

## Stereotype Belief on Feminism Jurisprudence: An Analysis to Aggression in Women

Bustamante, Jacinto Y. <sup>1</sup>, De Dios, Roselyn M. <sup>1,3</sup>, Ramos, Vilma B. <sup>1,2,3</sup>, Antonio, Olive Chester C. <sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, College of Public Administration and Disaster Management, Gen. Tinio St., Quezon District, Cabanatuan City 3100 Philippines*

<sup>2</sup>*Graduate School, Department of Public Administration*

<sup>3</sup>*Local Government Unit, Cabanatuan City*

\*[vbramos21@gmail.com](mailto:vbramos21@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** Despite measures being taken around the world to protect and value women, they remain vulnerable to oppression. At the height of the global pandemic many cases of abuse against women have been recorded especially domestic violence where the perpetrator and victim are together in their home due to strict lockdown. This study was conducted to find out the perspective of the female-victims on the root cause of their oppression from the hands of the aggressors and its continuing factor. The researcher used snowball sampling and descriptive research design triangulated by secondary and primary data. Thirty-four respondents from Nueva Ecija, Philippines answered the survey and were interviewed with the assistance of authorities. The study revealed that the most common violence experienced by women are psychological violence and sexual abuse and these stem from the superiority complex of the men and sexual desire to women. Respondents also described how women should be treated and it was revealed that all victims strongly agree with the highest level of conformity that the dignity of a woman should be respected. Further, the study proved that women's silence and tolerance of abuse against them is a result of their belief in the superiority of men over women which becomes a constant factor in women's oppression. The result of the study indicates the lack of power and futility of the law to protect women who chose to remain silent. The law to protect women is meaningless no matter how cruel it is when the victim's silence precedes justice. No economic violence was found in this study which may be due to the women's financial status as not a significant factor to experience oppression. Further researcher on the similar topic and purpose with more respondents with a qualitative method to find a more accurate and detailed result is recommended.

**Keywords:** Aggression in Women, Feminism Jurisprudence, Punitive Law, Superiority Complex, Women Oppression

## 1. Introduction

The status of women has been a topic of grave discussion, for many years in the past. In previous times, men dominated society while women were secondary to them. A woman was considered a man's possession. Throughout the world, various social norms, in some form or the other, deny women their right to education, health services, economic opportunities, and political participation. They were (and are being) mistreated inside and outside their homes (Srivastava, 2019).

The word woman is a combination of "wife" and "man". When old english was first being spoken in the 5th century AD, there were two distinct words for men and women: "wer" meant "adult male," and "wif" meant "adult female. These words were combined to man: "wer" plus "man" (in the form of "waepman") meant "adult male person." "Wif" plus "man" ("wifman") meant "adult female person." In 1600 the word woman was established. Woman for singular and women for plural (Enslin, 2020).

Women are the primary caretakers of children and elders in every country of the world. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organization of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges. They are likely to be the prime initiator of outside assistance and play an important role in facilitating (or hindering) changes in family life (Gran, 2019). Because of their good qualities they should be made feel valued and appreciated.

During the pre-Spanish period the pre-Spanish Filipino woman had an honored position in the family and society (Torralba Titgemeyer, 1998). They have always enjoyed greater equality in Philippine society (U.S. Library of Congress, n.d.). The Filipino wife in pre-colonial times was treated as a companion, not as a lesser person. She enjoyed freedom to decide for the whole family and her role is not limited to domestic issues or bearing children. Most women before the Spanish colonization have decision-making powers (Baldemor Jr., 2012; Gabriel, De Vera, & Antonio, 2020). Meanwhile, during the Spanish era, the role of women was reduced to housekeeping and childrearing. In effect, women were viewed to be reserved, shy, and submissive to men. Filipino women of the Spanish period had a mind of their own, assertive, active, and enterprising. However, because of the norms set by the Spaniards, their status remained to be

inferior to men (Camaya & Tamayo, 2018; Peralta, 2015). The Filipino women were not able to escape violence during American period, they suffered violence during such times and much more in Japanese times where they were greatly abused and violated. Japanese imperial troops during World War II used abduction, coercion and deception to force women and girls to provide sexual gratification to military personnel. (Mccarthy, 2020).

