Perception of Victim Blaming: Basis for Community Education

Willmer R. Pizarra[1]
College of Criminal Justice Education,
Laguna State Polytechnic University, Los Baños,
Laguna, Philippines

Christy Liane R. Niem[2]
Assistant Professor, College of Criminal Justice Education,
Laguna State Polytechnic University, Los Baños,
Laguna, Philippines

Kristelle Ann R. Torres[3]
Assistant Professor, College of Criminal Justice Education,
Laguna State Polytechnic University, Los Baños,
Laguna, Philippines

Abstract:- The main objective of this study was to determine the perception of victim blaming in terms of societal and socio-cultural factors, as a basis for community education. The respondents of the study were three hundred seventy-nine (379) constituents of one barangay in component city in the Philippines. The descriptive-correlational method of research was employed and the researcher-constructed questionnaire as data gathering tool. A significant relationship in the assessments of the respondents when grouped according to their profile variables were tested. A community education was proposed to enlighten the community about victim blaming. In line with the findings and the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were offered: The Sangguniang Barangay may conduct seminars to provide safety awareness guidelines to prevent victimization in their community. Seminar on the basic self-defense technique may be considered to enlighten the community about what they do to prevent victimization. The Sangguniang Barangay may coordinate with Sangguniang Kabataan may ask for help on raising awareness through social Media Platform to enlighten the community of what possible social cause of victimization. The Sangguniang Barangay and Kabataan may coordinate and create partnership with the College of Criminal Justice Education for future activities like educational seminars about awareness on victim blaming and prevention of crime victimization. The Sangguniang Barangay may ask help from the Philippine National Police to discuss what possible opportunities in the victim lifestyle that provoke criminals to commit crimes against them. The future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies with wider scope and exploring other variables not included in this present endeavor. Also, there must be well representation from the people of the community.

Keywords:- Community Education, Societal, Sociocultural, Victim Blaming, Victimization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reported victims of crime have increased in this modern century, many individuals become victims of crime because of different circumstances, most of the criminals take advantage to them because of their weaknesses and vulnerability. Almost all victims suffered psychologically and emotionally, which affect their character. These include victims who suffered post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during or after the incidence. Victim of crimes was one of the worst scenarios in every individual, anyone possibly becoming a victim of crime.

Despite everything that happened to the victims of crime, some people were blaming the victim because they believe the latter contributed to their victimization, as well as they were responsible for the criminal acts that happened to them. In other words, some people believe the victim's action and behavior were the reason for their victimization. Moreover, some researchers and other known individuals studied the victims of crime, and most of them agreed and supported that the victims had contributed to their victimization and were also responsible for the criminal acts that happened to them. However, despite the efforts of past researchers and other individuals studied victims of crime and agreed and supports that the victims are contributed to their victimization and responsible to the criminal acts happened to them, still, no one can prove scientifically that the victims of crime have contributed and responsible to the crime happened to them.

In view hereof, the proponents' observation and experience always encountered different perceptions about victim blaming since past years, different perceptions about victim blaming have emerged and become more questionable in the chosen community where the study was conducted. The different perception about victim has become more concern to deal with, and needs more studies to determine the perception about victim blaming of most of all residents in the research locale. Victim blaming culture is one of the reasons why this problem still occurs in every community.

Since the community has different perceptions about victim blaming, there were many things to understand about perception on victim blaming. First, if societal and socio-cultural factors were the reason that affect perceptions of victim blaming by the community. Victim blaming perpetuates the cycle of violence, leading survivors who internalize this blame to experience profound shame. They accepted responsibility for their mistreatment and were less inclined to disclose it. There was no scientific study that proved that victim blaming was helpful to lessen the crime, only theory and opinion. It was required to treat victims of crime that they were not responsible and liable to the crime that happened to them and it was just because of the criminals who was not afraid to commit crimes.

