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Intimate Partner Violence Experiences of Filipino Women: Evidence from the Philippines

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Antoinette Louise S. Makani

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**Intimate Partner Violence Experiences of Filipino Women:
Evidence from the Philippines**

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the different factors that influence the current experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) of ever-married and never-married Filipino women. The study also examines the differences in perceived IPV experiences. Data from the 2022 Philippine National Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS) were utilized in this study. Only women age 15–49 who answered the Women’s Safety Module (N=19,228) that they were ever-married or never-married but ever had an intimate partner (N=13,362) were included in the analysis. Regression analysis with Stata 18 was used to analyze the relationship of physical, sexual, and emotional IPV to women’s (1) background characteristics, (2) current life circumstances, and (3) immediate precursors. The results showed that IPV prevalence is steadily declining in the Philippines with 3% of women experiencing any form of physical IPV, 1% sexual IPV, and 11% emotional IPV in the last 12 months. The proportion of married women who are experiencing current IPV (aOR = 2.7, 95% CI [1.9–3.8]) is higher than their never-married counterparts. The women’s situational contexts have been shown to be the most significant risk factor for experiencing IPV. Overall, IPV is a significant social issue and public health concern that should be considered seriously through policy reforms and strengthening of community initiatives that focus on violence against women.

KEY WORDS: intimate partner violence, Philippines, DHS, family violence, violence against women

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is Goal 5—Gender Equality, which calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres. The most common form of violence experienced by women and girls in the private sphere is intimate partner violence (IPV), which is defined as any behavior by a current or former male intimate partner within the context of marriage, cohabitation, or any other formal or informal union that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm.¹ The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that IPV remains to be a pervasive social and health problem with global estimates of 30% of women subjected to one form of IPV.¹

Data from the Philippines show that the proportion of ever-married women (age 15 to 49) who reported ever experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence committed by their current or most recent husband/partner has declined over time from 29% in 2008, 24% in 2017, and 18% in 2022.² The declining trend is positive for the country, although violence is not inevitable and can be prevented.³ Further improvements are possible and needed. The WHO has found that several factors are associated with IPV. These include individual characteristics as well as social and cultural factors. Despite the widespread prevalence of IPV, many view the violent experiences of women as disconnected events that take place in the private sphere of relationship conflict and are beyond the realm of policymakers and healthcare providers. This can lead others to blame the women for being subjected to violence and not the perpetrators.³

There are several studies of IPV in the Philippines that have used nationally representative Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data to analyze the relationship of IPV with factors such as age,⁴ women's education,⁵ women's empowerment,⁶ and intergenerational abuse.⁷ There is still a need to better understand the complex factors that contribute to IPV in the Philippines. A more comprehensive understanding of the factors related to IPV is necessary to further reduce and eliminate the incidence of IPV in the country.

1.1 Research Question

This study addressed the question: What are the factors that influence the current IPV experiences of women who ever had intimate partner relationships in the Philippines? Specifically, this study:

1. Describes the different factors that influence Filipino women's IPV experiences, such as background characteristics, current life circumstances, and situational precipitators; and,
2. Examines the differences in the perceived influences of current IPV experiences of ever-married and never-married Filipino women.

1.2 Literature Review

This study builds on the central thesis that IPV is a complex, multi-factorial phenomenon with dimensions that can include intrinsic factors such as individual, biological, and psychological characteristics¹ and extrinsic factors such as patriarchal ideologies, culture, society, religion, and media,² and their interplay with one another.

Age, as both a biological marker and component of social identity, has been studied as a crucial variable in IPV. Different studies have consistently found that early 20s to mid-30s is the age group when IPV is most commonly first experienced^{3,8} and with the highest prevalence^{4-7,9} among women. However, there are findings that Filipino women first experience IPV³ and gender-based violence⁸ comparatively later than women in other countries. Education is another background characteristic that can be a factor in exposure to IPV. Previous research found that women with low educational attainment have the highest risk of experiencing IPV.^{5,7-9} Religious affiliation has also been found to be related to IPV in the Philippines, with Catholics more greatly associated with experiencing IPV^{7,9} than women who are non-Catholics.

Exposure to parental violence during one's formative years is an experience that may have long-lasting effects. Various studies have found direct effects of being exposed to parental violence in childhood and experiencing IPV during adulthood.^{8,10-12} Another factor related to IPV prevalence is justification, in which women justify their own experience of violence. Alcohol can be a factor in IPV because it is accepted to impair an individual's ability to think¹⁰ lead to aggression,¹ which justifies the perpetuation and victimization in IPV. Social identity can also be a crucial factor that can lead to aggressive behavior and the perpetuation of violence,¹¹ staying in an abusive relationship,¹⁰ and justifying IPV.

Certain social identities are accompanied by communication styles, ideologies, culture, and traditions. The breadwinner ideology¹¹ and the masculine honors belief¹² are existing belief systems that enable men to perpetuate "justified" violence toward women. In Burma, IPV is justified when women refuse contraception or neglect children.¹³ In the Philippines, the occurrence of IPV was found to be a result of intergenerational transmission.⁷ A child who witnesses IPV with parents may internalized gender expectations that continue into adulthood, where men normalize violent behavior and women normalize their victimization. Thus, the interconnection of norms and socialization are crucial factors in IPV. Gender roles may also justify IPV.

There are also environmental factors and current life circumstances that are factors in IPV. Place of residence, whether urban or rural, may be a factor. In Ethiopia, for example, urbanization was found to decrease of women's acceptance of IPV.¹⁴ In Bangladesh⁵ and Pakistan,¹⁵ the prevalence of IPV is much higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Different regions have also showed similarities and differences in the patterns of IPV. In a comparison between South Asia and Southeast Asia, similarities and differences have been identified.¹⁶ The prevalence of lifetime and current physical and/or sexual partner violence is highest in India (South Asia), but lower in Vietnam, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, and the Philippines (Southeast Asia). Household size is another factor to consider. The presence and an increasing number of living children at home increases the experience of spousal violence.^{6,13} In contrast, high cohabitation rates with extended kin in rural Pakistan¹⁴ led to a reduction in all types of abuse because the presence of family members provided social support.

Women's empowerment has also been associated with IPV in different contexts. Different variables have been explored in previous studies to operationalize the empowerment of women. These include work status, wealth status, making decisions in the household,⁶ and media exposure.¹⁵ All of these are factors in women's prevalence, odds, and experience of IPV. Experiencing economic stress from a volatile work status,¹⁶ living in a low-income country,^{4,9} being in the lowest wealth quantile,⁵ not meeting the expectations about domestic work,⁹ money, and status problems¹³ expose women to a higher risk for IPV. In the Philippines, media exposure and awareness of women's helpdesks (both empowerment variables) lower the odds of

perceiving IPV as acceptable.⁵ As women's empowerment level increases, the experience of spousal violence decreases.⁶

The use of control is a man's attempt at changing a woman's behavior. This is usually within the context of men using threats, experiencing jealousy, or harboring suspicions against women. Findings in Rwanda and Uganda found that conflict and tension between men and women lead directly to physical IPV and that men sometimes sought to control their partners because of anxiety and preventive jealousy.¹⁷ Other studies from different countries have also found that these factors are consistently associated with higher rates of IPV.^{10,18,19} Another factor in IPV is the use of substances, and particularly alcohol. It is consistent in the literature that alcohol, particularly drunkenness, is a direct risk for IPV. This is supported by research in Brazil⁷ and the Philippines.⁹

Women are the most common victims of IPV, although women can also be perpetrators of violence. The reasons are different from IPV perpetrated by men. Commonly cited reasons for women to use violence against their partner are self-defense,¹⁰ insecurity,¹¹ and occasionally, the consumption of alcohol that comes along with their husband's harmful levels of alcohol consumption.¹⁸ Women in the Philippines who were exposed to parental IPV were found to be two times more likely to perpetuate IPV toward their husbands at least once in their lifetime.⁷ There is less social stigma against women's use of IPV.²⁰