The role of women in today's world has changed significantly and for better. Women are now self-sufficient, well aware and financially independent. They have attained immense success in every field, whether it is sports, politics or academics. With the encouragement of co-education, women are now marching side by side with men, in every walk of life (KARAM, n.d.). From a time when women were not able to voice their opinions to the modern time the lifestyle of a woman has undergone a drastic transformation. The modern society and workforce are filled with powerful women who play their leadership roles in offices in a very impactful and efficient manner (Narula, 2018).

While women involvement in the different sectors of the society has been noted over the past years, many women remain to have limited professional advancement (Cortez, n.d.). The advancement of women has been slow, with women greatly underrepresented in the national and local assemblies (Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics, 2012). Power, access and opportunities continue to be unequally distributed based on gender. The gap between men and women widens as the leadership ladder goes up (Zhao & Smith, 2015). It highlights that, "efforts in mainstreaming gender equality is not enough and need to improve" (Sonza & Tumibay, 2019).

Despite the recognition and call to empower and protect women, they still experienced mistreatment especially at the height of the pandemic called Covid-19. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified (UN Women, n.d.). The most common form is verbal abuse, followed by sexual harassment, physical abuse, denial of basic needs and denial of means of communication. Most women believe that COVID has made things worse. Nearly 7 in 10 women think domestic violence has increased during the pandemic, and 3 in 5 think sexual harassment in public has increased (UN WOMEN, 2021). With the advent of the pandemic the abuse of women was on the rise again. In the recent study conducted at the

height of the pandemic about the perspective of the perpetrator on the root cause and the continuing factor of women oppression, according to the perpetrator women suffered violence because of the superiority complex of men. Superiority complex is defined as an exaggerated feeling of one's own superiority (Dictionary.com). In this study, male offenders admitted that their most common type of violence committed against women was physical violence with 86.66 percent, verbal maltreatment with 73.33 percent, physical violence with 26.66, sexual violence with 13.33, and none of the respondents committed economic violence (Bustamante, 2022).

In general, feminism can be seen as a movement to put an end to sexism, exploitation, oppression and to achieve full gender equality in law and in practice. However, on issues of women protection, feminism has been little or no progress. There have been insignificant reductions in cases of violence against women (Council of Europe Portal, n.d.). Despite the efforts of the law makers and legal feminist to solve the problems in women oppression, a concrete solution and determination of factors of oppressions have not been really addressed. Feminism jurisprudence that claims legal equality for all, without any social prejudice or male domination seems no effect (IPleader, 2021).

In the recent study titled "Is Punitive Law a Solution to Protect Women?: The Perspective of the Perpetrator On the Root Cause and the Continuing Factor of Women Oppression in Nueva Ecija, Philippines" revealed that the respondents did not care about the law when they perpetrated oppression against women and did not even enter in their minds the punishment that could be imposed upon them (Bustamante, 2022).

To clarify the fact in the study that the respondents did not care about the law when they perpetrated oppression against women and the abuse perpetrated by men originated in superiority complex, this study was conducted to confirm or refute the said conclusion. This study aimed to determine the level of conformity of the female-victim respondents on the root causes of women oppression, the proper treatment to women, the factors of continuous oppression of women, and its implication to the laws of the land related to women protection. The respondents and participants in this study are those who have or had intimate relations with the perpetrator. The study adapts the following hypotheses: 1. Superiority complex is the major cause of women oppression; 2. Proper respect

to women is lost due to an exaggerated feeling of one's own superiority; 3. The strict law for the protection of women is not a guarantee to suppress violence.