In this issue that exists in this community, the proponents become motivated to conduct a research or study on the perception of every individual about victim blaming as a basis for community education. The proponents have an idea that helps the community to educate them about victim blaming. Accordingly, it was one of the major elements that can help to understand more about victim blaming. It can be useful in order to have a proper education and knowledge to the community in terms of blaming the victims of crime.

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design*

This study aimed to determine the significant relationship between the respondents' perception on victim blaming issues when grouped according to profile, using a self-constructed questionnaire. Descriptive-correlational design was employed to measure a relationship between two or more variables. The proponents utilized this design of research because it is the most appropriate method to determine the significant relationship between the respondents' perception on victim blaming issues when grouped according to profile.

➤ *Respondents of the Study*

The respondents of the study were 379 community members of one barangay of a component city in the Philippines . These respondents were selected through simple random sampling. This techniqe utilized each member of a population having an equal chance of being chosen through an unbiased selection method [1].

➤ *Research Instrument*

Researcher-made questionnaire served as the research instrument in this investigation. The questionnaire was developed to elicit responses regarding the specific issues that were addressed in the study. The questionnaire's content was developed by referencing past and related studies. For the content validation, the first draft was submitted to the experts in the field were also consulted to go over the questionnaire and to determine whether the questions were categorized correctly. In addition, the proponents convinced these experts to give some suggestions, comments and

recommendations for the enhancement of the questionnaire. After a series of revisions, the final draft was presented to the language epert for grammatical accuracy and content appropriateness.

The questionnaire used in this study determined the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment, and their perception of victim blaming. The variables included socio-cultural and societal factors. These categories were given ten (10) statements each, in which the respondents were requested to rate the statements using the following numerical rating value and verbal interpretation: 4 = Almost always true; 3 = Usually true; 2= Usually not true; 1 = Almost never true.

➤ *Data Gathering Procedures*

Prior to the distribution of questionnaires thru google form in social media, validation and checking of questions finalized through comments and suggestions of adviser, panel members, chairman and the experts on this field. The letter includes the most respectful request to allow the proponents and ask for the respondents' support and cooperation in answering the questionnaire. The questionnaire utilized as the research instrument.

The proponents explained clearly the instructions to the respondents before answering the checklist. They have allotted enough time to answer the entire question in order to have accurate responses. They were given an assurance that their answers would be treated with strictest confidentiality. Subsequently, the proponents conducted an informal verbal interview to obtain further clarification and enhance their understanding of the respondent's responses. Following the administration of the questionnaire, it was promptly collected to guarantee a high retrieval rate. The collected data were compiled, organized, and analyzed with the aid of statistical tools and the expertise of a statistician.

➤ *Statistical Treatment of Data*

The following statistical measures were used to analyze and interpret the data and results in the order from which it appeared in the objective of the research.

Frequency and Percentage. These were used to analyze and interpret the respondents' profile according to age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment.

Weighted Mean. This was used to determine the respondents' perception of victim blaming in terms of socio-cultural and societal factors. The following mean ranges and verbal intepretation were used to interpret the data: 4.00-3.25 = Almost always true; 3.24-2.50 = Usually true; 2.49-1.75= Usually not true; 1.74-1.00 = Almost never true.

Chi – Square Test of Independence. This was used to determine the significant relationship between the profile and the respondents as perceive in victim blaming issues.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➢ *Profile of the Respondents*

The succeeding table present the frequency distribution of the respondents according to the profile variables considered in the study. These were age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Profile of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21 – 30	308	81.26
31 – 40 years old	45	11.87
41 – 50 years old	18	4.74
51 – 60 years old	7	1.84
61 years old and above	1	0.29
Sex		
Female	232	61
Male	147	39
Civil Status		
Single	299	78.89
Married	77	20.31
Widow/Widower	3	0.80
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	6	1.58
High School	212	55.93
College	160	42.21
Masters	1	0.28

It can be seen in the previous table that majority of the respondents belonged in the age bracket of 21 to 30 years old having a frequency of 308 or 81.26 percent of the sampled population. This implies that most respondents were 21 to 30 years' old which can be characterized as matured enough to be aware of the current happenings in the society. They may possess characteristics of a citizen who is conscious in factors of victim blaiming

It can be also observed in the table that male respondents outnumbered the female respondents. Majority of the respondents were male having a frequency of 232 or 61 percent of the sample population. On the other hand, female respondents got a frequency of 147 or 39 percent.

