

LIVE or LEAVE: Processes Caviteña Women Undergo in Intimate Partner Violence

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Abstract

This Grounded Theory Research describes the experiences of women in intimate partner violence (IPV) and identifies the processes they go through to arrive at a decision on how to optimize intimate relationships. In addition, it aims to generate a theory or a framework arising from the core concepts that evolved from the collected data.

The central research question is: What are the processes (cognitive, affective and behavioral) that Caviteñas have been through in dealing with intimate partner violence?

Eleven informants were interviewed. Data that were generated were subjected to open, axial and selective coding analysis. Five core categories were identified and in this particular research focuses only on the process of Intimate Partner Violence.

Since this may arouse the awareness and sensitivity to cultural issues on IPV, this may be an input for health practitioners to develop culture-sensitive prevention strategies for women in Cavite.

Keywords : Intimate partner violence, cognitive process, affective process, behavioral process

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, intimate partner violence (perpetuated by male partners) has been recognized as a leading public health problem. About 1 to 3 or 30% of women have experienced either physical and/or sexual abuse in their lifetime. In 2018, the estimated prevalence of IPV in Western Pacific Region is 20%. In the Philippines, the estimates of IPV among ever-married/partnered women in lifetime and the past 12 months are 14% and 6% respectively [1]. Medina [2] emphasized the following qualities of women from Cavite: diligence, fortitude or emotional toughness, and advocacy for human rights.

The consideration of these cultural characteristics of Caviteñas and their engagement in abusive relationships influenced the uniqueness of the study. How can intimate partner violence happen in families where integrity, freedom and respect are foremost? How can diligent, bold women who highly

support human rights allow being trapped in violent relationships? How can women who find the courage and resources to leave be protected? Does leaving end the intimate partner violence?

In this study, answers to these questions were explored from the cultural perspective of Caviteñas.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This Grounded Theory Research primarily aimed to describe the experiences of Caviteña women in intimate partner violence and identify the processes they go through in order to arrive at a decision about how to deal with the intimate relationships. Ultimately, this study was intended to develop a theory out of the interconnections of the concepts identified.

The central research question is: *What are the processes (cognitive, affective, behavioral) that Caviteñas have been through in dealing with intimate partner violence?* From these processes, the study proceeded in answering the

question: *What postulates can be formulated as far as intimate partner violence is concerned?*

III. METHODS

The study utilized qualitative method, particularly Grounded Theory based on the concepts of essences of Postpositivism by Strauss and Corbin[3]. To gather qualitative data, unstructured/informal interviews and observation were done. To improved explanation of findings and analysis, impressions, description of setting, circumstances, intriguing events in relation to field and interviewees as part of the culture of interest. The audio taped interviews were then transcribed verbatimly and each transcription was carefully analyzed through open, axial and selective coding.

In open coding, 21 codes were identified based on their properties or characteristics after data was broken into smaller fragments. Interconnections between codes were analyzed in axial coding and those with similar content were reclustered to 18 concepts which leads to 5 core categories systematically that evolved through selective sampling.

Theoretical sampling was utilized in selecting 11 informants: women born and raised in the different districts in Cavite who personally experienced physical violence by intimate partners.

There was no coercion, and the informants were assured that they were free to withdraw at any stage, should they choose to do so, and voluntarily agreed to sign the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) in accomplishing the research instrument as well as the Key Informant Interview. The anonymity and confidentiality of information was upheld. Privacy and confidentiality of the answers were emphasized thereafter and whatever information gathered was used for research purpose only.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This article concentrates on the theme, *processes of IPV* which describes the different processes namely cognitive, affective and behavioral, abused women undergo in their

experience of violence in intimate relationships and their decision to stay or leave the abusive relationship. The framework that was generated is depicted in Figure 1.

