

Violence against Women and their Children Incident Report: Data Exploration for VAWC Awareness

¹Francis F. Balahadia, ²Zerah Jane M. Astoveza & ³Gelzen R.
Jamolin

Abstract

This study analyzed the cases on the Violence against Women and their Children (VAWC) in the province of Laguna to determine the level of law awareness, reasons for unreported violence incidents and preferences on reporting VAWC cases. To assess the collected responses, descriptive statistics and Kruskal Wallis were utilized. Convenience sampling was used with 356 respondents, 34 of whom were witnesses to the abuse and 65 are the victims of abuse. Majority of witnesses to the abuse were women between 16 and 20 years old while the victims were between 16 and 30 years old. Emotional abuse is the most common type witnessed regardless of age, location, civil status, occupation, or educational attainment. While physical abuse is the most common type experienced by the victims, it is frequently perpetrated by their former husbands. Ironically, respondents were “Very Aware” of the VAWC law but the 70.5% of them do not report cases due to embarrassment, fear of being blamed, inability to make own decision, and fear of societal judgment. Majority of respondents believe a mobile application and website could help report the abuses.

Keywords: *violence against women, awareness, unreported violence, law, abuse*

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About the authors:

¹Corresponding author. College of Computer Studies - Laguna State Polytechnic University-Siniloan Campus

²College of Computer Studies - Laguna State Polytechnic University-Siniloan Campus

³College of Teacher Education - Laguna State Polytechnic University-Siniloan Campus



1. Introduction

Gender inequality still prevails in the 21st century despite the generally progressive trend of cultural, racial, and sexual boundaries being erased in almost all areas of life nowadays. Females, no matter their geographical or cultural background, still have to endure a lifelong struggle against discrimination, abuse, and violence, with those who are poor bearing the brunt the most (Oxfam International, 2021). The prevalence of violence against women and their children (VAWC) is so extensive that the international community has been prompted to declare it as a public health and human right issue of worldwide scope (Guedes et al., 2016). Organizations pushing for the protection of women's health and rights have been lobbying for the abolition of such cruel acts for decades, resulting in the holding of several global and regional conventions and agreements, most notable of which were the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993 and the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 (World Health Organization, 2021).

The Philippine government has long recognized the importance of protecting women and their children against violence and threats to their safety and security. There are several government agencies and programs established to perform functions for this purpose such as Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) created in 1975, Women and Children Protection Center (WCPC) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Gender and Development (GAD) Program in all government departments, among others. The passage of Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004, is the biggest step the government has taken so far towards ending VAWC (UNICEF, 2020). The government has also partnered with the United Nations (UN) agencies and civil society organizations in pursuing its goals of ending VAWC and helping people who suffered from gender-based violence (United Nations, 2020).

Despite combined efforts from the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), VAWC is still rampant. Among women aged 15 to 49, one out of four reported having suffered physical or sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) in 2017 (Philippine Commission on Women, 2019). Data from the PNP revealed that physical abuse accounted for 38.54 percent of the 108,675 cases of domestic violence (PSA Infographic, n.d.), making it the most common. Furthermore, a survey commissioned by the Commission on Population and Development (POPCOM) in early 2021

and conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) reported that “harmful acts” in the form of physical, sexual, and emotional violence are causing great concern in their everyday life under the “new normal” for 25% of the adults surveyed (Cudis, 2021).

The Philippine National Demographic and Health Survey in 2018 as cited by Ranada (2020) revealed that family members are typically inflicting physical violence on women. In ever-married women, their current husband/partner (47.5%), former husband/partner (24.7%), and mother/stepmother (15.6%) are the top 3 perpetrators, while for those who were never married are the mother/stepmother (26.1%), the father/stepfather (25.3%), and the sister/brother (19.2%). These numbers corroborate the observation that intimate partners and family members are responsible for the most common forms of violence committed against women and children (WHO, 2021; LSHTM, 2010). Consequently, many cases of VAWC are unreported and victims choose to live in silence and shame, carrying the stigma throughout their lives instead of blowing the whistle on the perpetrators who frequently are the victims’ relatives or acquaintances (Forum on Global Violence Prevention, 2011).

