



THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF CLIENT VIOLENCE AMONG WOMEN SOCIAL WORKERS WORKING WITH 4Ps IN LANA DEL SUR

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ABSTRACT: Social workers, vital to communities, face the significant challenge of client violence in their noble profession. This study explored the phenomenon of client violence experienced by women social workers within the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in Lanao del Sur. Through qualitative research methods, including phenomenological interviews, the objective was to gain insight into the lived experiences of these social workers, the contributing factors to client violence, and the coping mechanisms employed. A total of seven participants were purposively selected, ensuring diversity in age, experience, and position within the program. Thematic analysis was then conducted to identify recurring patterns and themes from the data collected. The findings reveal three main themes: "Safety and Security Concerns," "Effects of Violence on Social Workers," and "Positive Coping." These themes shed light on the threats faced by social workers, the psychological consequences of client violence, and the strategies employed to cope with such challenges. Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of support systems and interventions in fostering a positive coping among social workers despite the adversities encountered. Based on the findings, recommendations include the development of training programs for conflict management, the provision of psychosocial interventions, community awareness campaigns, establishment of regular feedback mechanisms, enhancing inter-agency coordination, safety planning, implementation of right-based approach, and review of policy maker.

Keywords: Client Violence, Social Workers, Women, 4Ps

I. INTRODUCTION

In communities worldwide, social workers serve as pillars of support, providing essential services to individuals and families in need. Their commitment to promoting social welfare often entails navigating complex and challenging situations, including instances of client violence (Martí, 2023; Radey et al., 2022). Social workers play a crucial role in promoting social welfare and supporting individuals and families in need, often navigating complex and challenging situations, including instances of client violence (Haugstvedt, 2020). They provide essential services, including emotional, social, and financial support, particularly to those experiencing mental health issues exacerbated by stigma and marginalization (Sturgeon, 2012). However, it is important to ensure the safety of social workers, as they can be subject to abuse and violence (Whitaker & Clark, 2006). Despite these challenges, social workers are vital in promoting community well-being, encouraging community participation, and fostering social cohesion (Van der Westhuizen, 2023).

On the other hand, women social workers in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in Lanao del Sur face unique challenges in their professional duties. These challenges are exacerbated by the program's implementation, which has been found to have discrepancies and delays in cash grants (Aguado, 2021). The experiences of these women social workers are further complicated by the program's gaps in addressing the needs of its beneficiaries, particularly in sustaining educational requirements (Devkota et al., 2021). These challenges are also influenced by broader societal issues, such as the marginalization and discrimination faced by women in the public domain (Haslinda, 2019). Despite these challenges, women social workers in similar programs have been found to establish alliances and practices of resistance to challenge the oppressions they experience (Arce & Duboy-Luengo, 2023).

Thus, this study delved into the phenomenon of client violence among women social workers within the 4Ps program, aiming to explore their lived experiences, identify contributing factors, and uncover coping mechanisms employed in the face of adversity. Through qualitative research methods, including phenomenological interviews, this study seeks to shed light on the multifaceted nature of client violence and its impact on the well-being and professional practice of women social workers.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is supported by the following theories: Risk Theory by Lukas (2006); Right Based Approach Framework of Gauri & Gloppen (2012) as cited by Broberg (2018), and Cycle of Violence Theory by Walker (1979) as cited by Eriksson & Mazerolle (2015).

The Risk theory provides frameworks that can contribute to mitigating risks, coming to grips with uncertainty, and offering ways to organize society in such a way that the unexpected and unknown can be anticipated or at least dealt with in a reasonable and ethically acceptable way. This theory is useful to anchor the idea of the variables being studied as it is related to the safety and security of social workers who experience client violence. It is useful in identifying threats, risk analysis and the choice of method of risk management.

Moreover, it is complemented by the Right Based Approach, which, according to Robinson (2012), "is a framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights for the essential purpose of achieving development." A rights-based approach essentially means that development agencies' policies, strategies, and procedures consider the international human rights system's norms, standards, and principles. These guidelines and standards are found in the documentation of international agreements and in the development plans and strategies created and implemented by states worldwide. The rights-based approach, according to Ife *et al.*, (2022), is all about "empower[ing] individuals to take their own decisions, rather than being the passive object of decisions made on their behalf." The rights-based approach is seen as an agent for responsibility, participation, non-discrimination, equality, equity, good governance, and the rule of law by its proponents within this environment. With this, a rights-based strategy helps social workers, as duty-bearers, fulfil their responsibilities and motivates right holders to exercise their rights. These required the government, particularly the DSWD or MSWD, to respect, protect, and fulfil every right, which means that respecting a right entail not interfering with how that right is used.