Cognitive Processes

Cognitively, the informants *have strong cultural beliefs on marriage* which are explained in various ways: First, they believed that marriage is sacred and permanent. Second, one Caviteña informant accepted that praying for the right man and having it granted is a fate. Third, a woman from Kawit, Cavite believed that their marital disputes are due to incompatibilities related to the same birth month and age. Fourth, marital union is lifetime and can never be retracted unless the law on revocation of marriage is appealed. Fifth, another woman realized that marital life is not that easy at all the way she expected it to be – being helped by another person (spouse). Sixth, the informants believed that it is all right for a woman to stay at home and take care of the children and other domestic responsibilities. Seventh, the role of in-laws, both as protective factor and a risk factor, is indispensable in the families with violence. And lastly, some of the informants were more tolerant of intimate partner violence and believed that it is the woman who leads the family especially in creating the emotional tone at home which is perpetuated by the traditional belief in gender roles of husband as breadwinner and wife as homemaker.

One abused woman has been financially dependent on her husband since their courtship. As disclosed by one Caviteña from Alfonso, Cavite, *“He would always be there whenever I would become short of finances especially for my tuition fee.”* When she unveiled this to her mother, she remembered her mother cautioning her *“You would be in deep trouble to that person. Though you don’t like anymore, you could not leave him.”* It is of considerable interest also to relate this financial dependence to the concept of economic abuse by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence as cited in Pollet [4] paraphrased as, *“By*

controlling and limiting the victims's access to financial resources, a batterer ensures that the victim will be financially limited if she chooses to leave the relationship. As a result, victims of domestic violence are often forced to choose between staying in abusive relationship and facing economic hardship." Therefore, indebtedness and men's economic control over women are two important reasons for the victim's dependence and incapability to leave the relationship.

As a boyfriend and husband, an abused woman perceived his partner as her father who always accompanies her anytime she needs it. She narrated, *"It looks like that I always have a companion everywhere except in the CR."* This counter transference has transformed into emotional dependence with her partner as well. As expressed by a woman from Alfonso, Cavite, *"He served as my father when I was in Manila, Ma'am. It seemed I was carrying with me the world. I don't know. I was totally at a loss. It took me a long time to adjust in Manila, Ma'am."*

In the face of intimate partner violence, the abused women still empathize with their husband for their uncontrolled anger, low self-esteem and narcissistic attitude as reasons for beating them.

"My children and I try to understand him. He has no work, retired and the pension he receives is solely used to pay for the amortization of the house..."

Informants from Cavite have their mental processes *mixed up and perplexed* once physical abuse is directed to them. In contrast to perplexity, when being physically injured by her partner, one abused woman from Cavite City admitted that her mind became blank making her unable to decide and ask for medical help. These behaviors are made apparent in the following citation:

"Before, when I experienced battery, it's like that my mind was very confused..."

The abused woman informants from Cavite were into *strong astonishment* when they were given death threats and physical and verbal abuses by their intimate partners.

"He texted me that he would kill me. I could not imagine that he could do that. We talked peacefully asking me to come back. I could not imagine that he could do that..."

The abused woman informants from Cavite have a number of *fears* in mind as a result of physical violence, including fear of husband's anger, *"I am afraid especially when he becomes hot-headed,"* being threatened to be killed as well as her children, *"I have a different feeling. I could not tell that he might kill me there; I am still afraid. Who knows that one day, he just stabs you; Of course, you will be afraid. He will kill your children"* and fear of physical retaliation by others (women's family, friends and former suitors), *"I told him, you know my brother is angry at you. When he hits you, it's impossible that your family will not retaliate. I keep him away from trouble..."*

An informant from Cavite City was terrified by the thought of the husband's tendency to shoot himself resulting from anger *"I was thinking he might shoot himself upstairs."*

The informants' greatest threat is that their husbands will take their children away. This fear of losing custody of children is evidenced in the following verbalization:

"I want to get all my children. There was a time that we quarreled because he was giving only two. He does not want to give the other one and I don't like that. If possible, I want all..."

The abused Caviteña informants held poor self-concept. *"While he is beating me, I feel being small,"* as conveyed by one woman from Alfonso, Cavite. Their self-worth had shattered which made them think of their being women highly discriminated and oppressed *"My being human diminished,"* *"I see myself as a worthless woman."*

The physical abuse is very damaging cognitively; thus, all the Caviteña informants had one way or another, *thought of committing suicide* by self-infliction of physical pain, over indulgement to work, use of sharp objects like scissors and knife, and hanging using rope. According to WHO [5], 72.7% of women who attempted suicide had suffered physical abuse by partners. Furthermore, Dillon et al.[6]

confirmed the association between experience of abuse and increased suicidal ideations and attempts in women, Intimate partner violence had greatly diminished informants' concept of themselves causing powerlessness and depression. One informant from Bailen, Cavite believed that through suicide, the intimate partner may change.