In conclusion, IPV is a complex social issue and public health concern because violence can cause harm, transform social identities, and be passed across generations. The influence of age, education level (including husband's education level), place of residence, and empowerment variables are better supported with empirical data. However, other factors such as attitude toward wife beating, religion, region, household size, drunkenness, and women-initiated violence need to be explored further. There is a need to establish a better association between these variables and IPV with a specific focus on the Philippines.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

This study uses a sociological lens to understand factors related to IPV. The sociological perspective of IPV focuses on the social context and situations in which men and women live and where violence takes place.¹⁹ This considers individual attributes, social norms and attitudes toward violence, relationship dynamics, and precipitating events that may contribute to the perpetuation of violence. Perpetuation of violence in relationships can be learned. Studies^{7,11,13,20-22} have found evidence of a relationship between domestic violence witnessed or experienced in childhood with IPV. Further, individuals learn norms related to violence that can lead to acceptance or non-acceptance of abuse.¹¹

We adopted three-level model of perceived reasons for IPV.¹¹ The conceptual model was developed with Flynn and Graham's meta-analysis of several IPV studies. The model proposes that the perceived reasons for IPV are located at different levels of individual attributes and factors based on their proximity to violence. The model distinguishes between and among the violence attributed to personality characteristics versus violence attributed to situational reactions. According to Flynn and Graham, these influences on violence are not only conceptually different but also require different prevention and treatment approaches. This model is shown below in Figure 1.

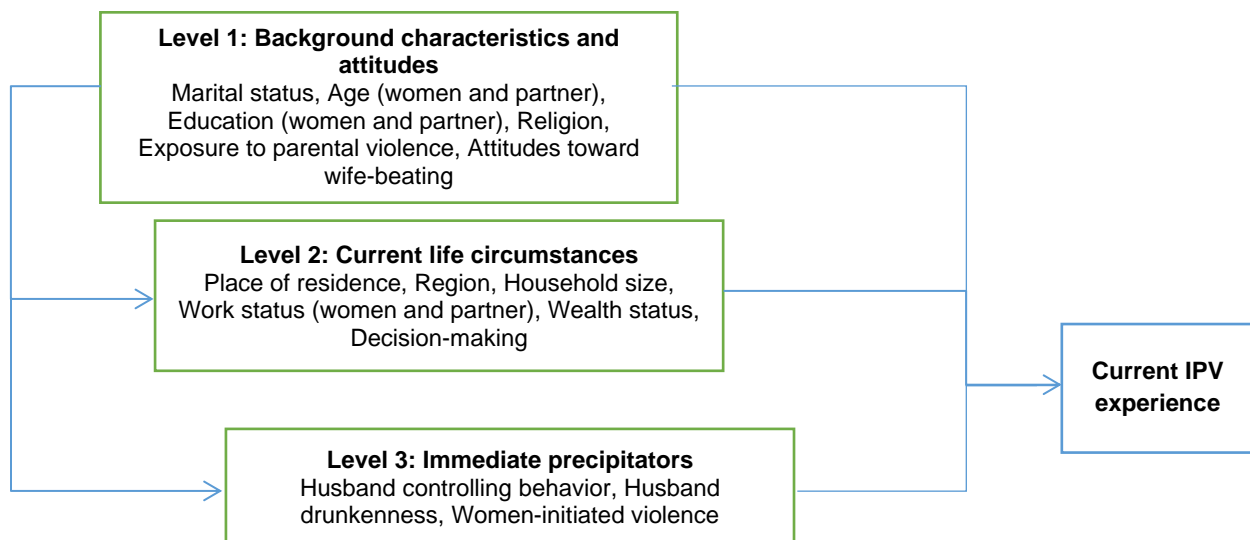
The first level, Level 1, includes the most distal variables. These involve stable attributes of women, which might increase their risk of IPV. This level includes background and personal attributes of women (and

partner perpetrators), attitudes towards violence, and childhood exposure to parental violence that may make them more prone to IPV. These distal variables are considered temporally remote and may be indirectly associated with IPV through their relationships with other variables that are directly related to it. We included background characteristics of women (marital status, age, education, religion), childhood experience of violence, and attitude towards wife beating as Level 1 variables. Attitudes towards wife beating is an indicator of a woman’s tolerant attitude towards violence and is assumed not to be a malleable perception but rather a learned social norm about one’s view on violence.

Level 2 variables reflect current life circumstances that may increase the likelihood of responding aggressively to an intimate conflict because of stress and other effects associated with life situations.¹¹ Flynn and Graham explained that current circumstances can create tensions that might directly or indirectly lead to conflict and violence. These include the economic conditions of the couple, marital unhappiness, and relationship dynamics. Such circumstances are considered contextual contributors to violence. The current life circumstances of women are determined by their location (type of place of residence, region), and life situation (household size, work status, wealth status, and involvement in decision-making).

The Level 3 variables or the immediate precipitators¹¹ (referred to in some literature as proximal antecedents,²³ or situational determinants¹⁰ of IPV include a person’s emotional state or acts provoking violence, such as provoking or aggressive acts by a partner, the emotional state of the perpetrator (including intoxication), and other situational factors (such as assertion of power, jealousy, and other “hot button” issues).^{11,15} We considered the partner’s controlling behavior (jealousy, accusation of unfaithfulness, limiting contact with family and friends, and insistence of knowing women’s whereabouts at all times), partner’s drunkenness, and women-initiated violence as factors. Women-initiated violence is considered as an important precipitant. Research findings have found that victim behavior can increase the likelihood of attack because violence is often an escalation of reciprocal verbal and physical actions.¹⁰ Wilkinson and Hamerschlag explained that these specific situational dynamics between partners in violent events are important cues in identifying intervention points with couples involved in IPV.¹⁰

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of perceived reasons for current IPV among Filipino women



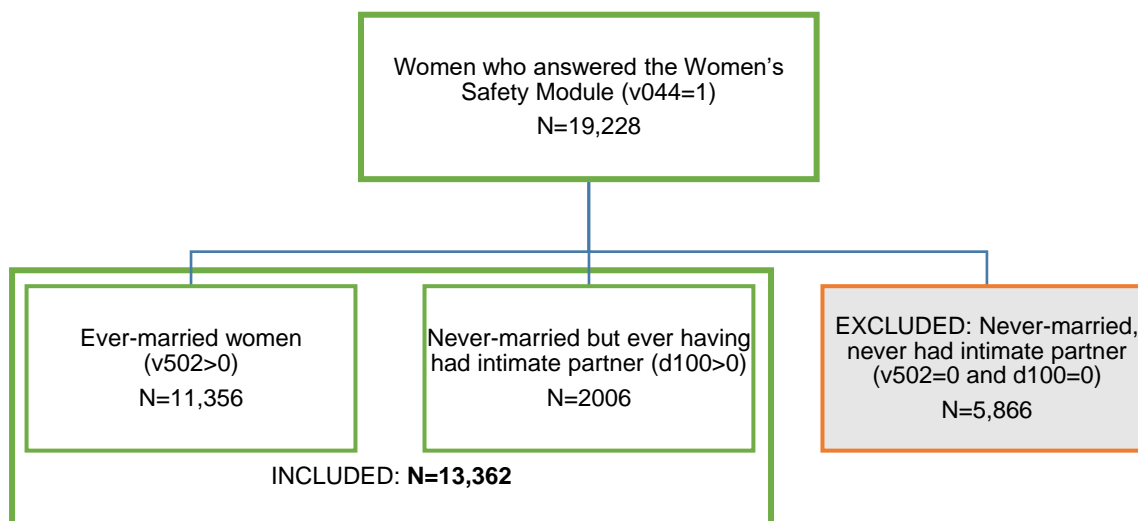
2 DATA AND METHODS

2.1 Data

We utilized data from the 2022 Philippines National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). The 2022 Philippine NDHS is the 12th in a series of national DHS surveys conducted every 5 years since 1968. The DHS sampling methodology is a two-stage stratified sample design using the Master Sample Frame (MSF) based on the household listings of the 2010 Census of Population and Housing and 2015 Census of Population. The first stage involved a systematic selection of 1,247 primary sampling units (PSUs) distributed by province or highly urbanized cities. The second stage is a systematic random sampling of either 22 or 29 housing units selected from each sampled PSU.