Furthermore, the Cycle of Violence Theory by Walker (1979), as cited by Eriksson & Mazerolle (2015), describes the phases of an abusive relationship that move through in the lead-up to a violent event and its follow-up. The idea explains that violent relationships follow a typical pattern or cycle. The entire cycle may happen in one day or take weeks or months. This concept explains that the cycle of violence then goes through four main stages: tension, incident, reconciliation, and calm. This theory is very relevant in the study as it helps the social workers understand the cycle of violence and strategize when to intervene best in the acknowledged phase or level for the best outcome.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used phenomenology research design to unfold and explore the experience, challenges, and stories about client violence by women social workers working alongside 4Ps in Lanao del Sur BARMM. A semi-structured interview guide tool was utilized in the in-depth interview with the seven (7) women social workers of the 4Ps working in the province of Lanao del Sur who had experienced client violence and have at least 3 years in the said designation. The interview was formal and unstructured conversational process. Ethical requirements have been addressed all throughout the process of this study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through the participants insights, the researcher delved into the themes and categories that emerge from their encounters with these challenges. The themes, categories and sample codes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes Book

Themes	Categories	Codes
Theme 1: Safety and Security Concerns	1. Triggers of Client Violence	<i>Close mindedness, Error releasing of Cashcards, Misinformation, Inconsistencies, Client misbehavior</i>
	2. Threats received by the Social Workers	<i>Physical threats, Verbal Threats, Security Threats, Family Threats, Emotional and Psychological Threats, Work Threats</i>
	3. Physical Attack received by the Social Workers	<i>Pulling of Hair, Finger pointing, Gun fires</i>
Theme 2: Effects of Violence on Social Workers	1. Loss of Self Worth & Self-esteem	<i>Losing face, Public Humiliation, Loss confidence, Self-distrust</i>
	2. Post-Traumatic Stress Related behavior	<i>Sleep difficulty, Extreme fear, Flashbacks, Trouble concentration</i>
Theme 3: Positive Coping	1. Insights Gained	<i>Passion to help, Professional growth, Learning experiences, Lifestyle integration</i>
	2. Strong Support System	<i>Family, Supervisor, Co-worker, Husband, Friends</i>
	4. Interventions Obtained	<i>Involvement of Traditional leaders, Kamustahan Session, Transfer of Area, Provision of Security to protect them, Supervisor's mediation</i>

Theme 1: Safety and Security Concerns

This theme consists of the categories on Triggers of client violence, Various threats, and physical attack received by the Social Workers.

Category 1: Triggers of Client violence

The triggers of client violence include close mindedness, errors in the release of cash cards, misinformation, inconsistencies of documents, and client misbehaviors. A diverse range of triggers emerges, offering insights into the complex dynamics that precede confrontational situations. One prominent trigger highlighted by the participants is the presence of discrepancies in the

distribution of grants or benefits. For instance, when beneficiaries insist on including ineligible family members or demand special treatment, tensions can escalate quickly, leading to threats or acts of aggression directed towards the social workers. For example, Participant 1 and 2 expressed:

“Actually there was error in releasing of cash cards kami yung first na namigay so there was no proper guidelines at that moment. So kami naman na mga workers we do not know how to scrutinize first hindi mo alam kung fake ba to or hindi; pwede ba to or hindi? Kaya we accepted them though alam namin yung mga accepted id's and hindi. Pero hindi talaga maiiwasan na may mga naga submit na gina force nila na maam i submit mo lang kasi baka, nagababaka sakali na maaprobahan. So yun we accepted all of them kasi to think din na this is an trial and error.” (*Actually it was a trial and error releasing of cashcards because we were the first to release so there was no proper guidelines at that moment. As a worker we do not know how to scrutinize first if is fake? or not? If it is acceptable or not? That is why we accepted them though we know the accepted IDs and not. However we cannot escape their forceful submission, they said that I should submit it because it may be accepted that's why we accepted all of them*) (Participant 1, Transcript 1, LN 66-71).