While the Caviteña informants blamed themselves and accepted responsibility for partner's abusive behavior, some believed that it is the husband's behavior, particularly the controlling attitude, womanizing, and non-prioritizing family for financial expenditures that must be blamed for damaging the family unity.

Considering the concept of submission, the Caviteña informants *believed that women may submit to their husbands* but not to the point of stripping oneself of self-respect and personal autonomy. The following are the conceptualizations of two participants about submissiveness of women:

"Martyrs are those women who submit themselves to their husbands although they are already hurt..."

"I submit myself if I know he is right, but if he is wrong, I don't..."

Some of the Caviteña informants *employed different mental coping mechanisms* to minimize the effect of trauma experience. Most commonly, the informants would cover up their physical injury by rationalizing or telling others that their bruises or wounds simply result from accidental slipping on the floor or bumping against a wall. The following citations give affirmation to this cognitive response to violence:

"If others ask why I am wearing shades, I tell I have sore eyes (though I have black eye) and I don't want to infect others, so I stay inside..."

"My child asked me why my cheek was reddening. I just told my child nothing, just a bump somewhere..."

Some of the abused Caviteña informants were hoping that eventually their husbands will change for the better. They wanted to believe,

"My husband will change. This could happen little by little," "I just told just let it be, he might not repeat it anymore." Based on the results on socio-demographic characteristics, the informants generally had 10 to 30 years of togetherness before coming to a point of dealing with the abuse in the forms of legal separation, reporting to authorities or filing legal charges against the husband. One Caviteña entrusted her thorny situation to God's intervention and believed that she had to overcome such difficulties for it is her responsibility as a woman to maintain harmony in the family.

Some of the Caviteña informants *demonstrated openness for healing and forgiveness*. One informant from Indang, Cavite was very humble to ask forgiveness if her action of filing charges against her husband was an imprudent move while a woman from Cavite City was analyzing if she had sincerely forgiven already her husband. Sharing their thoughts:

"While going to Trece, I told myself to forgive me for what I am doing because I could not handle it anymore..."

Sometimes when he asks forgiveness, I tell myself if I have really forgiven him.

Whenever I see his face, I always ask myself if.... But whenever you leave him, what's this? Have I really forgiven him?"

The abused Caviteña informants also considered leaving their partners either temporarily or permanently. Some reasons for temporary separation are to seek for "greener pasture" in foreign countries to augment family's financial scarcity; to share husband's responsibility in taking care of the children; to provide a "time out" for violence; and to give self an opportunity to contemplate and release emotions. The abused Caviteña informants perceived that the effects of permanent separation are social isolation of husband since these victims would opt to stay or rent a house with the children, seeking occupation in a distant place, and implications of the use of husband's surname by the wife and the children. Quoting their verbalizations:

“When we separate, no children will go with him. I’ll go with my children. I’ll work in a faraway place...”

“My children carry his family name. Ma’am, I could remove his and still use my maiden name, but not to those of my children...”

Despite being in an isolated and pitiable situation, they still aspire for reestablishing social connections once they are ready. They are open to forgiveness and healing. They generally are optimistic that the situation will change and will offer them new beginnings. They believe that they deserve something better in their effort to change their situation. These could be indications of boldness and resiliency of the Caviteña informants with the mindset that, as women, they are responsible in maintaining the harmony and peace at home and that they have to take actions to achieve these.

Affective Processes

Many abused women are trapped in *traumatic bonding*; the emotional bond abused women have formed with their abusers. After the physical violence, the victims develop positive feelings toward the abuser as the latter become especially loving and kind. Having no other options, the women accept the loving gestures, love them and anticipate their needs more than their own. The victims even find fault with themselves and accept responsibility for partner’s aggression. Married women are likely to become more emotionally dependent on men because of what Denmark and Paludi [7] pointed out that marriage is more of an emotional investment for women while for men, it is more of instrumental gain (housekeeping and livelihood).