This study includes individual women age 15–49 who answered the Women’s Safety Module, which included questions on domestic violence (see Figure 2). The 2022 questionnaire captured intimate partner experiences of both ever-married women (those who are currently married or living with a man as if married and women who were formerly married or who lived with a man as if married) and never-married women who reported to have currently or formerly had an intimate partner. In the previous DHS surveys, only IPV experiences of ever-married women were included. Of the 19,228 women interviewed with the Women’s Safety Module, only those who ever had a husband or an intimate partner were included (N=13,362) in the analysis. The interviews of women were conducted in strict accordance with the WHO’s guidelines on the ethical collection of information on domestic violence.²

Figure 2 Selection of analytical sample



2.2 Variables

2.2.1 Dependent variables

We selected the women's current IPV experience as the outcome variable of the study. Current IPV is defined in the DHS as the women's experience in the 12 months before the survey of physical, sexual, or emotional violence perpetrated by their current or most recent/husband/intimate partner. Physical violence included having been (1) been pushed, shook, or thrown objects, (2) slapped, (3) twisted in the arm or hair pulled, (4) punched, (5) kicked, dragged, or beaten, (6) choked or burned the woman on purpose or (7) attacked with a weapon. Sexual violence included having been forced to engage in sexual intercourse or perform sexual acts against one's will, or threatened to perform certain sexual acts against one's will. Emotional violence included (1) being humiliated in front of others, (2) threatened to harm you or someone you care about, (3) insulted, (4) prohibited from engaging in one's work or profession, (5) controlled your money or property, (6) destroyed personal property or harmed pets, and (7) husband having other intimate relationships.

The variable was constructed based on questions if the women experienced any form of physical, sexual, or emotional violence perpetrated by their current partner in the last 12 months. Their responses were dichotomized into No or Yes, regardless of the frequency of IPV occurrences in the last 12 months.

2.2.2 Independent variables

The explanatory variables in the study were grouped into three levels based on the conceptual framework. The Level 1 variables include the background characteristics and attitudes of women. The background characteristics are marital status (never-married or ever-married), age (younger group age 15–34 or older group age 35–49), education (primary or lower, secondary, or higher levels), religion (Roman Catholic or non-Catholic), exposure to parental violence (her father beating her mother or father did not beat her mother), and attitude toward wife beating (justified wife beating or do not justify wife beating). The ever-married women's husbands' ages and education were also examined.

The Level 2 variables are factors related to the women's current life circumstances. This set of variables included variables on women's location (their place of residence either urban or rural), and geographical groupings of regions based on major geographical island groups (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) and National Capital Region (NCR). This set also included variables on their current life situation, as indicated by their household size (small with 1 to 3 members, medium with 4 to 5 members, or large with more than 5 members), work status (not working or working in the last 12 months), and wealth status (poor or non-poor). The wealth status of women was the recategorization into two groups based on the variable wealth quintile (lowest and second as "poor," and middle, fourth, and highest categories as "non-poor"). Other variables in Level 2 were the women empowerment variables which included asset ownership (no ownership or own/partially own house and/or land), having a bank account (no or yes), and smart phone ownership (no or yes). The work status of husband (not working or working in the last 12 months) and involvement in household decision-making (no or yes) were also examined for the ever-married women.

The Level 3 variables are those considered immediate precursors to IPV. These variables were created based on questions on the partner's controlling behavior, partner drunkenness, and woman-initiated violence toward the partner. The variable control was based on 5 questions on husband controlling behavior, which

were: (1) jealous or angry when she talks with other men, (2) wrongly accuses her of being unfaithful, (3) does not permit her to meet her female friends, (4) tries to limit her contact with her family, and (5) insists on always knowing where she is at all times. The variable control was categorized as “no” or “yes” if the husband demonstrates one or more controlling behaviors. Husband’s drunk behavior was categorized as “no” if the husband ever drinks or have drunk but never got drunk in the last 12 months, or “yes” if he became drunk in the last 12 months. Women-initiated violence in the last 12 months is categorized as “no” or “yes” if the women was physically violent toward her partner even though the partner was not being violent with her.

2.3 Statistical Analyses

We analyzed the data with descriptive and inferential statistics. The data were weighted with the weight variable for domestic violence and adjusted for sample design. We performed a chi-square test of associations among level 1, 2, and 3 variables and IPV. Multivariable logistic regressions were performed accounting for the DHS complex sampling design using the survey set (*svyset*) command on Stata 18, wherein the sampling weights, primary sampling units, and strata were defined. Three regression analyses were done: (1) Logistic analysis with IPV as the outcome variable with all factors, (2) Logistic analysis with IPV outcome variable with all factors grouped by marital status, and (3) Logistic analysis of IPV outcome variable for ever-married women only including factors of spousal age difference, spousal educational difference, husband work status, and decision-making. The first analysis examined the overall IPV influences of all women. The second analysis examined if there are differences in the IPV influences for the never-married and the ever-married women. And finally, the third analysis sought to examine if there are factors unique to ever-married that are associated with their IPV experiences. Results from regression analyses were shown as odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Current IPV Experiences

There has been a steady decline in the proportion of women experiencing IPV in the past several rounds of the NDHS (see Appendix Figure A1). Based on the reports of women in the 2022 NDHS, 3% experienced any form of physical violence, 1% experienced a form of sexual violence, and almost 11% experienced a form of emotional violence in the last 12 months.

Table 1 Current IPV experiences of women who had or have an intimate relationship

Percentage of women age 15–49 who experienced intimate partner violence in the last 12 months	
IPV Experience	%
Any physical violence in past 12 months by partner	
No	96.9
Yes	3.1
Any sexual violence in past 12 months by partner	
No	98.8
Yes	1.2
Experienced physical and sexual violence by partner in the last 12 months	
No	99.4
Yes	0.6
Any emotional violence by partner in past 12 months by partner	
No	89.5
Yes	10.5
Experienced physical/sexual OR emotional violence by partner in the last 12 months	
None	88.2
Emotional IPV only	8.1
Physical/sexual IPV only	1.3
All forms of IPV	2.4
Experienced any IPV in the last 12 months	
No	88.2
Yes	11.8
Total	100.0

After combining current IPV experiences of women, about 1 in 10 (11.8%) Filipino women experienced any form of IPV in the last 12 months. Two percent experienced all forms of IPV, 1% experienced either physical and/or sexual IPV, while 8% of the women experienced emotional forms of IPV.

3.2 Characteristics of the Women Who Ever Had Intimate Partner Relationships

3.2.1 Background characteristics and attitudes (Level 1)

In the weighted sample of 13,362 women, the majority (85.0%) were married (Table 2). Half were age 34 or younger (50.9%), and the other half were age 35–49. Among the married women (n=11,356), most (67.4%) were younger than their husbands. Half (49.5%) of the women have secondary level of education, and many (38.0%) reached tertiary level or higher, while a few (12.4%) only have primary education or no

education at all. When compared to their husbands, a third (35.6%) of the ever-married women were less educated, while about the same proportion (33.2%) were more highly educated than their husbands.

Three of four (76.4%) women were Roman Catholics. The majority (83.7%) have no exposure to parental violence or have not witnessed their fathers beating their mothers. Nine in ten (90.3%) said that wife beating is not justifiable for any reason.

Table 2 Characteristics, attitudes, current life circumstances, and IPV immediate precursors of participants

Percentage of women age 15–49 who ever had intimate partner by selected characteristics		
Variables	N	%
Level 1: Background characteristics and attitudes		
Marital status		
Never married	2,006	15.0
Ever married	11,356	85.0
Age group		
Younger (15–34)	6,795	50.9
Older (35–49)	6,567	49.1
mean age = 34.2		
Spousal age difference ¹		
Younger wife	7,237	67.4
Same age	1,321	12.3
Older wife	2,172	20.2
Education		
Primary level or lower	1,661	12.4
Secondary level	6,620	49.5
Tertiary or higher	5,081	38.0
Husband's education ¹		
Primary level or lower	1,303	12.1
Secondary level	5,622	52.4
Tertiary or higher	3,805	35.5
Spousal education difference ¹		
Husband better educated	3,816	35.6
Wife better educated	3,563	33.2
Equally educated	3,295	30.7
Neither educated/don't know/missing	57	0.5
Religion		
Non-Catholic	3,159	23.6
Catholic	10,203	76.4
Exposure to parental violence		
No	11,411	85.4
Yes	1,951	14.6
Justified wife beating		
No	12,061	90.3
Yes	1,302	9.7
Level 2: Current life circumstances		
Place of residence		
Urban	7,354	55.0
Rural	6,008	45.0
Region		
National Capital Region	1,846	13.8
Luzon	5,896	44.1
Visayas	2,413	18.1
Mindanao	3,207	24.0

Continued...