As shown in the table that the greater number of the respondents was represented by single people which got the highest frequency of 299 or 78.89 percent. These results were expected since the age distribution resulted that majority of

the respondents were 21 to 30 years old. Probably, one of the possible major reasons for this finding was that they were studying during the time of survey, therefore, making them not yet interested in entering marriage.

Lastly, majority of the respondents were high school graduates which obtained the highest frequency of 212 or 55.93 percent of the sample population. The findings imply that the respondents were literate to respond to the purpose of the study. Majority of them were able to finish high school level of education. Better yet, some of them reached and graduated tertiary level. This denotes that they value education and considered it as springboard to a better living.

➢ *Respondents' Perception on Victim Blaming*

The succeeding tables present the assessments made by the respondents which shows their perception on victim blaming in terms of socio-cultural and societal factors as basis for community education.

Table 2 Respondents' Perception on Victim Blaming

Variables	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Socio-cultural factor	3.05	Usually true
Societal factor	3.06	Usually true
Overall Mean	**3.06**	**Usually true**

In general, the respondents perceived that sociocultural factor as "Usually true" among person being victimized of crime as shown by the mean of 3.05. It can be inferred that for respondents, they believed that not only the criminals are the reason why some people being victimized sometimes but because of some factors such as being careless, not fighting

back when being harass, being too trustworthy, and the victim is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

In the study conducted by Reference [2], the association between acceptance of intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization among Kenyan women took into consideration the selected sociocultural factors that may also influence

acceptance of IPV. The result states that sociocultural factors had a greater impact.

In addition, on above paragraph, in the study conducted by Reference [3], about blaming the victim of acquaintance rape, suggested a need for more transparency in describing the scenarios used in research on victim blaming in sexual assault cases and greater empirical attention to sociocultural factors that may influence blaming tendencies. This study shown that socio-cultural factors is one of the main reason attributes victimization of an individual.

Moreover, the respondents perceived that societal factor as "Usually true" among person being victimized of crime as shown by the mean of 3.06. It can be inferred that the respondents believed that not only the criminals are the reason why some people being victimized sometimes but because of some factors such as wearing inappropriate clothes, and risk by walking home alone at night, and others.

According to the study conducted by Reference [4] about Qeirat Values and Victim Blaming in Iran, found that Qeirat values was highly correlated with victim blaming, and that this link was mediated by a number of culture-specific proscriptions about women's roles and dress code. Further, in a regression analysis with all moral foundations, Qeirat values, Haya, and religiosity as predictors of victim blaming, only Haya, religiosity, high Authority values, and low Care values were found to predict how strongly Iranian participants blamed victims of sexual assault scenarios.

➢ *Significant Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents as Perceived in Victim Blaming*

Table 3 presented the summary of computations when testing was done on the significant relationship that exist between the assessment of the respondents when they are grouped according to their profile.

Table 3 Computations in Test of Significant Relationship in the Assessments of the Respondents when Grouped According to Profile Variables

Variables		df	X^2	P - value	Decision	Remarks
Age	Socio-Cultural	12	22.117	*0.036	Reject Ho	Significant
	Societal		17.534	0.131	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Sex	Socio-Cultural	3	7.448	0.059	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Societal		1.764	0.623	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Civil Status	Socio-Cultural	6	5.020	0.541	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Societal		3.695	0.718	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	Socio-Cultural	9	14.186	0.116	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Societal		8.483	0.486	Accept Ho	Not Significant

*Significant at 0.05 level

When the test for significant relationship was done in the assessments of the respondents considering their age, it generated a degrees of freedom of 12 and a chi-squared of 22.117 in socio-cultural and a chi-squared of 17.534 in societal and a P-value of 0.036 in socio-cultural and P-value of 0.131 in societal. This made the proponents reject the null hypothesis which means that there was significant relationship in the assessments of the respondents when their age was considered. Thus, regardless of age, the respondents positively assess the perception on victim blaming. Due to the level of maturity and perceptual ability of the respondents, they had similar assessments in the perception of victim blaming.