In the Philippines, former senator Legarda (2016) remarks that despite efforts by the government to document all forms of VAWC, the number of women who are victims of domestic abuse can only be estimated at best due to many cases being unreported. Many victims choose not to report incidents of abuse mainly because they are not aware of their legal rights emphasizing the need to increase public awareness on women’s rights. Garcia (2020) acknowledged the lack of awareness about the issues, laws, and the services. Despite PNP WCPC various efforts and information drives, their reach is limited, and that many people remain unaware. People are not aware that VAWC is a public offense and there are laws in place to protect women from abuse. The QCPD considered that not only women, but also men and potential offenders, should be aware of the law. Men should also be aware of the fact that VAWC are unconstitutional and have major legal consequences. Because of the exclusivity of the legal profession, many people are unaware of the laws and their rights.

With these arguments and propositions, this study seeks to collect data on abuses experienced by women, the level of their awareness on the types and acts of domestic violence, and their legal rights. It also identifies the reasons for unreported cases and their preferences in reporting the incidents. Results of this study can be fundamental inputs to the PNP, Barangay

Women's Desk and other related government agencies in developing better programs, activities and policies against VAWC.

2. Literature review

Violence Against Women and Children

The United Nations defines VAWC as “any” act of gender-based violence against women, whether in public or private life, that causes or is likely to inflict physiological, sexual, or psychological pain or suffering to women, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Gender-based violence is any form of violence directed towards women based on their sex (WHO, 2021).

VAWC is a grave public health concern with multiple impacts on women's mental, physical, and reproductive health (Boeckel et al., 2014; Devries et al., 2010; Devries et al., 2013; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Maman et al., 2000; Stöckl et al., 2013). It is any act of violence in intimate partner and children that resulting to physical, sexual, psychological harm, and economic (United Nations' General Assembly Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women resolution 48/104 of December 1993).

According to the Daily Tribune Philippines (2021), violence against women happens in one out of every four Filipinas (Antolin, 2021). In the province of Laguna, the VAWC cases increase from 539 in 2014, 581 in 2015, 446 in 2016 to 1,022 in 2017 (Mortel & Balahadia, 2019).

Republic Act 9262

The government formulated and implemented the policies and legislation against VAWC, and part of this is the Republic Act 9262. This law protects children and women in these grave acts. R.A. 9262, also known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, is a law that promotes the protection and prescribes penalties of the abuses on women and their children by their intimate partners (Dulin, 2018).

On March 2004 the then President Macapagal-Arroyo signed R.A. 9262. It defines VAWC as *"any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating*

relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty”. It includes, but is not limited to, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and economic abuse (The LawPhil Project, n.d.).

The penalties to the perpetrators are imprisonment, paying a fine of not less than one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than three hundred thousand pesos (300,000.00), and the perpetrators shall undergo mandatory psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment and shall report compliance to the court (The LawPhil Project, n.d.).

Awareness in VAWC Law

Although there is a law protecting the welfare of women and children, there is always a question of the level of awareness regarding the content and implementation of R.A.9262. According to the study of Santiago and Aya (2014), the selected homemakers in the municipalities of Palawans were moderately aware of the provisions of RA 9262. Moreover, in the study of Panerio and Albay, they found out that the City of Digos in the province of Davao Del Sur is also moderately aware of the provisions of R.A.9262. Additionally, some studies in the Philippines also measured the awareness of male respondents on Republic Act 9262 and based on the survey of San Juan et al. (2017), the male respondents in Tanay Rizal were "aware" of the general information of R.A. 9262 but lack in-depth understanding.

The 2017 Philippines National Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), a national representative, cross-sectional survey of women and girls aged 15 to 49, provided the information. Intimate Partner Violence was reported by 23.9 percent of those in current relationships. 11.2 percent thought it was acceptable for a husband or partner to hit or beat their wife. 10.5 percent said they could not say no to sex with their spouse, and 20.4 percent said they could not say no to sex with their partner (Yoskioka et al., 2020).

3. Methodology

This study utilized descriptive research design to determine the abuses experienced by women, the level of awareness on VAWC, the reasons for unreported cases, and the preferences on reporting the incidents.

Convenience sampling was used with 356 respondents, 34 of whom were witnesses to the abuse and 65 are victims of abuse. The majority of the respondents were unmarried (76.7%), between 16-20 years old (49%), and graduated from high school (43.8%). A noticeably large number of single respondents are college graduates or pursuing postgraduate studies (29.31%).

Due to the nature of this study, the data gathering process was treated with utmost confidentiality and the identity of the respondents remained undisclosed all throughout the duration of the survey and treatment of data. The participants were contacted through social media because of the current restrictions. The main objective of the study was explained thoroughly before participants were asked to partake in the survey. The study ensured voluntary participation and the participants who agreed were given the freedom to withdraw from answering the questionnaire at any part. Upon the voluntary agreement of the participant, the link to the questionnaire was sent. They were given instructions on answering the online questionnaire. They were given three to five days to complete and submit their responses through Google Forms. In addition, they were briefed that all responses were confidential and all their data were deleted after the study was concluded.