Table 2—Continued

Variables	N	%
Household size		
Small (1–3 members)	2,507	18.8
Medium (4–5 members)	5,651	42.3
Large (more than 5 members)	5,204	38.9
Work status (last 12 months)		
Not working	5,310	39.7
Working	8,053	60.3
Husband work status ¹		
Not working	547	5.1
Working	10,184	94.9
Wealth status		
Poor	5,090	38.1
Non-poor	8,272	61.9
Ownership of property		
None	7,875	58.9
Full or partial ownership of land or house	5,487	41.1
Has bank account		
No	8,622	64.5
Yes	4,740	35.5
Own a mobile smartphone		
No	2,440	18.3
Yes	10,922	81.7
Involvement in decision-making ¹		
Not involved	1,688	15.7
Involved	9,042	84.3
Level 3: Immediate precursors		
Partner controlling behavior		
No controlling behavior	8,541	63.9
With controlling behavior	4,821	36.1
Partner became drunk the last 12 months		
Doesn't drink, never drunk	6,569	49.2
Became drunk	6,793	50.8
Woman-initiated violence		
No	12,695	95.0
Yes	668	5.0
Total	13,362	100.0

¹ N = 10,731 only applicable to ever-married women.

3.2.2 Current life circumstances (Level 2)

More than half (55.0%) of the women resided in urban areas. Most (44.1%) were in Luzon and Mindanao (24.0), while the remainder lived in the Visayas (18.1%) and National Capital Region (13.8%).

With the women's current life situation, many (42.3%) were living in households with 4 to 5 members. The majority (60.3%) were working in the last 12 months prior to the survey, while almost all the husbands (94.9%) of the married women were working during the same time. Based on their wealth status, 3 of 5 women (61.9%) belong to the non-poor category, while 2 of 5 (38.1%) were considered poor.

With the indicators of women's empowerment, only about 2 in 5 (41.1%) of the women own or partially own a house and/or a piece of land. Only one in three (35.5%) own an account in a bank or other financial institutions, although the majority (81.7%) own a smart mobile phone. Among the ever-married women,

the majority (84.3%) were involved in the decision-making on matters about her health, major household purchases, and family visitations.

3.2.3 Immediate precursors to IPV (Level 3)

For the three situational precipitants related to IPV, the distribution of women varied depending on the precursor behavior. Over a third (36.1%) reported that their husband demonstrated one or more of the five controlling behaviors in the last 12 months. About half (50.8%) reported that their husband had been drunk in the last 12 months. Only 5% reported being physically violent toward their husbands without their husbands beating them.

3.3 Associations between IPV and its Perceived Influences

The succeeding results present the bivariate measures of associations between the Levels 1, 2 and 3 variables and IPV. Among the ever-married women, the relationship of IPV with spousal age difference, husband's education, spousal age difference, husband's work status, and involvement in decision-making were also examined (Table 3).

3.3.1 IPV and background characteristics and attitudes of women (Level 1 variables)

The bivariate analysis of the relationships between the current IPV experiences and the independent variables and the statistical significance of these associations are presented in Table 3. Among the background characteristics of women, IPV experience was significantly related to marital status, spousal age difference, level of education, exposure to parental violence, and attitude toward wife beating. The women's age and religion were not significantly related to current IPV experience.

The proportion of married women who experienced current IPV is higher than their never-married counterparts (12.8%, 95% CI [11.8–13.9] vs 6.0%, 95% CI [4.6–7.7]). The age of the women was not significantly associated with IPV experience, although spousal age difference was. Slightly more women (13.7%, 95% CI [12.5–15.1]) experienced IPV if they were younger than their husbands than women who were of the same age (10.3%, 95% CI [.3–12.8]) or older (10.5%, 95% CI [8.8–12.4]) than their husbands.

There was an inverse association between IPV experience and education, with a higher proportion of less educated (primary or lower, 17.3%, 95% CI [14.8–20.3]) women having experienced IPV than their more educated counterparts (secondary level: 13.8%, 95% CI [11.8–14.3] and tertiary or higher (9.6%, 95% CI [8.4–11.0])). The same pattern was observed for the relationship between men's education and IPV as with women's education, where a higher proportion of the women whose husband only had primary education or lower (16.6%, 95% CI [14.1–19.4]) experienced IPV than those women whose husbands had secondary education (13.8%, 95% CI [12.4–15.3]) or higher (9.6%, 95% CI [8.4–11.0]).

Exposure to parental violence was also significantly related to IPV experience. Women who reported witnessing their fathers beating their mothers while growing up had higher rates of IPV experience than those who did not witness parental violence (21.8%, 95% CI [19.2–24.6] vs. 10.1%, 95% CI [9.2–11.0]). A higher proportion of women who justified wife beating for any reason had IPV experience compared to those who did not justify wife beating (21.3%, 95% CI [18.3–24.7] vs. 10.8%, 95% CI [9.9–11.7]).

Table 3 Bivariate association between current IPV experiences and perceived influences

Percentage of women age 15–49 who had or have intimate relationships experiencing current IPV by characteristics						
Variables	Experienced any IPV in the last 12 months				p value	Total
	No		Yes			
	%	CI	%	CI		
Level 1: Background characteristics and attitudes						
Marital status						
Never married	94.0	92.3–95.4	6.0	4.6–7.7	<.001	2,006
Ever married	87.2	86.1–88.2	12.8	11.8–13.9		11,356
Age group						
Younger (15–34)	87.5	86.2–88.6	12.5	11.4–13.8	.069	6,795
Older (35–49)	89.0	87.7–90.2	11.0	9.8–12.3		6,567
Spousal age difference*						
Younger wife	86.3	84.9–87.5	13.7	12.5–15.1	.002	7,237
Same age	89.7	87.2–91.7	10.3	8.3–12.8		1,321
Older wife	89.5	87.6–91.2	10.5	8.8–12.4		2,172
Education						
Primary level or lower	82.7	79.7–85.2	17.3	14.8–20.3	<.001	1,661
Secondary level	87.0	85.7–88.2	13.0	11.8–14.3		6,620
Tertiary or higher	91.6	90.3–92.7	8.4	7.3–9.7		5,081
Husband's education ¹						
Primary level or lower	83.4	80.6–85.9	16.6	14.1–19.4	<.001	1,303
Secondary level	86.2	84.7–87.6	13.8	12.4–15.3		5,622
Tertiary or higher	90.4	89.0–91.6	9.6	8.4–11.0		3,805
Spousal education difference ¹						
Husband better educated	85.8	84.1–87.4	14.2	12.6–15.9	<.001	3,816
Wife better educated	86.1	84.3–87.8	13.9	12.2–15.7		3,563
Equally educated	90.4	88.7–91.8	9.6	8.2–11.3		3,295
Neither educated/don't know/missing	89.6	77.1–95.7	*	4.3–22.9		57
Religion						
Non-Catholic	89.3	87.7–90.8	10.7	9.2–12.3	.116	3,159
Catholic	87.9	86.8–88.9	12.1	11.1–13.2		10,203
Exposure to parental violence						
No	89.9	89.0–90.8	10.1	9.2–11.0	<.001	11,411
Yes	78.2	75.4–80.8	21.8	19.2–24.6		1,951
Justified wife beating						
No	89.2	88.3–90.1	10.8	9.9–11.7	<.001	12,061
Yes	78.7	75.3–81.7	21.3	18.3–24.7		1,302
Level 2: Current life circumstances						
Place of residence						
Urban	89.7	88.5–90.9	10.3	9.1–11.5	<.001	7,354
Rural	86.4	84.9–87.7	13.6	12.3–15.1		6,008
Region						
National Capital Region	91.6	88.1–94.2	8.4	5.8–11.9	.024	1,846
Luzon	87.9	86.4–89.1	12.1	10.9–13.6		5,896
Visayas	86.0	84.1–87.8	14.0	12.2–15.9		2,413
Mindanao	88.6	86.7–90.2	11.4	9.8–13.3		3,207
Household size						
Small (1–3 members)	89.0	87.1–90.6	11.0	9.4–12.9	.649	2,507
Medium (4–5 members)	88.0	86.7–89.1	12.0	10.9–13.3		5,651
Large (more than 5 members)	88.1	86.6–89.5	11.9	10.5–13.4		5,204
Work status (last 12 months)						
Not working	88.3	86.8–89.6	11.7	10.4–13.2	.877	5,310
Working	88.2	87.1–89.2	11.8	10.8–12.9		8,053

Continued...