Maintaining the emotional tone of marriage or intimate relationship drives violence among spouses. One informant from Alfonso, Cavite agreed that if a woman is emotionally responsive to her mate, violence will not take place by saying, *“If a wife is affectionate with her husband, she will not be hurt.”* Enriquez [8] supports this idea that affection or *“lambing”* is meaningful in Filipino culture.

For an informant from Rosario, Cavite, it is undeniable that the *emotional anguish she suffered resulting from her husband’s extramarital affair is relived* whenever she encounters the other woman who happens to be a distant neighbor in the same village. She narrated, *“He resents me so much if I say things about her other woman. That is what it hurts me here.”* Also, there is an *emotional numbness* which causes inability to sense the pain brought by emotional trauma. As articulated by one participant, *“I am feeling numb...”*

One informant from Cavite City had *unexplained feeling* the first time she saw her husband together with another woman. She mournfully expressed, *“I could not express how a woman feels seeing her husband inside the house of another woman.”*

The foregoing reaction to intimate partner violence resultantly became a barrier to love. Seven out of the eleven Caviteña informants expressed *vanishing love* to their spouses as a result of intimate partner violence as expressed in the following verbatim:

“The time that he was hurting me, I was already losing my love toward him...”

There is an accompanying emotional isolation. One woman from Rosario, Cavite neither experienced being loved by her husband, *“It’s not clear to me, his love. I did not experience true love from him,”* nor experienced pleasure in various aspects of the relationship, *“I don’t feel happiness.”*

Sternberg as cited in Weiten et al.[9] in his triangular theory of love gave an explanation that all love experiences must be characterized by 3 elements, namely: intimacy, passion and commitment (consummate love). The concept on love of this particular woman mentioned earlier is not grounded on the 3 elements and is called *nonlove*. In contrast, one informant from Cavite City has sustained her love and loyalty to her husband despite the emotional abuse she had suffered from him acclaiming, *“My love is still there 100%. I admit I still love him. I tell my children that if I don’t anymore love your father, probably I have remarried another man*

already.” And this may be the kind of love defined by Dobson [10] as tough loving.

The abused Caviteña informants developed *distrust* towards the abusive partner which started even before there was physical violence, when the abuser was having extramarital affair with other women. And this damage of trust greatly betrayed these women.

In response to emotional abuse, the informants labeled their dominant feelings as *exploding anger*. Quoting informants’ verbatim responses: *What would I still feel, just to be angry; Lately, I felt angry; I am feeling angry; My heart seemed to burst; It seems like I want to explode and Sometimes, I feel I would burst.* Some, however, were able to suppress their feelings of anger in order not to be destructive. Being destructive could place them in danger of more severe physical attacks. One abused woman expressed, *“I have long remained silent.”* According to Videbeck [11], anger that is suppressed can lead to hostility and aggression which can potentially lead to victim’s retribution.

Some of the Caviteña informants responded affectively by *feeling guilty* of their inability to perform other obligations due to economic insufficiency and of their inability to stop the economic abuse in general. One battered wife from Alfonso revealed that she was unable to financially support her own mother since her income is being controlled by her husband in favor of the latter’s support for his biologic family. Guilt can have both positive and negative effects. Positively, it can inspire people to act in thoughtful and conscientious ways. Negatively, it can be unproductive according to Gestalt (as cited in Flannagan and Flannagan) [12] as exemplified by the woman informants in this study who felt guilty for not being able to intervene and for even provoking the occurrence of violence.

The Caviteña informants described the abusive situation they are in as *shameful or embarrassing* that they avoid disclosure of their situation to their friends. This conceptualization is embodied in the following narratives: *“Of course, I am ashamed to tell; it’s a shameful*

experience...” After the interview, one informant from Rosario, Cavite, however, verbalized that transcending the painful situation means telling her story to the world without embarrassment. *“I am not embarrassed telling my story that way because I have experienced it, so that it would not happen to others. They don’t have to marry right away, they have to choose,”* she openly expressed.