In the study conducted by Reference [5] about victim blaming in young, middle-aged, and older adults, it determined that the older age of participants blamed the victims more than the other groups. However, in contrast to the typical severity effect, the oldest group blamed the very irresponsible victim more when the outcome was mild than they did when the outcome was severe.

As to the test of significant difference in the assessments made by the respondents when compared according to their sex, it generated a degrees of freedom of 3 and a chi-squared of 7.448 in socio-cultural and a chi-squared of 1.764 in societal and a P-value of 0.059 in socio-cultural and P-value of 0.623 in societal. This shows that no

significant relationship was found in the assessments of the respondents when their sex was considered. Therefore, male- and female-respondents both viewed the perception on victim blaming normally. This was due to the involvement of both gender in the issue of victim blaming. Both male and female respondents perceived the victim blaming issue based on their experience and observation.

In the study conducted by Reference [6], they explore this distinction by examining the victim characteristics of gender, sexuality, and victim–perpetrator relationship. Findings indicate that these variables have significant effects on rape blame attribution. In other words, gender is very important in the issue of victim blaming. Moreover, according to Reference [7] "Rape myth acceptance are false beliefs regarding the incidence of sexual assault, and are more prevalent among males, may influence how victims are treated.

Furthermore, when the test was done considering the respondents' civil status, it generated a degrees of freedom of 6 and a chi-squared of 5.020 in socio-cultural and a chi-squared of 3.695 in societal and a P-value of 0.541 in socio-cultural and P-value of 0.718 in societal. This made to accept the null hypothesis which means that there was no significant relationship in the assessments of the respondents when their civil status was considered.

In the study conducted Reference [8] about perceptions of domestic violence, perceptions were influenced by their own sex and myths about domestic violence, by the victim's decision to return to the abusive relationship, and by the relationship status of the victim (dating or married to the perpetrator. As a result, demonstrated significant main effects of participant's sex, domestic violence myths, and of the victim's relationship status and decision to return. That is, participants blamed the victim who reportedly returned to her abuser more than the victim about whom there is no such information.

Similarly, when the respondents' educational attainment was considered in testing the difference in their assessments, it gained a degrees of freedom of 9 and a chi-squared of 14.186 in socio-cultural and a chi-squared of 8.483 in societal and a P-value of 0.116 in socio-cultural and P-value of 0.486 in societal. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted which means that there was no significant relationship in their assessments when grouped according to their educational attainment. It can be inferred that no matter how low or high the achievement of an individual in terms of education, they all perceived the perception on victim blaming positively. This shows that a person attains elementary and those attain doctorate degree are both possess a positive impression toward this form of assessment.

In the study conducted by Reference [9] about effects of a victimology course on victim blaming found out that results from the multivariate analysis indicate that less knowledge over time and a higher propensity to blame victims at the beginning of the semester predicted more victim-blaming attitudes on the posttest. Victim-blaming attitudes among college students enrolled in a victimology course were compared with students enrolled in other courses. Results from a pretest and posttest suggest that the victimology students were significantly less likely to blame victims and these students also gained significantly more knowledge over time compared with the students who did not enroll in the course.

IV. CONCLUSION

The respondents perceive societal and socio-cultural factors as a major factor in victim blaming. Based from the findings of the study, being careless and being too trustworthy has the highest mean assessment for the socio-cultural factors. The proponents believe that the community education program such as seminars about safety awareness guidelines in relation to victimization was one of the programs to be prioritized to provide proactive response of the community about victimization. Moreover, raising awareness through discussion by Philippine National Police (PNP) about Modus Operandi of criminals will also prioritize to enhance knowledge and awareness of community about possible social factors that motivate the offender to commit crimes to the victim.