This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire anchored on the Republic Act No. 9262 known as The Anti-Violence against Women and Their Children Act of 2004. This two-part survey questionnaire was validated by three (3) officers from the PNP Women's Desk and two (2) from the GAD office. The first part contained questions about the respondents' demographic information, the forms of violence witnessed/ and or experienced, the reasons for not reporting VAWC and their preferences in reporting VAWC incidents. The second part measured the respondents' level of awareness on the different kinds and acts of violence that women and children experience and their awareness on the legal provisions of RA 9262.

The demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics while the respondents' level of awareness were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis test.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1 presents the distribution of the different types of abuse sorted according to the participants' demographic profiles.

Table 1

The Different Types of Abuse by Respondents' Demographics

	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Economic Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Physical-Emotional Abuse	Physical-Sexual-Emotional Abuse	Total	Rank
By Age								
Witnesses to the Abuse								
16 - 20	7	6		13			26	1
21 - 25	1	2		5			8	2
Total	8	8	0	18	0	0	34	
Victims								
10 - 15	1						1	9.5
16 - 20	4	5		3			12	1.5
21 - 25	1	1	2	4			8	5.5
26 - 30	7	3	1	1			12	1.5
31 - 35	7	1	2				10	3
36 - 40	3	2		2	1		8	5.5
41 - 45	5		1	2		1	9	4
46 - 50	1			1			2	7.5
51 - 55							0	11
56 - 60	1			1			2	7.5
61 and above	1						1	9.5
Total	31	12	6	14	1	1	65	
By Location								
Witnesses to the Abuse								
Kalayaan		1		1			2	6
Famy	1	1		1			3	4
Mabitac	1			2			3	4
Pagsanjan		1					1	7
Pakil	1	2					3	4
Pangil				4			4	2
siniloan	5	3		10			18	1
Total	8	8	0	18	0	0	34	
Victims								
Alaminos				1			1	14.5
Calamba	4	2	2	1			9	2
Canlubang			1				1	14.5
Famy	2			1			3	5
Kalayaan	2	1		1			4	4
Liliw	1						1	14.5
Longos	1						1	14.5
Los Baños		1					1	14.5
Lumban	1	1					2	8
Mabitac		1					1	14.5
Paete		1					1	14.5
Pakil	1						1	14.5
Pangil	2	1		2			5	3
San Pablo	2						2	8
Siniloan	12	4	3	5	1	1	26	1
Sta rosa	1			1			2	8

Sta. Maria	1			1			2	8
Victoria				1	1		2	8
Total	30	12	6	14	2	1	65	
By Civil Status								
Witnesses to the abuse								
Single	8	8		16			32	1
Married				2			2	2
Total	8	8	0	18	0	0	34	
Victims								
Single	10	6		7	1		24	2
Married	12	5	5	4	1		27	1
Separated	4	1	1	1			7	3.5
Widower	4			2		1	7	3.5
Total	30	12	6	14	2	1	65	
By Occupation								
Witnesses to the Abuse								
Farm Technician		1					1	5.5
Housekeeper	1						1	5.5
Part-Time Prof. Singer		1					1	5.5
Vendor				2			2	3
Home Makers	1	1		5			7	2
Working Student	1						1	5.5
Student	5	5		11			21	1
Total	8	8	0	18	0	0	34	
Victims								
Call center agent	1						1	11.5
Cashier	2	1					3	4.5
Cashier		1					1	11.5
Dressmaker	1						1	11.5
Eatery Manager			1				1	11.5
Farmer				1			1	11.5
Home Makers	17	4	2	5			28	1
Housekeeper	1		1				2	6.5
Nanny	1						1	11.5
Nurse		1					1	11.5
Sales lady			1				1	11.5
Store Owner	1				1		2	6.5
Student	3	4		4	1		12	2
Teacher	1			1		1	3	4.5
Vendor	2	1	1	3			7	3
Total	30	12	6	14	2	1	65	
By Educational Attainment								
Witnesses to the Abuse								
High School Graduate	5	5		13			23	1
College Undergraduate	2			2			4	3
College Graduate		2					2	4
Post Graduate	1	1		3			5	2
Total	8	8	0	18	0	0	34	
Victims								
Elementary								
Undergraduate	2			1			3	7
Elementary Graduate	4	1	1				6	5
High School								
Undergraduate	4	1	2	3			10	3
High School Graduate	4	5	1	5	1		16	2
College Undergraduate	2	4		2			8	4
College Graduate	13	1	2	2			18	1
Post Graduate	1			1	1	1	4	6
Total	30	12	6	14	2	1	65	