Table 3—Continued

Variables	Experienced any IPV in the last 12 months				p value	Total
	No		Yes			
	%	CI	%	CI		
Husband work status ¹						
Not working	87.9	83.4–91.3	12.1	8.7–16.6	.778	547
Working	87.3	86.2,88.3	12.7	11.7–13.8		10,184
Wealth status						
Poor	85.3	83.8–86.7	14.7	13.3–16.2	<.001	5,090
Non-poor	90.0	88.9–91.0	10.0	9.0–11.1		8,272
Ownership of property						
None	88.6	87.5–89.6	11.4	10.4–12.5	.304	7,875
Full or partial ownership of land or house	87.7	86.1–89.1	12.3	10.9–13.9		5,487
Has bank account						
No	87.4	86.3–88.4	12.6	11.6–13.7	.007	8,622
Yes	89.7	88.2–91.0	10.3	9.0–11.8		4,740
Own a mobile smartphone						
No	85.5	83.4–87.4	14.5	12.6–16.6	.001	2,440
Yes	88.8	87.8–89.8	11.2	10.2–12.2		10,922
Involvement in decision-making ¹ (ever-married women only)						
Not involved	81.0	78.1–83.7	19.0	16.3–21.9	<.001	1,688
Involved	88.5	87.5–89.5	11.5	10.5–12.5		9,042
Level 3: Immediate preceptors						
Partner controlling behavior						
No controlling behavior	95.4	94.7–96.0	4.6	4.0–5.3	<.001	8,541
With controlling behavior	75.6	73.6–77.4	24.4	22.6–26.4		4,821
Partner became drunk in last 12 months						
Doesn't drink, never drunk	93.1	92.1–94.0	6.9	6.0–7.9	<.001	6,569
Became drunk	83.5	82.0–84.9	16.5	15.1–18.0		6,793
Woman-initiated violence						
No	89.8	88.9–90.6	10.2	9.4–11.1	<.001	12,695
Yes	57.8	52.3–63.1	42.2	36.9–47.7		668
Total	88.2		11.8			13,362

Note: An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹N = 10,731, only applicable to ever-married women.

3.3.2 IPV and current life circumstances (Level 2 variables)

Based on the bivariate analyses, both indicators of women’s location (type of place and region of residence) were related to their IPV experience (Table 3). There was a higher proportion of rural women who experienced current IPV than their urban counterparts (13.6%, 95% CI [12.3–15.1] vs. 10.3%, 95% CI [9.1=11.5]). Regional differences showed that the highest proportion of women with current IPV experience resided in the Visayas (14.0%, 95% CI [12.2–15.9]), followed by Luzon (12.1%, 95% CI [10.9–13.6]) and Mindanao (11.4%, 95% CI [9.8=13.3]) and lowest proportion in National Capital Region (NCR) (8.4%, 95% CI [5.8–11.9]).

There were no statistically significant differences in the proportion of women with IPV experiences based on their household size. The work of the women and her husband did not contribute to differences in IPV experiences. The wealth status of women was significantly related to their IPV experience, with more poor women having IPV experience than non-poor (14.7%, 95% CI [13.3–16.2] vs. 10.0%, 95% CI [9.-11.1]). Some indicators of women’s empowerment emerged significantly associated with current IPV experience.

Ownership of property or bank accounts were not significantly related with current IPV experience. However, IPV experience was related to ownership of smart mobile phones with lower proportions of women with smart mobile phones having IPV experiences than their counterparts (11.2%, 95% CI [10.2–12.2] vs. 14.5%, 95% CI [12.6–16.6]). Involvement of ever-married women in decision-making was inversely related to IPV experience, with women who were not involved in couple decision-making having a higher proportion who had experienced IPV (19.0%, 95% CI [16.3–21.9]) than their active decision-making counterparts (11.5%, 95% CI [10.5–12.5]).

3.3.3 IPV and immediate precipitators (Level 3 variables)

The situational indicators of IPV were statistically significantly associated with current IPV experience. More women whose partners demonstrated one or more controlling behavior have IPV experiences than women with non-controlling partners (24.4%, 95% CI [22.6–26.4] vs. 4.6%, 95% CI [4.0–5.3]). The proportion of women whose husband became drunk in the last 12 months with IPV experience was higher than women whose husband did not drink or did not become drunk (16.5%, 95% CI [15.1–18.0] vs. 6.9%, 95% CI [6.0–7.9]). Women-initiated violence was positively related with her IPV experience. About two in five women (42.2%, 95% CI [36.9–47.7]) who were physically abusive toward their partners experienced IPV, while only 1 in 10 women (10.2%, 95% CI [9.4–11.1]) who were not physically violent toward their partners experienced IPV.

3.4 Determinants of Current IPV

3.4.1 Determinants of current IPV for women who ever had intimate partners

The first multivariable logistic regression analysis was done to determine the relationships of the different perceived influences (Levels 1 to 3 variables) on current IPV experiences of women (Table 4). Prior to the regression analysis, the explanatory variables were tested for multicollinearity. The test for correlation showed weak correlation (less than 0.45 correlation coefficient) between the explanatory variables.

Among the Level 1 variables, 5 of 6 background variables (marital status, age, education, exposure to parental violence, and attitude toward wife beating) showed statistically significant associations with IPV (Table 4) while controlling for other factors. Ever-married women have 2.7 times (95% CI [1.9–3.8]) higher odds of experiencing IPV than those who never married but had been in an intimate relationship. The odds of experiencing IPV were 20% (aOR=0.8, (95% CI [0.7–1.0]) lower in older women compared to the younger women. The secondary level and higher level educated women have lower odds (aOR=0.7, (95% CI [0.6–1.0] and aOR=0.6, (95% CI [0.5–0.9], respectively) of experiencing IPV than those who reached only primary level of education.

Women who were exposed to parental violence have 1.7 times higher odds (95% CI [1.4–2.1]) of the women of experiencing IPV than their counterparts. Women who justified violence also have 1.7 times higher odds (95% CI [1.3–2.2]) of experiencing IPV than those who do not justify wife beating.

None of the 8 current life experience variables was significantly associated with IPV. However, the three immediate precipitants showed significant associations with IPV experience. Women with controlling partners (aOR=5.6, 95% CI [4.7–6.8]), who became drunk in the past year (aOR=1.6, 95% CI [1.3–2.0]),

and have initiated violence toward their partners (aOR=3.8, 95% CI [2.8–5.2]) have higher odds of experiencing IPV than their respective counterparts.