Furthermore, risk by walking home alone at night and being drunk has the highest mean assessment in terms of societal factors. Raising awareness through discussion by PNP

about person's lifestyle that provoke criminals to commit crimes will also be prioritize to enhance knowledge and awareness of community about possible social factors that motivate the offender to commit crimes. Lastly, social media awareness platform will also be one of the priorities in community education program to enhance knowledge of community about the possible relationship of being drunk to the victimization. The proponents believe that this suggested community education program will give a major impact to the community to address victim blaming to their community.

Based from the findings and conclusions of the study, the following are endorsed in addition to the community education programs discussed in the previous paragraphs.

- The Sangguniang Barangay may conduct seminars to provide safety awareness guidelines to prevent victimization in their community. And also add to the seminar the basic self-defense technique to enlighten the community about what they do to prevent victimization.
- The Sangguniang Barangay may coordinate with Sangguniang Kabataan to ask for help on raising awareness through social Media Platform to enlighten the community of what possible social cause of victimization.
- The Sangguniang Barangay and Kabataan may coordinate and create partnership with the College of Criminal Justice Education for future activities like educational seminars about awareness on victim blaming and prevention of crime victimization.
- The Sangguniang Barangay may ask help from the PNP to discuss what possible opportunities in the victim lifestyle that provoke criminals to commit crimes against them. And also Modus Operandi of offenders, for the purpose of awareness and pro-active action of the community.
- The future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies with wider scope and exploring other variables not included in this present endeavor. Also, there must be well representation from the people of the community.

REFERENCES

[1]. Simkus, J. (2023, July 31). Simple Random Sampling | Definition, Steps & Examples - Simply Psychology. www.simplypsychology.org. https://www.simplypsychology.org/simple-random-sampling.html

[2]. Mugoya, G.C.T., Witte, T.H., & Ernst, K.C. (2014). Sociocultural and Victimization Factors That Impact Attitudes Toward Intimate Partner Violence Among Kenyan. Women Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 30(16), 2851-2871. https://doi.org/10.1177/088626051455428

[3]. Gravelin, C. R., Biernat, M., & Bucher, C. E. (2019). Blaming the Victim of Acquaintance Rape: Individual, Situational, and Sociocultural Factors. Frontiers in psychology, 9, 2422. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02422

[4]. Karimi-Malekabadi, F., & Falahatpishe Baboli, M. (2023). Qeirat Values and Victim Blaming in Iran: The Mediating Effect of Culture-Specific Gender Roles. Journal of interpersonal violence, 38(3-4), 2485–2509. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260522110 1184

[5]. Adams-Price, C.E., Dalton III, W.T. & Sumrall, R. (2004) Victim Blaming in Young, Middle-Aged, and Older Adults: Variations on the Severity Effect. Journal of Adult Development 11, 289–295. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:JADE.0000044532.83720.7 4

[6]. der Bruggenac, A. & Amy Grubbb, A. (2014). A review of the literature relating to rape victim blaming: An analysis of the impact of observer and victim characteristics on attribution of blame in rape cases. Aggresion and Violent Behvaior, 19(5), 523-531. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2014.07.008

[7]. Hayes, R. M., Lorenz, K., Bell, K. A., (2013). Victim blaming others: Rape myth acceptance and the just world belief. Feminist Criminology, 8(3), 202-220. https://doi.org/10.1177/155708511348478

[8]. Yamawaki, N., Ochoa-Shipp, M., Pulsipher, C., Harlos, A., & Swindler, S. (2012). Perceptions of domestic violence: the effects of domestic violence myths, victim's relationship with her abuser, and the decision to return to her abuser. Journal of interpersonal violence, 27(16), 3195–3212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260512441253

[9]. Fox, K. A., & Cook, C. L. (2011). Is knowledge power? the effects of a victimology course on victim blaming. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26(17), 3407-342. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260511403