Table 1 depicts that 99 participants, 34 of whom witnessed a woman being abused and 65 of whom were abused. The majority of witnesses to the abuse were women between the ages of 16 and 20. On the other hand, the victims of abuse were mostly between the ages of 16 and 20 and 26 and 30 years old. The result matches the 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority that one in every four Filipino women between 15-49 years old has experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence by their husband or partner (PSA, 2019). Because they are physically and emotionally incapable of defending themselves against their abusers, younger women who are at reproductive age are more likely to experience violence.

In terms of location, results show that majority of the witnesses to the abuse and the victims of abuse were from Siniloan, Laguna. The vast majority of witnesses to the abuse are single while married participants ranked second. While victims were mostly married, the unmarried victims were also into intimate/romantic relationship with the perpetrators but not legally married. Moreover, the most common occupation of the witness to the abuse is student followed by home maker. In contrast, the victims were mostly home makers followed by students. The vast majority of witnesses to the abuse were currently enrolled college students while the victims were already college graduates. This is the exact opposite of the findings of Shiraz (2016) that having an education and/or earning an income gives women more power and higher social status, which appears to lower the level of domestic violence they experience when compared to women who do not work, have few years of education, or are not currently enrolled in education. However, the victims, who were college graduates and home makers, were financially dependent on their husbands or partners delegating more authority over them. This reduces the likelihood of having opportunities and the courage to leave the relationship. However, unemployment is not the only factor linked to VAWC as the data shows that violence can occur regardless of the witnesses' and victims' occupations, as well as their educational levels.

Overall, the emotional abuse is the most common type of abuse witnessed regardless of age, location, civil status, occupation, or educational attainment. On the other hand, physical abuse is the most common type of abuse experienced by the victims.

Table 2*The Different Types of Abuse by Victims' Relationship to the Offenders*

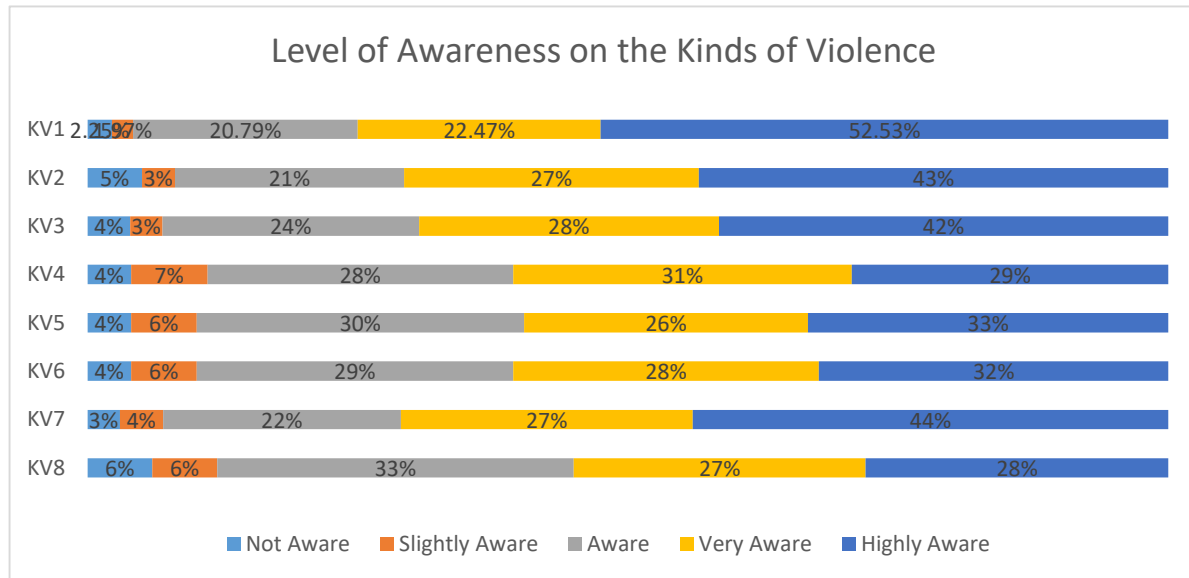
Relationship	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Economic Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Physical Emotional Abuse	Physical, Sexual, emotional	Total	Rank
Current Boyfriend		1		1			2	7.5
Former husband	10	1	3	4			18	1
Former Live-in partner	4	3	1	2			10	3.5
Former Boyfriend	1			1			2	7.5
Current Mother's Boyfriend	5	2		2	1		10	3.5
Current Live-in Partner	2	1	1				4	6
Husband	8		1	3	1	1	14	2
Have a sexual relationship to the abuser		4		1			5	5
Total	30	12	6	14	2	1	65	