Table 4 Multivariable logistic regression analysis of the perceived influences on current IPV experiences of women who ever had intimate partners (N=13,362)

Variables	aOR	95% CI
Level 1: Background Characteristics and Attitudes		
Marital status (ref: Never married) Ever married	2.7***	1.9–3.8
Age group (ref: Younger, age 15–34) Older (age 35–49)	0.8*	0.7–1.0
Education (ref: Primary or lower) Secondary level Tertiary or higher	0.7* 0.6**	0.6–1.0 0.5–0.9
Religion (ref: Non-Catholic) Catholic	0.9	0.8–1.1
Exposure to parental violence (ref: No) Yes	1.7***	1.4–2.1
Justified wife beating (ref: No) Yes	1.7***	1.3–2.2
Level 2: Current Life Circumstances		
Place of residence (ref: Rural) Urban	0.8	0.7–0.9
Region (ref: National Capital Region) Luzon Visayas Mindanao	1.0 0.9 0.8	0.6–1.6 0.6–1.4 0.5–1.2
Household size (ref: Small, 1–3 members) Medium (4–5 members) Large (more than 5 members)	1.1 1.0	0.9–1.3 0.8–1.3
Work status (ref: Not working) Working	1.0	0.8–1.2
Wealth status (ref: Poor) Non-poor	1.0	0.8–1.1
Ownership of property (ref: None) Full or partial ownership of land or house	1.2	1.0–1.4
Has bank account (ref: None) Yes	0.9	0.8–1.1
Own a mobile smartphone (ref: No) Yes	1.0	0.8–1.2
Level 3: Immediate Precursors		
Partner controlling behavior (ref: No controlling behavior) With controlling behavior	5.6***	4.7–6.8
Partner became drunk the last 12 months (ref: No) Became drunk	1.6***	1.3–2.0
Woman-initiated violence (ref: No) Yes	3.8***	2.8–5.2
Constant	0.0***	0.0–0.0

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

3.4.2 Determinants of current IPV by women's marital status

The second regression analysis was done to further explore the differences in associations of the selected factors with IPV between never-married and ever-married women. Since the goal of this portion of the analysis is to explore differences between never and ever-married women, only those variables that were collected from both groups were included (as there is more detailed information about the partner/husband that were collected from the ever-married). Characteristics of women by their marital status were examined and presented in Appendix 2.

The initial multivariable regression results suggested that IPV was higher among those who had been married, although the reason is unclear. The results showed differences in the IPV determinants of women by their marital status (Table 5). Based on the results, there were eight (8) significant factors that influence ever-married women IPV experiences, while only five (5) perceived influences were significantly related with the never-married IPV experiences. Four (4) factors appeared to be significant factors that influence IPV for both groups: age, education, partner controlling behavior, and women-initiated violence. The primary areas of difference in the associations of the variables with IPV for each group were childhood exposure to parental violence, attitudes toward wife beating, place of residence, and household size.

The adjusted odds ratio of never married older women of experiencing IPV was 3.7 times (aOR=3.7, 95% CI [1.4–9.8]) of their younger counterparts. Among the ever-married women, those in the older age group have lower odds (aOR=0.8, 95% CI [0.6–0.9]) of experiencing IPV than to their younger counterparts (Table 5). Age served as a protective factor for the ever-married older women, but not for the never-married older women. Distribution of women by age group and marital status showed that there are only a few never-married older women in the sample (see Appendix Table A1). The odds of experiencing IPV decreased with education, regardless of women's marital status, although the magnitude of the association was larger for never-married women in intimate partnerships.

The associations between exposure to parental violence and attitude toward wife beating with IPV experience were significant for the ever-married women but not for the never-married. Ever-married women who had exposure to parental violence had 1.8 times higher odds (aOR=1.8, 85% CI [1.4–2.2]) of currently experiencing IPV, and women who accepted/justified violence had 1.7 higher odds (aOR=1.7, 95% CI [1.3–2.2]) of experiencing IPV than their respective counterparts.

The location of women in terms of urban or rural residence was associated significantly with IPV experience among the ever-married but not for the never-married. Ever-married women in urban areas have lower odds (aOR=0.8, 95% CI 0.6–0.9) of experiencing IPV than their rural counterparts.

For the never-married women, being in a medium-sized household gave the woman 2.8 times higher odds (aOR=2.8, 95% CI [1.3–5.9]) of experiencing IPV than women who live in a household of 3 or less. Household size, however, was not a significant factor in IPV experience among the ever-married women.

Tables 4 and 5 showed that Level 3 variables of partner controlling behavior, partner drunkenness, and women-initiated violence consistently have significant associations with IPV. Having partners with controlling behavior increased the odds of women experiencing IPV in the past 12 months, regardless of marital status. The variable of women-initiated violence increased the odds of a women experiencing IPV with aOR=4.2 (95% CI 1.5–1.7) for the never-married and aOR=3.6 (95% CI 2.6–5.0) for the ever-married.

However, the association of partner's drunken behavior with IPV was only significant for the ever-married women, while women with a partner who became drunk have 1.9 higher odds (aOR=1.9, 95% CI [1.5–2.3]) of experiencing IPV than their counterparts. This difference in the influences of these precipitants of IPV by marital status may reflect the differences in the situational circumstances of the women. Married women often co-reside with their husbands. The co-residence with partners could result to woman not having an option to get away from a drunk partner, which made them vulnerable to IPV. The never-married might more easily avoid the partner's drunkenness.

Table 5 Multivariable logistic regression analysis of the perceived influences on current IPV experiences of women who ever had intimate partners by marital status (N = 13,362)

	Never-married		Ever-married	
	aOR	95% CI	aOR	95% CI
Level 1: Background characteristics and attitudes				
Age group (ref: Younger, age 15–34)				
Older (age 35–49)	3.7**	1.4–9.8	0.8**	0.6–0.9
Education (ref: Primary or lower)				
Secondary level	0.1***	0.0–0.3	0.7*	0.6–1.0
Tertiary or higher	0.1***	0.0–0.2	0.7*	0.5–0.9
Religion (ref: Non-Catholic)				
Catholic	0.9	0.4–1.7	0.9	0.7–1.2
Exposure to parental violence (ref: No)				
Yes	1.7	0.9–3.2	1.8***	1.4–2.2
Justified wife beating (ref: No)				
Yes	2.1	1.0–4.6	1.7***	1.3–2.2
Level 2: Current life circumstances				
Place of residence (ref: Rural)				
Urban	1.1	0.6–2.1	0.8**	0.6–0.9
Region (ref: National Capital Region)				
Luzon	1.1	0.4–3.2	1.0	0.6–1.6
Visayas	1.5	0.5–4.5	0.9	0.5–1.4
Mindanao	0.7	0.2–2.2	0.8	0.5–1.3
Household Size (ref: Small, 1–3 members)				
Medium (4–5 members)	2.8**	1.3–5.9	1.0	0.8–1.3
Large (more than 5 members)	1.9	0.8–4.8	1.0	0.8–1.2
Work status (ref: Not working)				
Working	1.4	0.8–2.7	0.9	0.8–1.1
Wealth status (ref: Poor)				
Non-poor	1.2	0.6–2.3	0.9	0.7–1.1
Ownership of property (ref: None)				
Full or partial ownership of land or house	1.0	0.4–3.0	1.2	1.0–1.4
Has bank account (ref: None)				
Yes	0.7	0.4–1.4	1.0	0.8–1.2
Own a mobile smartphone (ref: No)				
Yes	1.1	0.4–3.1	0.9	0.7–1.2

Continued...

Table 5—Continued

	Never-married		Ever-married	
	aOR	95% CI	aOR	95% CI
Level 3: Immediate precursors				
Partner Controlling behavior (ref: No controlling behavior) With controlling behavior	5.0***	2.5–10.0	5.7***	4.7–6.9
Partner became drunk the last 12 months (ref: No) Became drunk	0.6	0.3–1.0	1.9***	1.5–2.3
Woman-initiated violence (ref: No) Yes	4.2**	1.5–11.7	3.6***	2.6–5.0
Constant	0.1*	0.0–0.5	0.1***	0.0–0.1
Total	1,680		12,906	

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

3.4.3 Determinants of current IPV of ever-married women

The final regression model aimed to explore the current IPV experiences of women who have been ever-married (Table 6). This focused on the potential power differentials between the woman and her husband. A number of variables related to the marital relationship were included in the analysis that were not included in the comparison between never and ever-married women because this information was only collected from ever-married women. The effects of the differences between the women and her husband in terms of age and education, both of which have been found in other settings to influence power dynamics within relationships and women’s involvement in household decisions, were included.