## 2. Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon (McCombes, 2020). It involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way (Shuttleworth 2008). There were 34 respondents in the study; all of them were female–victims of violence residing in Nueva Ecija, Philippines. The respondents were chosen through snowball sampling and based on their knowledge and willingness to participate in the study. The researcher used this method because many of the potential respondents on this topic were not willing to be interviewed and with the strictness and sensitivity of the topic. The questionnaire used to gather information was constructed by the researcher. The researcher utilized a five–point Likert scale and the data gathered from the instrument were statistically performed using frequency count, percentage, and weighted mean. The researcher, likewise, utilized secondary data from Police Regional Office 3 Philippine National Police (PNP) to capture information regarding the number of victims of violence against women and conducted interviews to capture the details of the experience of the participants. The qualitative data collected through the interview utilized descriptive coding to support the answers on the survey. The survey and interviews were conducted with the assistance of authorities and consent were sought to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Violence Experienced by Women

**Table 1.** Police Regional Office 3 Philippine National Police Report (January 2018 – July 1, 2022)

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No. of victims of violence against women (R.A. 9262)	1,059	996	733	712	323

Source: PNP CIRAS as of July 1, 2022

When asked of the violence being experienced or aggression committed towards women, the percentage distribution was shown on Table 2.

**Table 2.** Violence Experienced by the Respondents

No. of Respondents	Physical Violence	Economic Violence	Psychological Violence	Sexual Violence	Verbal Maltreatment
34	23.53%	0%	52.94%	52.94%	29.41%

Note: Multiple responses

The data show that majority of the respondents experienced psychological and sexual violence (52.94% each), followed by verbal maltreatment (29.41%) and physical violence (23.53%). Meanwhile, no respondents mentioned they suffer from economic violence. How the respondents were treated by their aggressors have its toll on their psychological state. Due to the maltreatments, abusive words, physical abuse, and infidelities, women mostly suffer from mental and emotional abuse. Aside from this, most of the respondents experienced sexual abuse from their partners or relatives. Due to their physical inferiority to men, women are left with no choice but to have forced sex with the aggressors. The aggression towards women did not stop even if women already contribute to their family in terms of work and finances. Initiatives and development may have lessened the gaps between men and women but it cannot be denied that oppression of women is still present in the households and even at the hands of their loved ones.

### *3.2 Root Cause of Women Oppression*

Upon asking the root cause of women oppression to the respondents, the results were presented on Table 3.

Table 3 shows that the top root cause of violence committed against women is men’s superiority complex (WM=4.47/Strongly Agree). Almost all of the respondents strongly agree that they experienced violence due to that kind of behaviour. Superiority complex is followed by sexual desire to a woman (WM=4.17/Agree) with high degree of conformity from female-victim respondents. This result confirms the percentage given in Table 2 where 52.94 percent of the respondents admitted that they had experienced sexual violence.

Men’s superior strength is in the third highest level of conformity (WM=3.82/Agree) while partner’s insecurity or jealousy (WM=3.76/Agree), having a hot-headed partner (WM=3.76/Agree), men’s control towards women (WM=3.76/Agree) are at the same level of weighted mean and verbal description. These factors such as insecurity, jealousy, and hot temper can push a woman’s partner to use superior strength or more force to control her. It is inevitable to think based on these results that these factors may actually be attributed to each other causing women to experience abuse through superior strength to control them.

**Table 3. Root Causes of Women Oppression**

Item	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. Partner’s Insecurity or Jealousy	3.76	Agree
2. Hot Headed Partner	3.76	Agree
3. Men’s Superiority Complex	4.47	Strongly Agree
4. Sexual Desire to a Woman (rape, acts of lasciviousness, sexual harassment, etc.)	4.17	Agree
5. Having a Partner with a High Level of Education	3.23	Moderately Agree
6. Inability to Accept Rejection	3.41	Agree
7. Men’s Superior Strength	3.82	Agree
8. Marital Discord and Dissatisfaction	3.53	Agree
9. Men’s Control Towards Women	3.76	Agree
10. Financial Incapacity of Women	3.18	Moderately Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.70	Moderately Agree

It is common nowadays to have discord and dissatisfaction in marriage and respondents agree (WM=3.53) that it is also a source of mistreatment of women. Likewise, the respondents agree (WM=3.41) that inability to accept rejection is a root cause of women oppression.