Table 2 shows the relationship of the victims to the offenders and the kind of abuse they experienced. According to the data, former husbands (18) are the most common VAWC perpetrators followed by current husbands (14), former live-in partner (10) and mother's current boyfriend (10). Most victims were able to escape the horrors of an abusive relationship by ending it, while others became widower. Some victims, on the other hand, are still in the relationship and/or currently living with the offenders.

Physical violence, being the most common kind of abuse experienced by women (30), is associated with manipulative tactics of controlling and keeping the victim in the relationship. Women fears to leave because a clear picture that attempting to be free is not only emotionally difficult but, life threatening. The threat of bodily and emotional harm puts a victim defenseless.

Figure 1

Level of Awareness on the Kinds of Violence against women and children



The level of awareness on the kinds of violence is shown in figure 1. Based on the results, most of the respondents are “*Highly Aware*” in the KV1- acts of physical harm or physical maltreatment committed by a partner or any person. The respondents are also “*Very Aware*” of the KV1- acts of lasciviousness or forcing a woman or her children to engage in sexual activity but does not constitute rape. The same level of awareness which is “*Very Aware*” was evident in terms of KV3-acts or omissions causing mental or emotional suffering of the victim, KV 4-acts of controlling the access to economic resources or financial deprivation by intimate partner or husband, KV5- acts of restraining to practice a profession, to engage in any work to gain additional income, KV 6- acts of restraining to practice a profession, to engage in any work to gain additional income, KV7- forms of humiliation, intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, and public ridicule that cause sleepless night and anxiety, and KV 8-acts of controlling to manage own property or to invest in any forms of business transaction, respectively.

The respondents who acknowledged the awareness about the kinds of violence experienced by women and children were similarly reflected in a survey conducted on male residents of Tanay, Rizal to determine their level of awareness about R.A. 9262. It was discovered that while respondents were aware of general facts, they lack thorough knowledge of

the information of the Republic Act. Responses were primarily based on internal states such as feelings and emotions. (San Juan et al., 2020).

Table 3

Percentage Distribution on Level of Awareness on the Acts of Violence

Act of Violence	NA	SA	A	VA	HA	SD	M
1. Hitting, kicking, punching, or causing harmful injury to the woman or child.	3.09%	2.25%	13.48%	20.79%	60.39%	0.99	5
2. Acts of grave threat that cause a woman or her child a traumatic experience or risk of imminent danger.	2.53%	1.97%	18.54%	28.09%	48.88%	0.97	4
3. Shouting, blaming, use of profane language to a woman or her child to feel low self – esteem.	3.37%	1.12%	15.73%	24.72%	55.06%	0.99	5
4. Depriving a woman and her children on financial support to become dependent.	3.37%	3.37%	22.47%	28.65%	42.13%	1.04	4
5. Depriving a woman and her child to provide the basic needs, and sustain the educational needs of their child.	3.37%	3.37%	20.51%	28.09%	44.66%	1.04	4
6. Preventing a woman to practice her profession or to work in any establishment to gain additional income.	3.93%	5.90%	25.00%	26.40%	38.76%	1.11	4
7. Controlling a woman to make her own decisions or actions.	3.37%	3.37%	21.63%	30.34%	41.29%	1.03	4
8. Forcing a woman and/or her children to watch a pornographic scene and engage in any sexual activity and/or acts of lasciviousness.	5.34%	5.34%	21.07%	24.44%	43.82%	1.16	4
9. Forcing a woman and/or her children to engage in copulation.	7.30%	8.71%	28.93%	23.60%	31.46%	1.22	4
10. Limiting a woman and her children to attend social gatherings with her family, relatives/close kin, or even to meet neighbor's.	5.62%	6.74%	26.69%	26.97%	33.99%	1.15	4
11. Staying of intimate partner or husband in the house of a woman with her child without any consent or against her will.	6.18%	6.74%	28.37%	26.40%	32.30%	1.17	4