Generally, the results are consistent with the prior regressions: exposure to parental violence, partner controlling behavior, partner drunken behavior, and women-initiated violence were significantly associated with current IPV experience. Of the Level 1 variables, only exposure to parental violence (aOR = 1.8, 95% CI [1.4–2.2]) and justification of wife beating (aOR = 1.5, 95% CI [1.2–2.0]) were significantly associated with current IPV. The age and education level of ever-married women were significantly associated with their experience of IPV in the previous logistic regression analysis (Table 5). However, when these indicators were replaced with spousal differences for age and education, both variables were no longer significantly associated with IPV. These indicators of power differentials were not related to IPV. This suggests that it may not be the age difference that is related to IPV, but rather the actual age of the women. With the educational differential, it was the women’s education and not whether her husband was less/better educated than her that influences IPV. Data have shown (Table 2) that more than half of the women were equally or better educated than their husbands. Further analysis should be done to confirm the influences of these age and education variables.

The Level 2 variables, urban residence (aOR = 0.7, 95% CI [0.6–0.9]) and involvement in decision-making (aOR = 0.7, 95% CI [0.5–0.8]), were significant influences on the IPV experiences of ever-married women. Consistent with the earlier analysis (Table 5), ever-married women who reside in urban areas have lower odds of experiencing IPV than their rural counterparts.

All Level 3 variables (with partner with controlling behavior: aOR = 6.0, 95% CI [4.9–7.4]; with a drunk partner: aOR = 2.0, 95% CI [1.6–2.5]; and woman-initiated violence towards partner: aOR = 3.4, 95% CI [2.4–4.8]) were statistically associated with current IPV.

Table 6 Multivariable logistic regression analysis of the perceived influences on current IPV experiences of ever-married women (N = 11,356)

Variables	aOR	95% CI
Level 1: Background characteristics and attitudes		
Spousal age difference (ref: same age)		
Younger wife	1.2	0.9–1.7
Older wife	0.9	0.6–1.3
Spousal educ difference (ref: same level)		
Husband better educated	1.2	0.9–1.5
Wife better educated	1.2	0.9–1.5
Neither educated/don't know	1.8	0.7–4.8
Religion (ref: Non-Catholic)		
Catholic	0.9	0.8–1.2
Exposure to parental violence (ref: No)		
Yes	1.8***	1.4–2.2
Justified wife beating (ref: No)		
Yes	1.6***	1.2–2.1
Level 2: Current life circumstances		
Place of residence (ref: Rural)		
Urban	0.7**	0.6–0.9
Region (ref: National Capital Region)		
Luzon	1.0	0.6–1.6
Visayas	0.8	0.5–1.3
Mindanao	0.8	0.5–1.3
Household size (ref: Small, 1–3 members)		
Medium (4–5 members)	1.0	0.8–1.3
Large (more than 5 members)	0.9	0.7–1.2
Work status (ref: Not working)		
Working	0.9	0.8–1.1
Husband work status (ref: Not working)		
Employed in the last 12 months	0.7	0.5–1.1
Wealth status (ref: Poor)		
Non-poor	0.8	0.7–1.0
Ownership of property (ref: None)		
Full or partial ownership of land or house	1.1	0.9–1.3
Has bank account (ref: None)		
Yes	1.0	0.8–1.2
Own a mobile smartphone (ref: No)		
Yes	0.9	0.7–1.2
Decision-making (ref: not involved)		
Involved in all three areas	0.7***	0.5–0.8

Continued...

Table 6—Continued

Variables	aOR	95% CI
Level 3: Immediate precursors		
Partner controlling behavior (ref: No controlling behavior) With controlling behavior	6.0***	4.9–7.4
Partner became drunk the last 12 months (ref: No) Became drunk	2.0***	1.6–2.5
Woman-initiated violence (ref: No) Yes	3.4***	2.4–4.8
Constant	0.0***	0.0–0.2
*** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05		

4 DISCUSSION

The prevalence of reported IPV experiences of Filipino women has declined over time, although it remains high. This study examined three-levels of perceived reasons for IPV experiences of Filipino women. These levels were based on their proximity to IPV experience, while giving particular attention to the women's social context, location, and circumstances. This study has limitations because the data were based on the women's reports, which included information about their partners. Since the cross-sectional nature of the DHS data can only provide a snapshot of the IPV experience at the time of the survey, the analyses could establish associations between the perceived influences and IPV and not causal relationships.

The prevalence of reported IPV experiences of Filipino women has declined over time, though remains higher than is ideal. This study examined the three-levels of perceived reasons for IPV experiences of Filipino women. These levels were based on their proximity to IPV experience, giving particular attention to the women's social context, location, and circumstances. However, this is without limitations as the data were based on the women's reports, including information regarding their partners. The cross-sectional nature of the DHS data could only provide a snapshot of the IPV experience during at time of the survey, and the analyses were only to establish associations between the perceived influences and IPV and not causal relationships.

The general findings across the three regression analyses showed that Level 1 variables of age, education, childhood exposure to violence, and attitude toward wife-beating, and Level 3 variables of partner controlling behavior, partner drunkenness, and wife-initiated violence were generally significant influences on current IPV experience. The Level 1 factors appear to be mediated by marital status because perceived influences at this level were significantly related to the IPV experiences of ever-married women. Overall, the risk factors of women's characteristics and attitudes and the situational precipitants to IPV were more consistent in their relationship with IPV than the current circumstances (Level 2 variables). The findings of the study showed that although there are common influences on IPV experiences of all women, there are also different factors that placed them at risk for IPV depending on their marital status.

For all women who ever had intimate partner, having ever been married was strongly associated with higher odds of having experienced IPV within the past 12 months. This may be due to those who are or have been married having greater 'exposure' to a partner who may be violent. Marriage norms in the Philippines requires couples to live together and this places women in social settings that expose them to risk. Never marrying is still an uncommon option in the Philippines and this makes single women, especially in the older ages, a selective group. When IPV experience was analyzed separately by marital status, some differences emerged that suggest that there may be other important factors. We are unable to fully account for the variety of factors that may predict the influence of marriage, and there may be other factors in between marriage and IPV beyond the variables included in the analyses.

Age showed significant relationship with IPV experience. However, the association of age with IPV experience varied depending on if the woman was ever-married. For ever-married women, age appeared to protect them from IPV, while the reverse was observed among the never-married. It may be possible that the older ever-married women have already been widowed and are therefore at less risk of currently experiencing IPV. However, the higher odds of IPV of the older, never-married women compared to the

younger ones could be attributed to different reasons and the fact that they are a selective group. Further examination of other characteristics of older, never-married women is necessary to further understand this association. Aside from age, education was also a significant background variable with its association with current IPV since education also protects women from IPV, particularly among those who have been married.

For all women who ever had intimate relationships, childhood exposure to parental violence, attitudes towards wife-beating, partner controlling behavior, partner drunkenness, and women-initiated violence were significant influences on IPV. However, the association of influences of childhood exposure to violence, justification of wife beating, and partner's drunkenness with recent experience with IPV became insignificant among never-married women when analyzed separately by marital status.

Exposure to violence during childhood is consistently associated with women's greater vulnerability to IPV. Prior studies have shown that childhood exposure to violence is associated with engagement in violent behavior.^{13,16,20,21} Growing up in environments where violence is present provides the child with violent models that promote learning about violence from adults (intergenerational transmission theory). Women exposed to violence against their mother may learn to normalize IPV.⁷ This normalization of IPV could be extended to women's attitudes, particularly toward wife beating. Theories of social learning and intergenerational transmission explain this. The social environment while growing up and the norms the women learn about violence from their adult models are important influences on their IPV experience in adulthood. The insignificance of childhood violence and attitudes toward wife-beating of the never-married women IPV tells a different story. Being unmarried, women may have different perspectives on wife-beating and gender roles. We can speculate that since they do not consider themselves as married wives, their attitudes towards wife-beating were different.