Physical battery leads to emotional reaction that the woman is *no longer the person the husband appointed as important and special*. *“When he did it to me, I felt I was not important to him,”* as declared by a participant.

In all these overwhelming emotional reactions to intimate partner violence, the informants were able to hold on and transcend above their situation. The violence had created a crisis situation where women acted well affectively and were brought back to their pre-crisis level of functioning. It is believed that what helped them most are their emotional toughness, children’s love, sustained love and loyalty to the husband, and empowerment to ask for help.

Behavioral Processes

The following behavioral processes from the *interpersonal standpoint* evolved from the study:

Many of the abused women were suffering from *conspiracy of silence*. When their partners have escalating anger already and the tension is increasingly building up, women would opt to remain silent, otherwise they will receive stronger thumping and beating and the shameful situation will be exposed to their neighbors.

Most victims of the abuse could not tell anyone their dehumanizing experience so they *concealed the information and the physical injuries* associated with the abuse. In order to cover up physical signs of abuse, one woman from Alfonso, Cavite shared that she wears long sleeved blouses, puts on heavy makeup and wears tinted eyeglasses or shades.

After a physical or a verbal violence episode, the couples become *estranged for few days or weeks*. *They ignore each other and fail to communicate with each other.* Quoting their

responses: “No more communication; I don’t mind him...” A victim from Alfonso, Cavite who is currently in the process of legal separation with husband was forced not to communicate since that was part of their agreement on paper. She stated, “*We are not allowed to text nor to talk with each other. That is part of our agreement on paper. When he fetches the children, we don’t talk. I don’t look at him.*”

Stories were told by these Caviteñas that they are beaten by their husbands if they refuse to engage in sexual intimacies with them or if they disapprove sex done by husband in extramarital way (with other women). For this reason, they become *defenseless* and try to appease their partners by giving into the latter’s wishes. As a consequence of coerced sex, some Caviteñas have developed *sexual unresponsiveness* and have just submitted themselves physically. This is affirmed by a 49-year-old victim from Rosario, Cavite, “*Hindi naman puwedeng hindi pagbigyan, bugbog ka diyan.*”

There is some degree of *powerlessness* that has enveloped the victims. “*I don’t know why I could not leave him,*” as raised by a 49-year-old victim from Cavite City. Another Caviteña mentioned, “*I could not stop him, so I can’t do anything.*” Still another cited, “*I don’t fight back anymore. I couldn’t fight back.*”

Six women testified that they had reached the point of stabbing their partners, in actual or attempted fashion, or they had thrown a knife to their partners.

“*I happened to get a knife because I was cooking. I attacked him, I really attacked him in the shoulder. Then we rumbled each other...*”

“*I happened to get the bolo. I really ran after him. When I could not catch him up, I threw the bolo and he was almost hit...*”

The above statements validate that Caviteñas are indeed capable of *self-defense*. They can be as violent as the abuser when their patience is pushed to the limit. The storyline of an abused victim from Cavite City, “Hurt me, I’ll hurt you too; kill me, I’ll kill you too...” *illustrates* this particular behavior.

Abused Caviteña participants whose husbands have extra marital relationships fearlessly deal with the affair by *stepping into the arena of the other woman*. They do this by either communicating through text messages or visiting the house of the mistress. One woman from Bailen, Cavite had to prove to herself that the infidelity is true that she actually spied on her husband’s where about. Another woman from the same place intentionally followed her husband to the other woman’s house and losing her sense of boundary, the physical violence happened there with the mistress as the principal witness.

“*He spanked me in front of the woman. I talked to his mistress and told don’t worry, I won’t get him. He’s yours...*”

The abused women from Cavite have been constantly *annoyed* by their partner’s abusive accusations and curses. These victims have *cursed openly* their abusers in the same way their abusers do.

Because of overriding fear that violence will be repeated, some Caviteña participants resort to *hiding in their own houses*.

“When I heard that he got his gun, I hid under the table...”