Legend: Not Aware (NA); Slightly Aware (SA); Aware (A); Very Aware (VA); Highly Aware (HA); Standard Deviation (SD); Mean (M)

Table 3 reveals that the respondents are “Highly Aware” that hitting, kicking, punching, or causing harmful injury to the woman or child, and shouting, blaming, use of profane language

to a woman or her child to feel low self – esteem was an act of violence. While the rest of the indicators of acts of violence shows that the respondents are “Very Aware”. On the contrary, it can also be found that, there are respondents who are slightly aware though some are truly not aware on acts of violence against women, respectively. The findings are in consonance with the perception of the housewives in the different municipalities of Palawan regarding R.A. 9262. It reveals that all housewives strongly agreed that the provisions or statements of R.A. 9262 are considered acts of violence against women and their children. It implies that respondents have positive perception on the provisions of the Republic Act (Santiago and Aya, 2014). However, the figure implies that, although there are women who are aware of the acts of VAWC, it does not justify the percentage of unaware women who may have contributed to the unending existence of violence against women and children.

Table 4

Anti-VAWC Law Rights and Protection processed data with mean, standard deviation and median.

Provisions of the law	NA	SA	A	VA	HA	SD	M
Filing a VAW case against her intimate partner, husband, or any person who commit domestic violence in barangay or lawful authority.	5.34%	8.15%	32.58%	23.03%	30.90%	1.15	4
Request for the Barangay Protection Order to secure Permanent or Temporary Protection against the offender not to harm the woman and her child.	4.78%	6.18%	28.65%	27.25%	33.15%	1.12	4
Assistance of the barangay desk officer to file an action against the offender who commits violence against women and their children.	4.21%	6.74%	31.74%	25.00%	32.30%	1.11	4
Any concerned citizen who has knowledge of the commission of domestic violence may file (in behalf of the victim – survivor) a complaint against the offender.	5.34%	10.11%	33.43%	23.60%	27.53%	1.15	4
Assistance from clinical or psychological experts to help a woman suffering from Battered Woman Syndrome.	7.87%	9.27%	28.37%	25.84%	28.65%	1.22	4
Legal assistance from the Public Attorney’s Office to defend a woman and her child against any form of domestic violence.	4.21%	8.43%	25.00%	28.09%	34.27%	1.13	4
Assistance from C/MSWD to have a temporary shelter or referral to Haven Rehabilitation Center to every woman survivor.	6.74%	10.39%	31.46%	23.31%	28.09%	1.19	4
The privilege of filing 10 days leave of absence with pay to cope up with suffering.	17.13%	17.13%	27.25%	18.26%	20.22%	1.36	3
Filing of complaint even uncommon relationship, such as lesbian/gay, or whom she has a sexual or dating relationship with LGBTQi+ that commits intimate partner violence.	8.43%	11.52%	33.99%	20.22%	25.56%	1.22	3

Table 4 shows the respondent's awareness on the legal rights and protection in Anti-VAWC. Based on the results, the respondents are 'Very Aware' in terms of filing a VAW case against her intimate partner, husband, or any person who commit domestic violence including the place to report it, which is in the barangay or lawful authority. They are also 'Very Aware' on how to request for the barangay protection order to secure permanent or temporary protection against the offender not to harm the woman and her child. In terms of assistance of the barangay desk officer, the respondents are 'Very Aware' on filing an action against the offender who commits violence against women and their children and also 'Very Aware' that any concerned citizen who has knowledge of the commission of domestic violence may file (in behalf of the victim – survivor) a complaint against the offender.

The respondents are also 'Very Aware' that they can seek assistance from clinical or psychological experts to help a woman suffering from battered woman syndrome, that they can seek legal assistance from the Public Attorney's Office to defend a woman and her child against any form of domestic violence, and that there is a temporary shelter or referral to Haven Rehabilitation Center to every woman survivor assisting by the C/MSWD. Meanwhile, the respondents are 'Aware' that they have a privilege of filing 10 days leave of absence with pay to cope up with suffering and they also aware that filing of complaint even uncommon relationship, such as lesbian/gay, or whom she has a sexual or dating relationship with LGBTQi+ that commits intimate partner violence.

Despite a more positive response in the level of awareness on anti-VAWC Law rights and protection, still a number of women are slightly aware and not aware to root out violence against them. This supports Amparo and Caparas (2012) that full awareness on RA 9262 through the modes of IEC is necessary to ensure protection of women and their children.

