Abstract

This study determined if in a rural setting prevalence of various forms of violence against women will result as socially acceptable. Using the descriptive-correlational method, a survey was conducted to 456 residents of a rural area in the Philippines. The results showed that social acceptability of physical abuse was significantly correlated to its prevalence but not sexual, emotional and economic violence. This suggested that women may continue to suffer from physical violence because it is socially acceptable. Furthermore, the finding implied that finding ways to change the perception of the society towards physical violence is important.

Keywords: social acceptability and prevalence of violence

1.0 Introduction

This study sought to determine if the prevalence of various forms of violence against women will follow if it is socially acceptable in a rural setting. The study supposed that when the society regards the different forms of violence against women as socially acceptable, their prevalence tends to be high.

Studies have shown that violence against women in various forms occurs when: men perceived women as their property (Saroca, 2012); the society is patriarchal (Rodriguez, 2012); violence against women is culturally accepted (Papp, 2010; Abramsky, et al., 2011; Yount et al., 2011; Al-Badayneh, 2012; García-Moreno et al., 2005; and Deyessa, et al., 2010); there is gender inequality (Gomez et al., 2011); there is a history of violence in pregnancy and alcohol abuse by a partner, risky sexual behaviors, low socioeconomic status and young age (Shamu, et al., 2011; Abramsky, et al., 2011; Devries, et al., 2010; and Taillieu and Brownridge, 2010); cohabitation, experience of childhood abuse, growing up with domestic violence, and experiencing or perpetrating other forms of violence in adulthood (Abramsky, et al., 2011).

There is limited empirical evidence though that in a rural setting of the Philippines, violence is socially accepted and that the prevalence of various forms of violence against women follows when it is socially acceptable. This study, a descriptive survey, addressed this gap by determining the
perception of the residents and the prevalence of the various forms of violence against women in a rural community Philippines.

2.0 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The social learning theory of Ronald L. Akers, suggests that individuals learn how to behave through both the experience of and exposure to violence (Jasinski, 2001). When people in the society experienced and were exposed to violence, they eventually accept it as a normal behavior. People in a community, therefore will do acts of violence because it is already accepted by the society. When translated into violence against women, prevalence is expected to be high if it is socially acceptable.

Using the provisions of the Republic Act 9262, which defined and enumerated acts considered as violence against women, the social acceptability of the various forms of violence against women was measured vis-a-vis the prevalence of acts of violence as reported by women respondents in an interview. If the people perceived the acts of violence against women as culturally accepted, there will be a high prevalence of violence experienced by women.

3.0 Methodology

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational method. A survey was conducted to test the

![Figure 1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study](image)
violence, and economic violence. Furthermore, cases of violence experienced by women in the year prior to the conduct of the study were also gathered through interview of the women respondents.

In addition, a regression analysis was then conducted to determine if the social acceptability of the various forms of violence against women are significantly correlated to the prevalence of the said violence against women.

### 4.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1 disclosed the perception of the respondents on the social acceptability of various forms of violence against women with 1 as acceptable and 2 as unacceptable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Abuse</th>
<th>Perception on the Social acceptability</th>
<th>Narrative Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Not acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Abuse</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Not acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Abuse</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Not acceptable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 disclosed the perception of the respondents on the social acceptability of various forms of violence against women with 1 as acceptable and 2 as unacceptable. The table showed that the respondents perceived physical abuse as socially acceptable but sexual abuse, emotional abuse and economic abuse as not acceptable.

The finding that physical abuse as socially acceptable is a grim discovery against the women’s situation. It suggests that in a rural setting the society still accepts physical violence against women, despite the various laws prohibiting the same.

The study of Gracia and Herrero (2006) found out that higher levels of acceptability were reported by those who perceived violence as less severe and less frequent, among men who know a perpetrator, and among those who have victim blaming attitude which is common among people who are older, less educated, and who placed themselves at the bottom of the social scale (Gracia and Tomás, 2014).

Table 2 summarized the cases of violence experienced by women in 2013 prior to the conduct of the study. The table revealed that the prevalence of physical violence and emotional violence is high with a frequency of 573 and 807.
respectively, while the prevalence of emotional and economic violence is low with frequencies of 12 and 49 respectively.

The high prevalence of physical violence against women coincided with the findings that physical violence against was socially acceptable.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that overall, 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence (WHO, 2013). In addition, Alhabib et al., 2010) emphasized that violence against women has reached epidemic proportions in many societies.

However, a high frequency of emotional violence despite the finding that it was not socially acceptable seemed to be a contradictory finding. But, a closer look revealed a logical explanation. Even if emotional violence was not socially acceptable, it did not leave any physical evidence when committed. Thus, women may suffer the numerous incidence of emotional violence without being noticed by the authorities or anybody whom the victim can turn to for help.

Table 2. Summary of cases of violence experienced by women respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Abuse</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Abuse</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 presented the results of the regression analysis, which shows that physical violence is significantly correlated at 0.05 level of significance with its prevalence but not sexual, emotional, and economic forms of violence. With a coefficient of -0.138 it means that the more acceptable physical violence is, the more cases of physical violence will be experienced by women. This findings suggest that in a rural setting, physical violence against women are prevalent because it is still socially acceptable.

### 5.0 Conclusion

In terms of physical violence, the findings supported the hypothesis from physical violence because it is socially acceptable. This implies that finding ways to change the perception of the society towards physical violence not only by the government but all sectors of the society is important because results can only be achieved from a concerted effort.

Table 3. Results of the regression analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Standardized Beta Coefficient</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social acceptability of physical abuse</td>
<td>Prevalence of Physical Violence</td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social acceptability of sexual abuse</td>
<td>Prevalence of Sexual Violence</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social acceptability of emotional abuse</td>
<td>Prevalence of emotional abuse</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social acceptability of economic abuse</td>
<td>Prevalence of economic abuse</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.0 Reference Cited


violence against women among the Spanish general population. Violence against women, 1077801213520577.


Rules and Regulations Implementing Republic Act 9262


Aggression and Violent Behavior, 15(1), 14-35.