From *intrapersonal angle*, the following behavioral processes evolved in the study:

The informants resorted to *self-infliction of pain* either through striking on the chest or knocking the head on the wall. As disclosed by a participant from Bailen, Cavite, “*It’s better to hurt myself than to fight him back.*” Mangnall and Yurkovich as cited in Videbeck [13]once explained that self-mutilation is an expression of intense anger and helplessness. The resulting physical pain is also a means to block emotional pain.

The following section explicates the behavior of the Caviteña informants in terms of *physical responses*.

All the abused Caviteñas *weep* during and after their physical abuse experience and upon recall of traumatic situation or anticipation that it will happen again. Notably, during the interview, nine out of eleven interviewees wept as they told their painful stories.

“In things like that, I just cry because he might hurt me. My children also cry. I am afraid that if he becomes fed up, he might do something wrong, so I just cry...”

During the actual occurrence of physical abuse, five out of the eleven Caviteña informants described that their *vision was shut off* preventing them to see what actually had happened. Though just transient physical blindness, being blinded may be an (only) option of the informants to cope with the torment of abuse.

The Caviteña informants had histories of being in a *state of shock*. After being physically beaten due to meddling with husband's extramarital affairs, an abused wife from Cavite City testified *“I lost my consciousness, I lost my sanity.”* As a result of this, she was unable to take care of herself – failing to eat and sleep at the right time and neglecting her physical appearance. In relation, another woman from Cavite City was terrified as she sustained wound on her face after her repeated refusals to her mate's requests. She pronounced, *“I was surprised when he did that to me, so I was hit in the face.”*

Economic abuse has affected the family's *regularity of eating, relationship with children and the capacity of the abused woman to save resources in times of emergency*. One woman from Cavite City expressed *“There were times that we were not able to have meals on time and I have sold my jewelry.”* Another woman from Cavite City shared, *“I get angry to my youngest whenever he asks money.”*

The abused women informants from Cavite suffered other *physical manifestations indirectly and directly* related to physical violence. *Indirectly*, the abused women developed nervousness due to overwhelming terror *“Before, I used to walk slowly. Now, I walk fast, I talk fast. Many observed that I fidget, seems like I have nervousness,”* palpitations due to suppressed anger: *“If I suppress my anger or something, I have palpitations.”*

One Caviteña informant suffered from embarrassing health consequences following sexual type of intimate partner violence,

namely: *infliction with sexually transmitted disease, infestation of body lice and deliberate submission for illegal abortions*. The following narratives confirm these indirect physiological consequences of IPV:

“Pus was coming out of my underwear...”

“My hypogastric or lower abdominal area was aching, even my vagina. When I got sick of lice, my vagina also became itchy...”

Intimate partner violence created not just negative but positive impetus as well. Positively, it created greater fortitude to the Caviteña participants as supported by the following line: *It seems I am becoming stronger and ability to resist controlling behavior of abuser as supported by: I don't want to go with him because he is forcing me to go back home*. Out of pain and anguish, there emerged the strength and spirit of battered women from Cavite to continue on resisting violence in relationships and fighting for one's principles and rights.

In order to combat the torment that they suffer from the hands of their intimate partners, Caviteña informants indulge *themselves in varied strategies which both provide coping and recreation*, namely: spiritual activities (praying, regularly attending mass services, involvement in El Shaddai), companionship of friends, use of cell phone, sleeping, indulgence to music, compulsive preoccupation with house cleanliness and orderliness, and finding livelihood alternatives. A woman from Rosario, Cavite has preoccupied herself with various means of livelihood. For her, productivity is the most effective coping strategy. One Caviteña informant found transferring of residence to a place distant to their original home as therapeutic for her.

Dealing with the abuser comes as a last option and oftentimes is associated with legal interventions. Three informants from Kawit (33 years old), Indang (49 years old) and Cavite City (49 years old) respectively have been *empowered* ultimately to *retaliate and fight back* by asking help from the barangay justice system and by filing legal charges against the husband. Two are already now separated from

their husbands (one from Alfonso for 1-2 years already and the other from Cavite City even before her husband died a year ago).