However, in this study the respondents agree to a moderate degree that having a partner with a high level of education (WM=3.23), and financial incapacity of a woman are root causes of women oppression. In general, the respondents moderately agree to all the questions regarding the root cause of women oppression with an overall weighted mean of 3.70.

### 3.3. Respondent’s Description on How to Treat a Woman

Table 4 expresses women’s feelings and perspectives on how they should be treated as women. It is interesting to know that all the respondents responded strongly agree(WM=5.0) to the question related to respect for the dignity of a woman. However, the result can be interpreted as less positive because it can also mean that women are still emphasizing their right to be respected because they may still feel a lack of recognition and respect from society.

**Table 4.** Treatment to Women

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. Never confront a woman with a loud voice should a woman is at fault.	1.41	Strongly Disagree
2. Be considerate to a woman.	3.88	Agree
3. Respect the dignity a woman.	5.0	Strongly Agree
4. Give a woman an equal employment opportunity and equal privileges as man even if they cannot perform the dexterity of a man.	4.47	Strongly Agree
5. A married woman is entitled to live with her spouse, to be loved, to be respected, to be supported (financially, emotionally, spiritually) by her legal partner.	4.88	Strongly Agree
6. The child of a woman should be respected for a respect to a woman’s child is a respect to her feelings.	4.76	Strongly Agree
7. Talk with a woman about her personal sexual experienced.	1.71	Strongly Disagree
8. Treat a comfort woman as an ordinary innocent woman.	3.59	Agree
9. A woman should not participate in decision making for she is a subordinate of man.	1.76	Strongly Disagree



10. A woman has no right to reject her partner in giving sexual intercourse since it is her obligation.	2.41	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.38	Moderately Agree

It can also be seen in the table that the agreement of the respondents is also very high as to the questions that a married woman is entitled to live with her spouse, to be loved, to be respected, to be supported (financially, emotionally, spiritually) by her legal partner(Wm=4.88 Strongly/Agree), that the child of a woman should be respected for a respect to a woman’s child is a respect to her feelings(WM=4.76/Strongly Agree), and give a woman an equal employment opportunity and equal privileges as man even if they cannot perform the dexterity of the latter(WM=4.47 Strongly Agree). These results are so remarkable that when the issue is about respect for women, it seems that women are overly responsive with very high approval. This may support the conclusion that women are still not getting full respect from society so they emphasized respect for women in this study.

Being considerate should be emphasized especially to the wife. It is written in the Holy Scriptures where the husbands are mandated to be considerate to their wives and treat them with respect (1 Peter 3:7). As to the question of be considerate to a woman the respondents agree with high level of conformity (WM=3.88). The respondent also agree (WM=3.59) to the question related to treating a comfort woman as an ordinary innocent one.

On the other hand, female-victim objected (WM=2.41/Disagree) to the question of the woman's obligation to give her body (giving sexual intercourse) to the man because it was her obligation and she should not refuse her partner.

Respondents were also asked about their views on whether women should not participate in decision making in the belief that they are only subordinate of men. That question received a strongly disagree (WM=1.76) response. This means that women want to convey the message that women also have the right to participate in decision making and it implies recognition of their freedom and ability to do so and not just remain silent and surrender to men’s decision.

If the respondents in this study do not agree with the belief that it is their duty to give their own body to their partner through sexual intercourse and that is

their obligation. They explicitly oppose or strongly disagree (WM=1.71) to the question regarding talking with a woman about her personal sexual experienced.