Participant 2 also shared,

“Validation namin yon sa listahanan, nag house to house validation ako nag over time na ako non nang mga 5pm, so yung mga tao akala nila matatapos na yong validation akala nila is last day na yun ng validation, so lahat sila pumunta sa akin gusto nilang mauna. (*it was our Listahanan Validation that time, I was conducting house-house validation, It was 5pm when I worked overtime, the beneficiaries thought that it was the last day of validation that is why they all came to me*) (Participant 2, Transcript 2, LN 6-8).

Moreover, misunderstandings during beneficiary interactions emerge as another significant trigger. Participants recount instances where beneficiaries become frustrated or hostile due to miscommunications or perceived unfair treatment. These misunderstandings often stem from the complex bureaucratic processes involved in social welfare programs, where beneficiaries may feel overwhelmed or marginalized. Consequently, social workers find themselves at the receiving end of verbal abuse or threats as they navigate these challenging interactions.

Furthermore, participants highlight the pressure and expectations imposed on them by beneficiaries, adding to the volatile nature of their work environment. Beneficiaries may demand preferential treatment or financial favors, threatening social workers if their requests are not met. Such expectations create a sense of vulnerability among social workers, as they grapple with the fear of reprisal or harm. Understanding these triggers is essential for implementing proactive measures to de-escalate tensions and ensure the safety and well-being of social workers in the field.

In the intricate realm of social work, professionals are tasked with confronting a plethora of challenges, especially when operating within communities grappling with socio-economic vulnerabilities (Kaewboonchoo et al., 2015). Amidst this dynamic landscape, a pressing concern looms large: the specter of violence targeting social workers, particularly women, who serve as frontline agents in delivering essential support and aid (Plaengsorn, 2015). The study undertakes a comprehensive exploration into the lived experiences of female social workers confronting client violence within the framework of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in Lanao del Sur.

The findings of the study accords to studies which shared that there are range of situational factors that can trigger client violence, including discrepancies in grant distribution, misunderstandings during beneficiary interactions, and frustrations with bureaucratic processes (Phoo & Reid, 2022). These triggers are particularly prevalent in the home care setting, where violence is common among clients with cognitive disorders, substance abuse, and limited mobility (Martí, 2023). In the context of intimate partner violence, substance abuse, childhood abuse, psychopathology, and anger are predictive risk factors for male perpetration (Messinger et al., 2014). Low self-esteem and the need to protect it can also play a role in triggering violence (Lambe et al., 2016).

Category 2: Threats Received by the Social Workers

The threats received by the Social Workers are verbal threats, text intimidations, physical violence, emotional and psychological harassment, family threats, work threats, and even received death threats. Participant 1 shared that she was told, “kung dala ko lang ang baril ko, binaril na kita...wag na wag kitang makikita sa community”. Lumapit siya saakin na as if hahawakan nya ako. (*if I bring my gun with me, I will shoot you.. don't let me see you in the community. He came to me as if he is going to harass me physically*) (Participant 1, transcript 1, LN 80-81).

Participant 5 also shared, “then last day naming stay sa kanila, while nasa CR ako para maligo ay may napansin akong phone sa may kisame then nakavideo ang phone na yun. (*then it was our last day, while I am in CR to take a bath, I saw a cellphone at the ceiling, then that phone was currently video recording*) (Participant 5, transcript 1, LN 13-15).

"Threats," which sheds light on the gravity of the risks faced by women social workers in the course of their duties. The findings reveal a spectrum of threats ranging from physical harm and grave endangerment to psychological intimidation and invasion of privacy. Instances where clients attempted physical assault, issued death threats, or engaged in confrontational behavior underscore the severity of the challenges these workers confront on a daily basis. The prevalence of such threats not only poses immediate risks to the safety and well-being of social workers but also underscores the broader issue of violence against frontline workers in the social services sector.

Moreover, the diverse nature of the threats highlights the complex dynamics at play within the professional environment of women social workers. From facing aggressive behavior and life-threatening situations to enduring harassment and emotional manipulation, these experiences illuminate the multifaceted nature of client violence. Also, the findings underscore the intersectional vulnerabilities faced by women social workers, particularly in contexts where societal norms and power dynamics exacerbate the risks encountered particularly in dealing with 4P's clients in Lanao del Sur. As such, understanding these threats is imperative in devising effective interventions and support mechanisms to safeguard the welfare of social workers and mitigate the impact of client violence on their professional and personal lives.

