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UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN FABIAN, PANGASINAN: TYPES, EFFECTS, AND INTERVENTION MEASURES

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ABSTRACT
Domestic violence has significant consequences for victims, particularly women. This study examined the prevalence of different types of violence in San Fabian, Pangasinan, and explored contributing factors, effects on victim-survivors, and coping strategies. Using a mixed-methods approach, findings revealed moderate prevalence of physical, psychological, and economic violence, and low reported sexual violence. Contributing factors included emotional instability, poor communication, economic hardship, substance abuse, and cultural norms. The study recommends enhanced awareness campaigns, support services, and targeted local interventions.
KEYWORDS: *Domestic Violence, Intervention Measures, San Fabian Pangasinan*

INTRODUCTION
Domestic violence affects individuals globally and is often hidden due to cultural norms and stigma. In the Philippines, rural areas like San Fabian lack localized data and accessible support systems. This study aimed to understand the forms, causes, and effects of domestic violence and identify effective intervention measures.

METHODOLOGY
The study used a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design. Surveys were distributed to housewives, and interviews were conducted with victims and local authorities. Tools were validated by experts. Quantitative data were analyzed using weighted means, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The quantitative findings of the study revealed that physical and psychological violence had a moderate prevalence among the respondents in San Fabian. Physical violence included forms such as slapping, hitting, and pushing, which, while not always resulting in serious physical harm, had notable effects on victims' well-being. These findings are consistent with those of the World Health Organization (2021), which reported that one in three women globally have experienced physical or sexual violence, most often by an intimate partner.

Sexual violence, in contrast, had a very low reported prevalence. However, this figure may not reflect reality due to underreporting, which can be attributed to fear, shame, and cultural stigma surrounding sexual abuse. UN Women (2023) and Krug et al. (2002) emphasized that sexual violence remains one of the most underreported forms of abuse due to societal taboos and fear of retaliation.

Economic violence was similarly rated as moderate. Respondents described instances of financial restriction, loss of autonomy over economic decisions, and control over employment, although these actions were not always identified as abusive due to normalization in traditional gender roles. This observation is aligned with Postmus et al. (2012), who noted that economic abuse is frequently misunderstood and often minimized within intimate partnerships.

Qualitative data further enriched the understanding of these findings. Thematic analysis revealed several key factors contributing to domestic violence. One major theme was psychological instability among abusers. This was often linked to unresolved trauma, poor emotional regulation, and internalized notions of masculinity rooted in early exposure to violence. Jewkes et al. (2010) argue that psychological vulnerabilities and internalized gender dominance significantly increase the risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence.

Victims described how unresolved arguments, lack of understanding, and emotional disconnection escalated into abusive behavior. This aligns with findings by Cunradi et al. (2009), who reported that poor conflict resolution and interpersonal miscommunication often predict relationship violence.

The absence of financial independence among women often made them vulnerable to coercion, control, and dependency on their partners. Ellsberg et al. (2015) emphasized that economic vulnerability is a key factor that increases women's risk of experiencing violence, especially in low-resource communities.

Additionally, substance abuse, especially alcohol consumption, was associated with increased aggression and violent episodes. Foran and O'Leary (2008) confirmed in their meta-analysis that substance use is one of the most consistent predictors of intimate partner violence.

Limited awareness of women's rights, patriarchal beliefs, and the normalization of male dominance often led victims to tolerate abuse and avoid seeking help. UNFPA (2020) notes that harmful gender norms and lack of formal education significantly contribute to the perpetuation of violence against women, especially in rural settings.

The effects of domestic violence were profound and multi-dimensional. Psychologically, survivors reported feelings of chronic stress, depression, anxiety, and in some cases, symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. Physical effects included fatigue, sleep disturbances, headaches, and general health deterioration. Socially, victims often withdrew from social interactions, experienced isolation, and had strained relationships with family and peers. These consequences further complicated their ability to seek assistance or escape abusive situations. As noted by Yoshihama (2002), social isolation and shame are common consequences of abuse that make it more difficult for survivors to access support.

As for coping mechanisms, survivors employed a range of strategies. Some chose to remain silent, suppressing their emotions in an effort to preserve family unity or protect their children. Others sought emotional refuge in informal support systems, such as trusted relatives or friends, though this was not always sustainable. A few respondents revealed that they had developed escape plans or approached formal support systems like the Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD), barangay officials, or the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) of the local police. These strategies reflect findings by Goodman et al. (2005) and Liang et al. (2005), who emphasized that survivors use complex, layered strategies in determining whether to stay in or leave abusive relationships, often weighing safety, economic resources, and emotional readiness before seeking help.

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