more coordinated responses, leading to better service delivery. The study highlighted that revitalizing knowledge across disciplines fostered a more holistic, survivor-centered approach, enhancing the overall quality of domestic violence interventions (Campbell et al., 2009).

Social Learning Theory, emphasizes that individuals acquire behaviors through observing, imitating, and modeling others. In the context of domestic violence response, it implies that proficiency can be enhanced by offering law enforcement officers and service providers exposure to positive role models, comprehensive training, and opportunities for observational learning. Such measures help improve their skills in addressing cases, fostering a deeper understanding of victims' needs and legal processes. By learning from seasoned professionals, officers can adopt more effective and empathetic approaches, leading to a higher quality of service (Bandura, 1977)

### **Implications for Practice**

For the Chief Investigators in Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD) should focus on creating a safe and supportive environment for victims of domestic violence. They should make sure victims feel heard and respected during the investigation. It is important to set up clear ways of communicating and offer easy access to counseling, legal help, and shelters. Investigators need to keep learning about the effects of domestic violence and how to spot patterns of control or abuse. They should also respect the victim's choices and make sure evidence is gathered carefully and quickly, while being sensitive to the risk of causing further trauma to the victim. Providing ongoing emotional support is also crucial.

For the Victims of Domestic Violence should be encouraged to seek help and support as soon as possible, whether through a trusted friend, family member, or professional services like counselors or hotlines. It's important for them to know that they have the right to feel safe and to make decisions that are best for their well-being. Victims should be informed about their options, such as getting legal protection or accessing shelters, and be supported in taking steps to protect themselves. They should also be aware that healing is a process, and it's okay to take time to recover. It's important that they feel empowered, not blamed, and that they have access to the resources and care they need throughout their journey to safety and recovery.

For the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) should focus on providing strong support for victims of domestic violence by offering immediate help, including safe shelter, counseling, and legal assistance. They should ensure that victims are treated with respect and care, and that their privacy and safety are protected throughout the process. DSWD should also work closely with other agencies, like the police and healthcare providers, to make sure victims have access to all the help they need. Additionally, they should educate the community about domestic violence and provide training for staff to understand the effects of abuse and how to respond appropriately. By being a reliable and compassionate resource, DSWD can help victims rebuild their lives and find safety.

For the Court should prioritize the safety and well-being of victims when handling domestic violence cases by ensuring a fair and sensitive approach throughout the legal process. Judges and court staff should be trained to understand the dynamics of domestic violence, including recognizing signs of abuse and controlling behaviors. They should provide quick access to protection orders and ensure that victims feel heard and supported during hearings. The Court should also make sure victims have access to legal aid and support services, and minimize any delays in the proceedings to reduce further harm. By offering a safe and responsive environment, the Court can help protect victims and hold offenders accountable for their actions.

For the Philippine National Police (PNP) specifically Women and Children Protection Desk Section as the enforcer of the law and the responder of the cases of domestic violence, it is suggested that in taking action to the complaints of violation against women and children who desisted their cases, in order to avoid the repetition of case desistance and victimization, their partner/husband who inflict violence to their wife/women and children must undergo several community service and series of lecture so that they will guided and learned not to repeat their wrong doings.

For the Local Government Unit, the continued support for the implementation of program against women and children so that the issue on domestic violence will minimize and even it will diminish. In addition, more support through budget allocation for Women and Children Protection Desk section in order to enhance the service for the victims of domestic and the prevention of the crime. May a law or ordinance must be formulated within the locality order to strengthen the legal basis on the implementation of the program on the

campaign against women and children so that it can maintain smooth flow and orderliness of the community regarding the issue of domestic violence.

The implementing sector of the government must provide a proper facility like temporary shelter of victims during the duration of case so that victims will be safeguarded and their safety is top priority. A formal shelter and protection will be given to the victims of domestic violence and other related case involving the safety of the victims.

To the concerned office or agency in handling cases of domestic violence who provide aid and support of the victims of domestic violence, it is suggested that they may give additional programs like skills training and livelihood program so that those victims with no source of income will be given an opportunity to have their own job and generates an income as they will be given an idea on how to manage business and other sources of profits.

### **Implications for Future Studies**

Lived experiences on the people also assigned in giving service for the victims of domestic violence like Municipal Social Welfare Development Officer (MSWDO) who are assigned in rescuing, protecting of victims and preventing domestic violence in municipal level so that they can also express their experiences in handling cases of domestic violence and cases against women and children and also to formulate more programs for the better service for the victims.

Lived experience on the people assigned in the who handles the cases against women and children in barangay level such as barangay officials and its social workers. As the basis of crafting resolution for barangay approach, to develop and implement program in combating domestic violence.

Evaluation and assessment on the implementation of programs for the victims of domestic violence and cases against women and children, their facility and resources to enhance the victim support program of their municipality

The above proposed study seeks some information on the overall service and program implementation regarding cases of domestic violence or cases against women and children and also for the victims. This future study will hopefully reveal the impact of the program from the person in-charge in their locality as well as in the barangay level and also to the member of the community. Upon realization of this study.

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