The threats experienced by women social workers in dealing with 4Ps clients in Lanao del Sur is a common situation. This emphasized an occupational health and safety of women workers in the Philippines which is a significant concern due to the feminization of the labor force and the associated risks (Kaewboonchoo et al., 2015). Women journalists in the country also face serious threats, including blackmail, physical violence, and sexual harassment (Gomez, 2023; Tuazon & Torres, 2021). These threats are further exacerbated for women migrant workers, who often experience violence, sexual abuse, and extortion (Leung, 2021).

Furthermore, studies shared that the risks faced by women social workers are multifaceted and severe, with many experiencing poverty, social exclusion, and lack of access to legal rights (Hassan, 2014). These risks are exacerbated by the dominance of a discourse of risk in social work, which can align the profession with carceral institutions and reinforce processes of criminalization (Leotti, 2020).

In addition, female workers, particularly those on night shifts, are at high risk of sexual threats and harassment, necessitating the development of prevention programs (Plaengsorn, 2015). These dangers are particularly pronounced in the globalized world, where social workers are exposed to unique risks in their interactions with individuals and groups experiencing social dysfunctions and deficits (Cywiński, 2018). These studies collectively highlight the urgent need for improved safety measures and protection policies for women in the workplace, including social workers.

Category 3: Physical Attack Received by the Social Workers

Physical attack received by the women Social Workers were the client-child pulled the hair of the social workers, the client finger pointed the social workers and as if he was going to punch the social worker, and the client fired a gun towards the social worker. Participant 3 said: “yong parang you did not expect na mangyayari yun, akala ko nga is mag-uusap kami naka smile pa nga sya nong puntahan ako tapos ge approach niya ako tapos hindi ko alam na may mangyayaring violence na talagang physicalan kasi sinabunutan nya talaga ako. (*I did not expect that would happen, I thought we will just talk as she was smiling at me when was approaching. I never thought that physical violence will happen because she pulled my hair and drag me*) (Participant 3, Transcript 1, LN 36-38).

Participant 6 also shared, “Few moments later, don mismo sa location nakarinig na kami ng mga putok ng baril and then later on narealized ko na sa akin papunta yong mga gunfire na naririnig ko. (*Few moments, in the same location, we have heard gun fires and then later on, I realized that the gun fires we heard were aiming at me*) (Participant 6, Transcript 1, LN 20-22).

OSHA has defined workplace violence as harmful or disturbing acts or threats, such as physical assaults, badgering, or bullying, at a place of employment. Because municipal links frequently deal with aggressive, disturbed, stubborn, and violent clients during the course of providing related social services, they run the risk of becoming victims of workplace violence. Furthermore, Freysteinsdóttir's (2020) research conducted in Iceland confirmed that 70 percent of social workers had been victims of emotional abuse in the previous six months, and 5 percent had been victims of physical abuse in the same time frame. Conversely, research seems that physical violence is less common throughout Europe and in Portugal specifically, as just 2 percent of workers in both instances reported having experienced this kind of aggression.

This physical violence can occur in a variety of settings, including during home visits, in community outreach programs, or in office settings. It is important for social workers to be aware of the potential risks and to have protocols in place for managing and responding to threats of violence.

Theme 2: Effects of Violence on Social Workers

The effects of violence on Social Workers are the loss of self-worth and self-esteem, as well as post-traumatic stress-related behaviors.

The exploration of the loss of self-worth and self-esteem within Theme 2 unveils the profound impact of client violence on the mental and emotional states of women social workers. Through participant narratives, the study unveils a spectrum of psychological responses, ranging from heightened anxiety and fear to chronic stress and trauma.

Category 1: Loss of Self-worth and self-esteem

The loss of self-worth and self-esteem means losing face, public humiliation loss confidence and self-distrust.

Moreover, reflection on the enduring impact of past experiences highlights the long-term psychological consequences of client violence. The erosion of trust described suggests a profound shift in worldview and interpersonal dynamics, indicating the need for ongoing support and interventions to rebuild resilience and foster a sense of security among social workers.

Collectively, these accounts underscore the urgent need for comprehensive support systems, trauma-informed care, and preventative measures to mitigate the psychological consequences of client violence and promote the well-being of social workers, particularly in this context, those that are assigned in Lanao del Sur. The narratives of experience by participants 1 and 3 of the study presented as follows:

yung nahihya ka, at nakakawala ng confidence na sigawan ng client mo sa maraming tao parang feeling mo kay wala kang kwentang tao dahil don. (*I feel ashamed and I loss confidence when the client shouted me in public, I felt worthless*) (Participant 1, Transcript 1, LN 30-32)

nagkaroon ako ng trust issue even my friends and family, hindi na ako masyadong nagtitiwala pati sa sarili ko. (*I had trust issues even my friend, my family, I don't actually believe in anyone even myself since that happened*) (Participant 3, Transcript 3, LN 20-22).