Among the Level 2 variables, household size presented a paradoxical association with IPV among the never-married women. Never-married women in medium-sized households were of higher risk for IPV than those in smaller households. This association needs further investigation. Other factors may have significant mediating effects on this relationship, such as the living arrangements and socioeconomic status. For the ever-married, residing in the urban areas is associated with a lowered risk of IPV. Studies in India²⁴ and Bangladesh²⁵ showed contradictory results, with higher levels of IPV against women found in urban areas primarily due to reporting IPV incidence to the authorities and more accessible services, while other studies^{5,23} showed higher IPV prevalence in rural areas. The lowered risk of urban ever-married women could be compounded by other economic characteristics, such as being employed and economically productive, which may protect them from IPV.

Among ever-married women, involvement in household decision-making is an important factor associated with IPV. This finding is consistent with some findings from other countries,^{27,28} but conflicts with others.⁹ Being able to participate in decision-making empowers women to make contributions to her health, home, and family life. This involvement in decision-making reflects women's autonomy and equality in the relationship, which may protect the woman from IPV. For Level 2, the dynamics between husband and wife, as reflected in her capacity to participate in decision-making, provide important current life contexts that influence the women's exposure to IPV.

The Level 3 variables were significantly associated with IPV in all three analyses. The magnitude of the associations varies among the three, especially for partner drunkenness. Previous studies have shown how control is used by male partners to assert power and masculinity,^{10,17} and undermine women's autonomy,²⁸ which limits the woman's social support and increases her vulnerability to IPV. Control by a partner can also lead to women's emotional distress.²³ The strength and the consistency of these immediate precursors to violence suggests the importance of the behavior and emotional state of the actors involved in the IPV. For the never-married women, partner drunkenness was not a significant predictor of IPV. Never-married women were not living with their partners, which may protect them from IPV. Finally, women-initiated violence consistently remained a significant predictor of IPV. This finding is consistent with other studies¹⁰ that suggest violence is relational and often a result of an escalation of reciprocal violent actions.

This study sought to understand women's current IPV through the three-level factors. The social environment where a woman grew up appears to be important in defining her perception of, and vulnerability to, violence. In an environment where violence is a regular occurrence or that violence is justified, the woman may normalize the behavior. The current life circumstances of the women also provide a social context for violence. A relationship in which there is fear of a partner and absence of autonomy places the woman in a vulnerable position. The non-significance of the associations between IPV, regional location, and women's economic indicators imply that regardless of where a woman resides spatially and economically, IPV is possible. The nature of the relationship of a woman with her partner, whether if it is hostile or not, or she is considered an equal or not, is a more important factor to IPV. Finally, the behaviors of the woman and her partner define the situations that led to IPV.

5 CONCLUSION

Many studies in the Philippines on IPV are small in scale and qualitative in approach. The use of DHS data, which is large-scale and includes a diverse sample of randomly selected women, provides a comprehensive picture of IPV in the country. This study utilized a sociological lens to understanding IPV by examining the social context and circumstances of women. The findings of the study offer implications for policy interventions. First, there is a need to revisit norms related to family violence. Empowerment and education of women (and men) appear to insufficient in addressing gender-based violence, although both lower the odds of experiencing IPV. There is a need to change attitudes that justify wife beating, which might have been learned in childhood and passed on intergenerationally. Children often learn to normalize violence when they see significant others (parents) practice the different forms of violence.

The findings also suggest the importance of immediate precipitants in causing violence. Potential policy interventions should focus on how we can help couples avoid resorting to violence in their situational contexts. One challenge is that these situations involve couple dynamics which are deemed very private matters in the Philippine context. The Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710) includes mechanisms that address violence against women in the community, one of which is the Barangay Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk. There is a need to strengthen the functionalities of the Barangay VAW Desk and to enhance the capabilities of the Barangay VAW desk officers in the community. There should be programs and trainings that would enable them to: (a) address couple communication and relationship issues, and (b) make services available for male victims of women-initiated violence. Since marriages expose women to IPV, there is an urgent need to provide support for married women who need to leave abusive relationships. Such support would include the immediate passing of the divorce bill in the Philippine Congress.

Since the data are limited to the women's reports of her and her partner's action and characteristics, there is a need to collect data from the male partners to provide insights about their points of view on IPV, control, and violent relationships. Information from the men's point of view will help improve VAW interventions at the community level.

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APPENDIX

Table A1 Bivariate association between perceived IPV influences and marital status

Percentage of women 15–49 who had or have intimate relationships experiencing current IPV by characteristics

Variables	Marital status				p value	Total
	Never married		Ever married			
	%	CI	%	CI		
Level 1: Background characteristics and attitudes						
Age group						
Younger (15–34)	26.2	24.5–28.1	73.8	71.9–75.5	.000	6,795
Older (35–49)	3.4	2.7–4.3	96.6	95.7–97.3		6,567
Education						
Primary level or lower	1.0	0.6–1.6	99.0	98.4–99.4	.000	1,661
Secondary level	14.9	13.6–16.4	85.1	83.6–86.4		6,620
Tertiary or higher	19.7	17.8–21.7	80.3	78.3–82.2		5,081
Religion						
Non-Catholic	12.8	10.9–15.0	87.2	85.0–89.1	.021	3,159
Catholic	15.7	14.5–16.9	84.3	83.1–85.5		10,203
Exposure to parental violence						
No	14.5	13.4–15.7	85.5	84.3–86.6	.017	11,411
Yes	18.1	15.4–21.2	81.9	78.8–84.6		1,951
Justified wife beating						
No	14.9	13.8–16.0	85.1	84.0–86.2	.303	12,061
Yes	16.5	13.6–20.0	83.5	80.0–86.4		1,302
Level 2: Current life circumstances						
Place of residence						
Urban	15.8	14.3–17.4	84.2	82.6–85.7	.102	7,354
Rural	14.0	12.7–15.5	86.0	84.5–87.3		6,008
Region						
National capital region	18.3	15.4–21.7	81.7	78.3–84.6	.001	1,846
Luzon	15.2	13.5–17.0	84.8	83.0–86.5		5,896
Visayas	16.3	14.1–18.8	83.7	81.2–85.9		2,413
Mindanao	11.8	10.4–13.5	88.2	86.5–89.6		3,207
Household Size						
Small (1–3 members)	17.2	15.0–19.6	82.8	80.4–85.0	.020	2,507
Medium (4–5 members)	13.5	12.1–15.0	86.5	85.0–87.9		5,651
Large (more than 5 members)	15.6	14.0–17.5	84.4	82.5–86.0		5,204
Work Status (last 12 months)						
Not working	14.4	13.0–16.0	85.6	84.0–87.0	.338	5,310
Working	15.4	14.1–16.8	84.6	83.2–85.9		8,053
Wealth status						
Poor	11.2	9.8–12.7	88.8	87.3–90.2	.000	5,090
Non-poor	17.4	15.9–18.9	82.6	81.1,84.1		8–272

Continued...

Table A1—Continued

Variables	Marital status				p value	Total
	Never married		Ever married			
	%	CI	%	CI		
Ownership of property						
None	23.5	21.9–25.1	76.5	74.9–78.1	.000	7,875
Full or partial ownership of land or house	2.9	2.2–3.8	97.1	96.2–97.8		5,487
Has bank account						
No	15.4	14.2–16.7	84.6	83.3–85.8	.302	8,622
Yes	14.3	12.7–16.1	85.7	83.9–87.3		4,740
Own a mobile smartphone						
No	4.5	3.3–6.1	95.5	93.9–96.7	.000	2,440
Yes	17.4	16.2–18.6	82.6	81.4–83.8		10,922
Level 3: Immediate precipitators						
Partner controlling behavior						
None	12.6	11.5–13.9	87.4	86.1–88.5	.000	8,541
With controlling behavior	19.2	17.3–21.2	80.8	78.8–82.7		4,821
Partner got drunk the last 12 months						
Doesn't drink, never drunk	16.8	15.3–18.4	83.2	81.6–84.7	.001	6,569
Got drunk	13.3	11.9–14.8	86.7	85.2–88.1		6,793
Woman-initiated violence						
No	15.4	14.3–16.5	84.6	83.5–85.7	.000	12,695
Yes	7.9	5.3–11.7	92.1	88.3–94.7		668
Total	15.0	14.0–16.1	85.0	83.9–86.0		13,362

Figure A1 Current IPV experiences of women age 15–49 in the last 3 NDHS