The question about never confront a woman with a strong voice if the woman was at fault earned a weighted mean of 1.41 with verbal interpretation of strongly disagree. This means that even women accept this behaviour in treating them when they make a mistake. It is sad to think but undeniably that women accepted that it is only normal to them to be confronted in loud a voice when they make a mistake.

Despite the fact that there are some questions where the respondents strongly agreed, the table shows that they moderately agree(WM=3.38) to all the questions on how to treat a woman. However, it will be noted from the result that the weighted mean almost entered at 3.40 with verbal interpretation of agree and this means that respondents almost agree with all the statements provided in Table 4.

### *3.4. Respondents' Conformity as to the Factors of Continuous Commission of Oppression Against Women*

Table 5 contains the factors of the continuous commission of oppression against women. This table states with high level of conformity that women experience oppression due to the belief that men are stronger than women making them unable to defend themselves (WM=4.17).

Another factor of continuous oppression of women where the respondents agree is paying no attention(neglecting) to them or beating a woman out of cold love (WM=3.94). Respondents were also at the same level of agreement (WM=3.94/Agree) about their views regarding the belief that sex is a matter of man's right and woman's obligation and it is also a factor why they consider it in a high level of conformity as one of the causes of continuous oppression against women.

Lack of strength to resist insecurity or jealousy of women's partner and inability of a man to swallow his pride are at the same level of agreement (WM=3.64/Agree) based on the evaluation of respondents to questions about the factors of continuous commission of oppression against women.

With respect to high level of education resulting in ignoring and disregarding the feeling of a woman the respondents are moderately agree (WM=3.35) as to that matter. Moderate agreement was also given by the respondents on the issue

of inability of a suitor to accept rejection made by a woman (WM=3.29) and woman is under the power of man (WM=3.17).

In the matter of women’s lack of financial independence, respondents moderately agree (WM=2.76) with the belief that a woman cannot stand alone without financial support. This means that respondents are less convinced that a woman can be oppressed simply because of the belief that she cannot stand on her own without financial support. Nowadays, women are already accepted in the workforce and are becoming the breadwinners of their family (Taruc, 2019).

**Table 5. Factors of Continuous Commission of Oppression Against Women**

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. Lack of Strength to Resist Insecurity or Jealousy of Women’s Partner	3.64	Agree
2. Treating a Woman as a Personal Property of Her Partner	2.64	Moderately Disagree
3. Inability of a Man to Swallow His Pride	3.64	Agree
4. A Belief that Sex is a Man’s Matter of Right and Woman’s Obligation	3.94	Agree
5. High Level of Education Resulting in Ignoring and Disregarding the Feelings of a Woman	3.35	Moderately Agree
6. Inability of a Suitor to Accept Rejection Made by a Woman	3.29	Moderately Agree
7. A Belief that Men are Stronger than Women Making Them Unable to Defend Themselves	4.17	Agree
8. Paying No Attention or Beating a Woman Due to Cold Love	3.94	Agree
9. Woman is under man’s power.	3.17	Moderately Agree
10. A Belief that a Woman Can Not Stand Alone Without Financial Support	2.76	Moderately Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.45	Moderately Agree

Despite claims of equality, the reality is that women in every part of the world are still considered the property of men either directly or indirectly (Zielinski, 2015). In that regard the respondents moderately agree (WM=2.64) with the question of treating the woman as the personal property of her partner. The 2.64 weighted mean with verbal interpretation of moderately agree is very close to the 2.59 weighted mean with a verbal interpretation of disagree. This simply means that respondents are not fully convinced that women experience oppressions because they are considered and treated as personal property of men.

### 3.5. Steps Taken to Stop Being Mistreated

The responses of the respondent female-victims to the question are presented below.