Numerous scholarly investigations have demonstrated the noteworthy influence of client violence on the mental health of social workers. Radey (2022) and Malesa (2020) both underscore the need for agency support and interventions to mitigate the negative effects of such violence (Malesa & Pillay, 2020; Radey et al., 2022). Lamothe (2018) further emphasizes the pervasive nature of client violence in child protection work, with workers perceiving it as a recurring problem and experiencing a range of psychological, organizational, and clinical consequences. Sturgeon (2014) adds a layer of complexity by discussing the role of stigma and marginalization in exacerbating the mental health challenges faced by social workers (Lamothe et al., 2018; Sturgeon, 2012). These studies collectively underscore the need for comprehensive support systems and interventions to address the psychological consequences of client violence in social work.

In essence, this theme serves as a crucial lens through which to understand the underlying drivers of client violence against women social workers in Lanao del Sur. By unpacking the loss of self-worth and self-esteem and the post-traumatic stress related behaviors associated with such incidents, the study not only enhances our comprehension of the challenges faced by social workers but also lays the groundwork for evidence-based interventions and policy reforms to address these issues effectively.

Category 2: Post Traumatic Stress Related Behaviors

Post-traumatic stress related behaviors are Sleep difficulties, extreme fear, flashbacks of the traumatizing experience and the women social workers feel that they have trouble concentration.

The reluctance to discuss the psychological effects of client violence, as highlighted in one narrative, suggests a potential barrier to seeking support and addressing emotional needs within the profession. Another experience emphasizes the traumatizing nature of client violence, particularly when perpetrated by individuals known closely to the victim. One narrative sheds light on the physiological manifestations of psychological distress, demonstrating the interconnectedness of mental and physical health.

Participant 5 said: "that experience was depressing, apektado lahat ng aspeto ng buhay ko, ang personal life ko, ang work even ng family. Yung feeling na natatakot ka at nahihiya na umalis ng bahay dahil doon. Iba ang emotional damage na genawa ng experience nayun saakin. (*That experience was depressing, all aspects of my life were affected, my personal life, my work even my family. That feelings of fear and shame of going out because of the incident. My emotion were damaged differently because of that experience*) (Participant 5, Transcript 1, LN 18-21).

Participant 6 also shared, "That incident brought me fear and sleepless nights as that was my first time to encounter and witness such imminent threat to my life (Participant 6, Transcript 1, LN 33-35).

Client violence exerts a profound and enduring impact on the mental health of social workers, revealing itself as a persistent challenge that affects their overall well-being and the standard of care they can extend to beneficiaries. These experiences are described as deeply traumatic and life-altering, leaving an indelible mark on the psyche of these professionals.

The encounters with violence and threats significantly impact the mental health of social workers, generating emotional distress, anxiety, and potentially leading to post-traumatic stress symptoms. The weight of these experiences, the fear they instill, and the potential danger associated with their roles can manifest in a multitude of ways, affecting their ability to function optimally both within and outside their professional domain.

These distressing incidents can result in heightened levels of stress and anxiety, potentially impairing social workers' capacity to engage effectively with their beneficiaries. The emotional toll may impact their ability to build trust, provide empathetic care, and maintain a positive outlook, subsequently influencing the quality of service they offer. Recognizing and addressing this impact on mental health is imperative to ensure the resilience and long-term effectiveness of social workers in their roles. By providing appropriate support, resources, and avenues for mental health care, organizations can help mitigate the adverse effects of client violence on the mental well-being of these dedicated professionals.

Theme 3: Positive Coping

Positive coping means insights gained, strong support system, and interventions obtained. Realization pertains to the insights gained by social workers through their experiences with client violence, while Support Systems underscore the importance of social and professional networks in mitigating the impact of these experiences. Interventions refer to the strategies and initiatives gained at addressing and preventing client violence within the social work profession.

Category 1: Insights Gained

Insights obtained means that the social workers realized that despite client violence, they still have the passion to help, it became part of their professional growth, learning experiences as well as it became a lifestyle integration.