Table 5

Significant Difference on the Level of Awareness on VAWC by Civil Status

Factors	H-Value	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Level of Awareness on the Kinds of Violence	5.42	0.144	Accept	Not significant
Level of Awareness as to Acts of Violence	6.91	0.075	Accept	Not significant
Anti-VAWC Law Rights and Protection Awareness of the Respondents	6.5	0.09	Accept	Not Significant

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test are shown in Table 5. It reveals no significant difference on the respondents' level of awareness on the kinds of violence, the level awareness of acts of violence, and the level awareness of anti-VAWC Law rights and protection having a p-value of 0.144, 0.075 and 0.090, respectively which is greater than 0.05, when grouped according to civil status. This implies that respondents' civil status has no effect on their level of awareness.

Table 6

Reasons of Unreported Violence Incidents

Reasons	Single	Married	Separated	Widow	Total	Rank
1. Fear of threat and harm for herself and of the family.	155	22	2	0	179	1
2. Fear of losing financial support from the abuser.	26	4	2	0	32	10
3. Afraid that filing a case will have an emotional impact on the children.	43	15	3	2	63	5
4. Do not know whom to approach for help.	65	10	1	1	77	4
5. In the belief that personal matters was the cause of the abuse	34	7	1	0	42	7
6. Do not want the abuser to be in serious trouble.	19	5	0	1	25	12
7. Have hope that the abuser will change later on in life.	27	7	4	1	39	8
8. Ashamed to be the topic of conversation in the barangay.	71	11	2	2	86	3
9. Do not know enough about the law that protects women and children.	37	6	1	0	44	6
10. No support from friends and relatives	33	1	1	0	35	9
11. My family (mother-in-law, relative, or parents) encouraged me not to complain for the betterment of my children and spouse.	23	6	0	0	29	11
12. I prefer to keep quiet and keep it to myself.	144	23	1	2	170	2

Table 6 shows 70.5% respondents not reporting the abuses they experienced, followed by 10.39% who reported the abused only to their parents and relatives, 6.3% reported to Barangay Officials, 4.49% shared to their friends, and 4.21% reported to police officers. The top reasons why victims do not report abuses/violence include '*Fear of harming oneself and hurting members of the family*', '*I prefer to keep quiet and keep it to myself*', '*Ashamed to be the topic of*

conversation in the barangay, *'Do not know who to approach for help'* and *'Afraid that the case will have an emotional impact on the children and that I cannot do anything'* with 50.28%, 47.75%, 24.16%, 21.62%, and 17.70%, respectively. Meanwhile, the least reason is *"Do not want to cause harm to the abuser"* with 7.10%.

This is the exact explanation of Partlow (2020) that many abused women give in to "pressure" from children who ask them not to file complaints against their spouses, or these women are monetarily reliant on their husbands. Similarly, majority of women who were subjected to domestic violence claimed that their husbands were the abusers (Sarkar, 2010). The result is also similar to the findings of Bernabe (2012) that incidents of VAWC are often unreported due to the sensitivity of the issues and its impacts on the women and their families. This is also the conclusion of Garcia (2021) that unreported cases increase because of personal embarrassment, economic dependence, privacy of families and victim blaming attitudes.

Table 7 shows the respondents' preferences on reporting VAWC cases. Most of the respondents believed that a mobile application and website can provide help in terms of abuses 62.69% as against the 35.52% who somewhat believed and 1.79% who did not believe. On the other hand, 85.37% prefer to report abuses against women and children through a mobile app as against 13.43% somewhat agreed and 1.19% did not agree. In order to immediately report abuses, 53.73% believes a mobile application and website would be the most convenient while 24.85% would rather call help to Barangay patrols making rounds in the community, and 21.49% would use police hotline.

In terms of reporting the location of the incident, 59.70% respondents/victims would prefer using a GPS-enabled mobile application to track their location. Whereas; 62.99% shares that it is more ideal to have access to mobile application that provides information on women's rights, laws and protections. At the same time, 62.69% would like to have a mobile application similar to social media platform where abused women may share their stories and be able to relate to each other. For possible way that police may be able to respond immediately to abuse incident, 63.28% opt to have a mobile application that ensures confidentiality of the issue and sends direct message to responders for immediate action.