**Table 4.** Response on Steps Taken to Stop Being Mistreated

Response
“I complained to my mother and told her about the abuses my father was doing to me but she did not believe me and remained silent.”
“I was afraid that my parents might worry and send me home because I was in another country when I was abused.”
“Just for the sake of peace, so I decided not to report to anyone because only my relative molested me when I was young.”

According to the participants, the violence and oppression were done mostly by members of their family and employers. With fear of their life, and for the sake of peace and freedom from disgrace and judgment, most of them remained silent in dealing with the situation. Some have confessed to their parents but received no support. Thus, the victims chose to be silent despite their conditions.

### 3.6. The Implication of Continuous Oppression of Women in Law

According to Merriam-Webster law is a rule or order that is obligatory to observe. There are many laws in the Philippines that aim to protect, develop and preserve women and give them a peaceful life. The Philippines has anti-rape law, anti-sexual harassment law, and anti-violence against women and their children law to name a few. Despite these existing laws the oppression experienced by women continues and it seems pointless for laws to prevent it. From the victim’s responses to the interview with them none of them mentioned the law or even

thought that those with legal authorities could help them, instead it can be inferred from their responses that out of fear they chose to remain silent. It can be seen from the responses of the respondents that a quiet and peaceful life is more important to them than to fight for their dignity and right. Thus, this means that laws for the protection of women in this study have no room to suppress violence against women because it is the victims themselves who have declared that peace is more important to them than fighting for what is right. In this case no matter how strict the law is, if it is not used, it is meaningless and will never be the solution to the suppression of violence. The suffering of women, in general, is due to ineffective implementation of the laws that intend to protect them (Gabriel, 2017). The law will only take effect if it is used but it remains barren and meaningless no matter how cruel it is when the victim's silence precedes justice.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

After reviewing the data and thoroughly analyzing the respondents' responses, this study shows that women are more likely to experience violence related to sexual and psychological violence. In this study more than half of the sample population experienced sexual and psychological violence. The respondents strongly agree with high level of conformity that superiority complex of man is the top root cause of violence against women and seconded by sexual desire to a woman causing them to become victims of different forms of sexual assault. In the questions regarding respondents' description on how to treat a woman, the respondents' answer emphasizes respect for women's dignity. On all questions related to respect for women the respondents strongly agree in a high level of conformity, and they seem in their answer to be very sensitive when it comes to the issue of respect for women. As mentioned in the earlier discussion this result can be interpreted as less positive because it can also mean that women are still emphasizing their right to be respected because they may still feel a lack of recognition and respect from society.

Regarding the factors of continuous commission of oppression to women, the study finds that the main reason for women's continuous oppression is the belief that men have superior strength or are stronger than women making them unable to defend themselves and since the superiority complex of men as mentioned earlier is the primary root cause of women's oppression it can be concluded that the very reason why women are oppressed is because of the belief

in the superiority of men. All oppressions of women, therefore, stem from the belief that men are superior to women. According to WebMd (2021) superiority complex is a belief that the abilities of one are somehow dramatically better than the other. From such a belief it can be concluded that it is already ingrained in the minds of the perpetrators and respondent–female–victims that men abilities are better than that of women making the latter silent and tolerant to the oppression they experience.

A further conclusion in this study is the ineffectiveness of the law for the protection of women to suppress violence against them because for the respondents a quiet and peaceful life is more important than to fight for their dignity and right. The silence and fear dominate their minds and hearts rather than fight for justice.

After critical analysis of the respondents' responses, the researcher offers the following: Other researcher should conduct researches similar to this topic and purpose with more respondents with a qualitative method to find a more accurate and detailed result. The government, whether national or local, must pay attention to the futility of the law to protect women from abuses because it is only effective if the oppressed have the courage to seek justice. The government should use churches, schools and other organizations organized for the welfare of women to remind the public in various ways and programs how to treat a woman. And finally, the government should not only rely on the law to protect women but should focus on more effective programs that will restore full respect for women because they are also people who deserve to be respected and protected.

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