The participants mentioned that their experiences made them realize the significance of their work within the community. Despite the myriad challenges they encounter, these professionals recognize that their efforts play a pivotal role in effecting positive change and improving the lives of beneficiaries. They have this realization that serves as their powerful motivator, driving them to be persistent in their mission despite the obstacles they face. It highlights their resilience and unwavering commitment to their vocation, even in the face of daunting circumstances.

Moreover, the participants acknowledged the importance of self-reflection and evaluation in response to challenging situations. Taking time to understand the root causes of conflicts or threats allows them to address underlying issues effectively. This introspective approach reflects a commitment to personal growth and professional development. Additionally, there is a recognition of the necessity of anticipating challenges in the future, emphasizing the need for preparedness and support.

This proactive mindset acknowledges the inevitability of encountering difficult situations and the importance of seeking assistance when needed. Participant 1 expressed "pero yung passion ko parin to continue, kasi nanydan palagi yung willingness mo to work " (*but my passion to pursue, because my willingness to work is always there*) (Participant 1, Transcript 1, LN 206-207).

Participant 4 also shared, "Kasi bilang social worker hindi naman tayo super man or super hero so normal lang talaga satin na may mga client na hindi nila maintindihan yung mga work natin so as a social worker kailanagn mo talagan tatagan yung sarili mo and yung professionalism mo" (*As a Social Worker, we are not superhero or super man so it is normal to us that there are clients who don't understand our work so as a Social Worker we have to be brave and be professional*) (Participant 4, Transcript 1, LN 5-7).

The category of Insights gained in social work is a complex and multifaceted concept, as evidenced by a range of studies. Aditya & Al-Fatih (2021) and Zaturskis (2014) both emphasize the importance of self-realization in social work, with Kostyuchenko focusing on the role of social workers in providing help and creating favorable conditions for individuals, groups, and societies, and Petružytė exploring the conditions that facilitate client self-realization.

In addition, Chamorro-Caicedo (2020) and Lepisto & Pratt (2016) further expand on this, with Arteaga discussing the theoretical-conceptual components that guide social work and the need for coherence in understanding and analyzing these categories, and Lepisto proposing a research agenda that distinguishes between the realization and justification of meaningful work (Aditya & Al-Fatih, 2021; Chamorro-Caicedo, 2020; Lepisto & Pratt, 2016; Zaturskis & Kiaunytė, 2014). These studies collectively underscore the significance of the Realization category in social work, highlighting its role in both the practice and theoretical understanding of the profession.

Category 2: Strong Support System

The strong Support System comprising supports from colleagues, supervisors, and family members, in navigating the demands of their profession. These individuals offer not just practical aid but also emotional reinforcement and encouragement, fostering camaraderie and solidarity among social workers. By drawing strength from these support systems, social workers are

better equipped to confront challenges and maintain their resilience in the face of adversity. This underscores the significance of collective resilience and the interconnectedness of social workers within their professional community.

Participant narratives highlight the crucial need for both office and LGU support to ensure the safety and well-being of social workers. Participants stress the importance of feeling secure in their roles, emphasizing the pivotal role played by organizational and governmental support structures. Furthermore, expressions of gratitude towards the office for prioritizing safety underscore the significance of institutional backing in fostering a conducive work environment. More so, participants commend the proactive approach of the LGU, which actively engages with social workers during the distribution of resources and stands ready to provide assistance whenever needed. This collaborative effort between social workers, their office, and the LGU underscores the importance of collective action in safeguarding the welfare of social workers and their beneficiaries.

Participant 5 and 6 expressed: "My family and my friends help me a lot at yung pananalig natin kay God na everything is okay as long as you keep your faith. (*my family and my friends help me a lot and praying to god that everything will be okay as long as you keep your faith*) (Participant 5, Transcript 2, LN 14-15).

Participant 6 also said, "My husband always takes me in a coffee shop para lang makalimutan ko yung nangyari. He always makes me laugh by his humorous move. I was also surrounded with a positive people who helped me to get back on a track. And talking to Allah helped me to understand the purpose of the incident." (*My husband always takes me in a coffee shop for me to forget what happened. He always makes me laugh by his humorous move. I was also surrounded with positive people who helped me to get back on a track. And talking to Allah helped me to understand the purpose of the incident.*) (Participant 6, Transcript 1, LN 48-51).