Understanding the processes of IPV leads to the conclusion that cognitions, emotions and behaviors work in synchronization with each other. All in all, the behaviors, as well as the cognitive and affective processes Cavite women go through, give a picture that while they initially confront intimate partner violence with silence and passivity, they are indeed capable of resiliency and transcendence above their traumatic situation later on. Once these values are tested, they will not give up and they will fight for what is right

Deciding to Stay/Leave the Abusive Relationship

A woman, whether married or not, has several options: to choose to maintain the relationship, to leave the relationship, or return in the condition that the partner would change or the violence would stop. *Deciding to stay in the abusive relationship* is mainly due to children's welfare. This concept evolves out of the following narratives told by the informants:

"When he started hurting me, I just sacrificed because of our children. I don't want my children to become like me, broken family. I like we are a complete family although you hurt me. I would accept to suffer as long as my children are with me..."

Leaving the relationship was due to being sick and tired of long suffering. Other reasons why Caviteña women put an end in the experience of violence were: woman's desire for freedom after long term seclusion at home, shame as a result of long-standing abuse to the woman's family of origin and recognition that woman's right is violated.

Many women need to experience a crisis point in their situation before they are made to realize that it is not worth remaining in the relationship anymore.

Returning home on the condition that the partner will change or the violence will end and for the sake of the children is one option tracked by four, out of eleven victims. In spite

of the pain they have suffered, many still love their partners sincerely and hope that through this tough loving, the husband will change.

The findings confirm that the IPV dynamics and processes as experienced by Caviteña informants are erratic or unpredictable. From passive and enduring behaviors, IPV could trigger potentially destructive actions once anger and disrespect accumulates. From feeling of hopelessness that the perpetrator will change (adulterous behavior), the Caviteña informants eventually became hopeful that their situation will improve when they either restore or break the relationship. Believing they have to take steps to deal with their abusive situation, they either give up the hatred or bitterness through forgiveness and restoration of their relationships with the perpetrators or they intervene through legal means specifically reporting the abuse, legal separation or filing charges against the perpetrator.

Theory Generated

The informants underwent a myriad of cognitive, affective and behavioral processes in deciding to remain in the relationship or decide to leave or escape as a result of intimate partner violence. Figure 1 in the succeeding section shows the schematic presentation of the processes or flow of events in the occurrence of intimate partner violence.

In totality, the 5 core categories where the PROCESSES OF IPV is a part of are, thus, put together to form part of a single substantive theory stated as:

"Intimate Partner Violence from the perspective of Caviteñas can be constructed as an inner experience that affects many dimensions of a woman as a person. The pain is beyond physical but that which deeply penetrates the inner core. The deep-seated emotional pain debilitates the woman up to the point of surrendering herself and contemplating for suicide. But her strong sense of family's wellbeing particularly that of the children empowers her making her bring out the fortitude that is inherent of her as a Caviteña. This

empowerment may eventually bring the woman to a trajectory of healing process with the support of family, neighborhood and community (Santos-Reyes, 2016)[14].”

V. CONCLUSIONS

The following postulates were formulated based on the findings in the core category, Processes of IPV:

1. Culturally, Caviteña women give high importance on the sacredness and permanence of marriage, traditional role of husband on livelihood while wife on domestic responsibilities, inevitable hardships and the influence of in-laws in family life.
2. The Caviteña informants use coping strategies in concealing the abuse and all information, manifestations and traumas associated with it.
3. Caviteña informants believed in the concept of submission to husband that is based on respect and autonomy.
4. The abused Caviteña women had poor self-concept that they blamed themselves for the abuse and contemplated for suicide.
5. They were terrified by the thought of being killed by the violent spouse, retaliation by the woman's relatives and husband's self-destructive behaviors.
6. They still hope that their situation will change that they forgive, heal and discern for either temporary or permanent separation.
7. Many victims of abuse are trapped in a cyclical traumatic bond, commonly emotional and financial, that they have formed with their abusers out of the need for nurturance, loyalty or indebtedness.
8. Extramarital affair is a leading predisposing factor in the development of abuse.
9. The abused women felt varying degrees of love with their spouses as a result of abuse, from estranged to tough loving.
10. IPV results to anger, guilt, shame, embarrassment that socially isolates the victim from deeper social connections.
11. The Caviteña informants have capability for self-defense which may range from passive to equally destructive behaviors.
12. IPV can be linked to different health consequences like shutting of vision, state of shock, self-care deficit, palpitations, sexually transmitted diseases and abortions.
13. The abused women from Cavite engaged in health promoting measures like spiritual activities, maximizing the technological advantage of cellphones, sufficient sleep and relaxation, doing daily household chores and preoccupation with livelihood.
14. Leaving the abusive relationship through legal interventions or permanent separation is a result of accumulation of disrespect.
15. Living the relationship is due to woman's forgiving attitude and children's welfare.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The theoretical framework that evolved from the findings of the study offers the following pertinent implications:

1. There is a need for the Caviteña informants to be more assertive and empowered in knowing their rights a woman keeping in mind the provisions in the RA 9262, an act addressing violence against women and utilizing available resources in the community to give them protection from IPV.
2. Cognitive structuring techniques may be considered in modifying some aspects of their culture that are counterproductive to their healthy coping as exemplified by belief on permanence of marriage, intactness of family, indebtedness, emotional responsibility of women, male sexual entitlement, interference of in-laws.
3. Children may be mentally traumatized on what they witnessed and thus may be

- helped through counselling, psychotherapy and healing the family tree technique.
4. Good parenting that is modelled by children prepares them psychologically for married and family life that they will build later on.
 5. Psychological preparedness for marriage and strengthening intimate relationships through joining married couples' organizations and support groups merit prevention of IPV.
 6. The role of in-laws as a protective factor for enhancing the couple's relationship must be strengthened; however, giving and receiving of financial help to either the family of origin or in-laws must be done non-obligatory.
 7. The Local Government Unit (LGU) acts as the lead sector in assessing, identifying, educating and referring cases of IPV in the different municipalities in Cavite.
 8. The DSWD, MSWD and PNP personnel may consider undergoing regular trainings on how to maintain safe and therapeutic environment including proper communication techniques, cultural considerations and gender and development approaches that are empowering, respectful of human rights and supportive of human potentials.
 9. The Barangay Health Station (BHS) or the Rural Health Unit (RHU), being the forefront units of the DOH, has the most important role in identifying and instituting preliminary interventions like history-taking and health assessment and psychological first aid to victims of IPV.
 10. The belief that IPV is a private, family matter is a barrier to helping the victims; thus, support and self-help groups be capacitated in the catharsis and externalization of the abuse stories of the victims since it was found out in the study that the pain felt during the abuse targets deeply the emotional core.
 11. The Counseling Psychologists or Guidance Counselors may focus on the following in designing interventions: self-awareness, self-esteem enhancement, empowering women, development of abuse screening tools, and preparation for marriage in the form of pre-marital counseling, revitalizing relationships, anger management, communication skills development, mental health programs, projective therapies such as creative, art, narrative, etc. that allow disclosure of abuse effectively.
 12. It is recommended that screening for women abuse be part of the routine history taking and physical assessment by nurses in all health care settings including community. The nurse-client relationship building during health assessment must be characterized by trust, non-judgmental and reinforcing environment and skills in open-ended communication to facilitate disclosure of abuse stories and examination of physical injuries related to abuse.
 13. Important provisions in RA9262 and integration of prevention and management of intimate partner abuse must be enhanced both in the theoretical and clinical aspects of nursing curriculum.
 14. The theoretical model may provide a framework for building additional theories on violence against women. Also, this may provide a background material which future researchers may use in their literature analysis.
 15. Future researchers may consider delving into the salient areas of this research like exploring IPV in the eyes of the batterer or IPV in the eyes of the children, the "sense of self" of the abused women from Cavite, the role of in-laws in marital disagreement, counseling skills of nurses in dealing with victims of violence, the psychology of infidelity, model of intervention that focuses on healing the core and the victim,

16. It is recommended that intimate partner violence be further emphasized in the realm of nursing research since the data obtained in this study merely came from those who had willingness to be interviewed. There may be more unreported violence in the grassroots.
17. This study may be replicated into research synthesis studies (Systematic Review of Literature, Scoping Review, Meta-Analysis, etc.) to be able to obtain rigorous evidences on interventions that work best in preventing IPV.

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