Table 7*Preferences on Reporting VAWC Cases*

Indicators	Percentage
Possibility of mobile app and website to reduce VAWC	
Yes	62.69
No	1.79
Somewhat	35.52
Preference to report VAWC through a mobile app	
Yes	85.37
No	1.19
Somewhat	13.43
Convenient method for reporting VAWC	
Use a mobile application and website	53.73
Contact police hotline	21.49
Call help to Barangay patrols making rounds in the community	24.78
Reporting of location/incident area	
Ask a neighbor or a family member to ask help.	9.85
Use a GPS-enabled mobile application to track their location.	59.7
Will contact the police department's hotline and request an immediate response.	30.45
Preferred method on VAWC information	
Through flyers posted at the Barangay hall where all will be able to read.	5.37
Access to mobile application that provides information on women's rights, laws and protections	62.99
Flyers and brochures on women's rights, laws and protections distributed in the barangay	1.79
Tarpaulins with VAWC forms and a flow chart depicting the VAW complaint process posted in a prominent location.	29.85
Preferred strategy for VAWC victims' sharing of experience	
A mobile application similar to social media platform where abused women may share their stories and be able to relate to each other.	62.69
Will confide my parents and friends about the abuse I am experiencing	11.04
Narrate a statement that I am experiencing abuse on a paper and sent it to the police	26.27
Preferred strategy for police response	
A mobile application that ensures confidentiality of the issue and sends direct message to responders for immediate action.	63.28
Send a text message to friends for them to send help.	4.48
Call the nearby barangay officials or police station.	32.24
Strategy for reporting VAWC emergency cases	
Never stop shouting for my neighbors to hear me that I am being abuse.	10.75
Make a lot of noise alert people that an abuse is happening.	16.42
A mobile application with a reporting feature that allows me to input my profile, and a trusted person for assistance.	72.84
Strategy for finding a shelter for VAWC victims	
Would ask the assistance of the barangay officials and police to find a place to stay.	11.04
Have a mobile application which can give information on the location of shelters	60.6
Would ask relatives help and a place to stay	28.36
Platforms to learn more about the forms of VAWC	
Would watch programs on television about abused women.	15.22
Through social media and an fb page with women and organized group provides information about VAWC.	20.3
Have a mobile application that allows users to click on information about forms of VAWC.	64.48

Likewise, to have immediate response to the victims and if their situations necessitates an emergency response, 72.84% believes a mobile application with a reporting feature that allows me to input my profile, such as my address, family and relative contact numbers, and a trusted person who will receive an immediate message/notification that I am being abused and need assistance.

Once the victims decide to leave their husband/partner but had no place to stay, 60.60% wishes to have a mobile application which can give information on the location of shelters accommodating abused women and children and are also providing livelihood assistance. For them to learn/discover they are VAWC victims without realizing before, 64.48% will greatly appreciate a mobile application that allows users to click on information about forms of VAWC.

As raised by Anderson et al. (2020) that, lack of responsive institutions and limited legal measures against violence are among the risk factors, the findings of the study deemed relevant and fit as solution to the unreported cases of violence. This finding is congruent to the suggestion of Valeza (2020) on the use of innovative approaches through new technologies and behavioral science.

5. Conclusion

The findings showed that emotional abuse is the most common type witnessed, regardless of age, location, civil status, occupation, or educational attainment of the respondents. Meanwhile, physical abuse is the most common type experienced by the victims from their former husbands. The level of awareness on the provisions of Republic Act 9262 among the female respondents from the Province of Laguna is “very high”. However, a number of unaware female should be taken in consideration because it may contribute to the unending battle to eliminate violence against women despite the campaigns. Additionally, it was revealed that the respondent’s civil status has no influence on their level of awareness on Republic Act 9262. Majority of them are not reporting the abuses they experienced due to fear, privacy, humiliation, absence of trusted person and emotional effects. The majority of the respondents believed that a mobile application and website could help them in reporting the abuses.

This study suggests a system that will address the needs of the VAWC victims in a more effective, faster, reliable and dependable manner. This features a mobile application and web

portal to be utilized in reporting VAWC cases that uses various technologies such as geo-mapping with a Geolocation Information System, web and mobile application, SMS and code generator which may reinforce violence insights among the public, as well as learning different violence prevention activities to increase wide dissemination of VAWC awareness to all woman and children. It will also include elements such as mobile software capable of reporting VAWC and a customizable e-reporting mechanism for pre-selected people to call in an emergency. Moreover, it may be used as method of providing VAWC-related Information and questionnaire module, generating questionnaire assessment to determine if person is a VAWC Victim based on the VAWC legislation in the Philippines. Lastly, in order to assist victims and empower them, there is a need for a mobile app that help out in locating shelter and work opportunity that would allow them to survive even without their husband/partner.

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