This finding accords with research which consistently highlights the critical role of supportive networks in maintaining a positive outlook among social workers (Cleary et al., 2023; Hazenberg et al., 2018; Silveira et al., 2016). These networks, including colleagues, supervisors, and family members, are crucial in providing emotional, instrumental, and informational support (Cleary et al., 2023). The importance of family social support networks is particularly emphasized, with active family relationships being a key factor in effective assistance to families (Loučková & Gojová, 2016). In the context of mental health social work, the involvement of family in the helping process and the organization of social assistance networks are highlighted as key intervention activities (Hazenberg et al., 2018). These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to support systems in social work, with a focus on strengthening family relationships and building effective cooperative systems.

Category 3: Interventions Obtained

The interventions obtained by the women social workers who experienced client violence are the involvement of traditional leaders in resolving the problem, Kamustahan Session, the office transferred the workers to another areas, and the LGU and the police provided security to the social workers with the coordination of the supervisors. Participant 5 said, "Ang ginawa ng agency namin ay gi transfer kami ng ibang area and that way kahit papaano na rin ay paunti-unti na akong nagiging okay. Our case ay resolved na amicably between our families." (*What our agency did was to transfer us to another area of assignment and that way I feel okay gradually. Our case was resolved amicably between our families*) (Participant 5, Transcript 1, LN 40-42)

This was reinforced by Participant 7 who said, "We receive counseling from a professional one if ever na affected na ang psychosocial and spiritual aspects namin na mga field workers; case conference between sa focal persons at sa mga field workers, and kamustahan session with co-workers." (*We receive counseling form professional one if our psychosocial and spiritual well-being were affected, case conference between the focals and field workers, and lamustahan session with co-workers*) (Participant 7, Transcript 3, LN 24-27).

The participants highlighted the interventions in which these involve proactive measures aimed at nurturing and sustaining a positive outlook among social workers in Lanao del Sur. They stressed the importance of targeted interventions to address the root causes of client violence and minimize associated risks. These interventions may encompass comprehensive training programs covering conflict resolution, safety protocols, and psychosocial support services. By providing social workers with the necessary tools and resources, these interventions empower them to navigate challenges with confidence and resilience.

The narratives underscore the significance of addressing the diverse personalities and behaviors encountered in daily interactions, especially with clients. This emphasizes the need for agencies to offer practical training that equips social workers with the skills to handle various forms of violence effectively. Such training programs are essential for enhancing preparedness and competence in managing challenging situations, thereby fostering a safer and more supportive work environment.

Moreover, participants stressed the importance of strengthening coordination with the LGU and fostering open communication through feedback sessions. These measures are vital for ensuring the protection and safety of social workers in the field. Regular meetings with supervisors and collaboration with local authorities contribute to a more cohesive response to potential threats and enhance overall security measures. By prioritizing collaboration and communication, interventions can effectively address safety concerns and promote the well-being of social workers.

The importance of targeted interventions in addressing the root causes of client violence and mitigating associated risks is underscored in the literature and studies which emphasize the value of transdiagnostic frameworks and effective training programs in this regard (Kumari et al., 2022; Miller-Graff & Howell, 2016). Also, Shapira and colleague (2021) further highlights the potential of peer-education campaigns in preventing violence, particularly among children and young adults. These interventions are crucial in the field of social work, where the need to cultivate and sustain a positive outlook is paramount (Shapira et al., 2021).

Furthermore, social workers' experiences of client-engaged violence are greatly influenced by organizational characteristics, such as workload and workplace safety culture (Shier et al., 2021). Positive behaviour support approaches, including increasing access to positive engagement opportunities and staff training, can help prevent crises and promote a positive culture (Whittle et al., 2021). Interventions to address workplace violence against social workers include increasing security, providing training and education, and offering counselling (Malesa & Pillay, 2020). Workplace violence negatively affects staff well-being and performance, highlighting the need for intervention studies and support for staff (Tuominen et al., 2022).

The examination of Theme 3 reveals a compelling narrative of resilience and determination among women social workers dealing with 4P's clients in Lanao del Sur. This theme delves into the positive outlook adopted by these professionals in the face of formidable challenges, highlighting their proactive approach to navigating the complexities of their roles. Far from being a passive reaction to adversity, the positive mindset embraced by social workers in Lanao del Sur region is founded on profound realizations about the significance of their work within the community. By delving into the categories of Realization, Support Systems, and

Interventions, this study shares valuable insights into the factors that contribute to their unwavering commitment and optimism amidst adversity.

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