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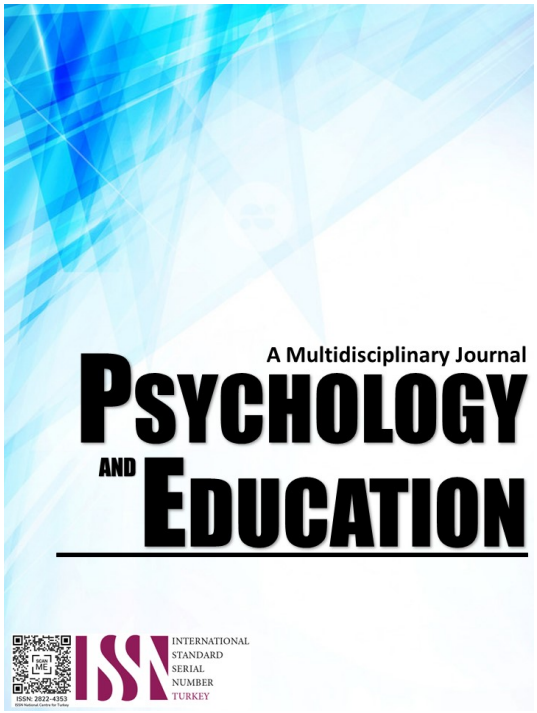

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Research Article

Unraveling the Lingering Truths: Accounts of Women in Men-Dominated Societal Spaces

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Abstract

The study focuses on the exploration of the challenges experienced by some women in men-dominated societal spaces, specifically in the household and workplace in the municipality of Midsayap, North Cotabato, Philippines. The 5 participants were identified through non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The study employed qualitative research, specifically narratology. The result showed that most of the participants experienced gender inequality and discrimination. However, the coping mechanisms of the participants just as respect verbally expressing their opinions, and ignoring people's negative comments helped them to excel and have their capabilities visible in the community. The study exhibited evident manifestations of discrimination, gender stereotyping, and gender inequality. Thus, the study enlivens awareness of the underlying realities of women even in this new era.

Keywords: Philippines, Gender Equality, Discrimination, Coping Mechanisms, Women Empowerment

Introduction

There is a big misconception about the word "women". They see women as a voiceless human beings, a follower, and just a homemaker. According to Espiritu (2020), in this patriarchal society, women have been neglected and oppressed throughout history. Women have always been seen as an addition to or neighbor to men in society. As a result, they have developed the ability to gradually blend in, work behind the scenes, and maintain silence in a world where men predominate. If we take a closer look at how women should be represented and treated equally in society over time, it reveals how slow the progress is.

Women's full and equal participation in all facets of society is a fundamental human right. Yet, around the world, from politics to entertainment to the workplace, women and girls are largely underrepresented. In our society, women are more likely than men to be displaced, to be sexually assaulted, victims of violence, and face other human rights violations. Women are more likely than men to conclude formal education early, making them less informed about the things they are needed to be educated about and less likely to be involved in decision-making that will affect their quality of life (Thomas, 2020).

In such a context, the role of a woman is not to stand up and defend herself, but to choose which masculinity will protect them (Owen, 2022). The stereotypic attitudes toward the roles of women and lack of confidence among women add to barriers for women in societal participation. Also, the meaningful participation of women in national, local, and community leadership roles has become an important focus of global development policy. Women are important actors in education and social affairs and are well-represented in academia, but in politics, certain barriers remain intact. The question of resources also affects women's access to decision-making positions since women and men do not enjoy the same access to resources that yields power.

The employment of women in professions or industries where men predominated gives a challenge for women to achieve fairness when it comes to gender equality. Highly skilled women succumb to stereotype-driven expectations. It begins early when girls as young as six stop believing that girls are the smart ones, while boys continue to believe that their gender is gifted. As women get older, these stereotypes discourage them from pursuing careers, and, with fewer women in a field, subsequent generations of women are deterred from pursuing them (Beilock, 2019).

Furthermore, women's roles in every household differ from every custom and tradition affecting how they are seen and perceived. For instance, the gendered distribution of labor in the home is widely recognized. Girls are typically assigned domestic tasks like cooking and cleaning, while boys are more likely to be assigned maintenance tasks like painting or mowing

the grass. This division of labor in the home teaches kids that they should assume different roles depending on their gender (Buitenbos, 2021).

Educating people about women's empowerment can be critical since the only route for women is to be strengthened in able for young students to be informed about the issues and explore measures to support women all over the world (Sinha, 2022). Therefore, women should be given equal rights as men do in this society for, they also play a very significant role in establishing an evolving society.

This study will be conducted to enhance students' learning about the role of women in a men-dominated societal place the young girls that are studying in this institution. Conducting this study may help them expand their understanding of the challenges that women face especially nowadays. Thus, this study aims to explore women's experiences in this contemporary society on the different types of challenges faced by them in the community and to promote women's empowerment as a process of recognition of women and their rights in society.

Research Questions

This study sought to determine the experiences of women in men-dominated societal places. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1.What are the challenges of women in men-dominated societal spaces?
2.What are the coping mechanisms of women on the challenges they encounter in men-dominated societal places?
3.What are the insights gained by women in men-dominated societal places?

Literature Review

The History of Women's Empowerment and Role in the Philippines

The concept of women's empowerment emerged from several important criticisms that are generated by the women's movement to prevail in development interventions. Most often, these are referring to women's ability to make decisions and how the outcome affects themselves as well as their families and the environment they are in (Tandon, 2016). As many generations passed, Filipino women also evolved through time. Back in the pre-colonial period of the Philippines, the structure of pre-Hispanic Philippine society could neither be described as patriarchy nor matriarchy but before the Spanish Colonization, their existence of a 500-year-long tradition of indigenous feminism that predated women's liberation in the West.

According to Limos (2019), Babaylans are referred to as the pre-colonial Philippine tradition of female mystical healers whose spiritual connectedness was a source of political and social power. Babaylan upholds power in society and receives the same respect as Datus perceives. The Babaylan is an indication that women played an important role in society before as males also did. Women's role in the 19th Century challenged also some concepts of what was "normal" for women under Spanish rule.

Since the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines, they brought laws that were not very favorable to the citizens, especially to women who still carry this behavior up to this day. After almost 500 years under Spanish Colonial rule, Canon law and laws of Spanish origin continue to dominate Philippine family, civil and penal law. Because of this belief, until now, Filipinas are still deprived of making their own choices (Saldua, 2021). This includes depriving women of their choices in life, their body and reproductive health, and their stand in society. Among others, the penal code, which continues to categorize consented abortion as a crime, as well as legally defines "prostitutes" as women is a remnant of the original Kodigo Penal enacted under Spanish colonization. Yet even a relatively recently enacted law like the Philippine Family Code of 1987 draws influence from Canon law in defining the ground of "psychological incapacity" for the nullification of marriage (in the absence of divorce law, which is always hotly contested) (Austria, 2004). Spanish education creates a great emphasis on values and norms of sexual behavior in the Philippines.

Girls were taught to be obedient to elders and always subservient to males. The time when Spaniards colonized the Philippines, it is the beginning of the stereotype, unequal rights, and misogyny of Filipina women. The Spanish-imposed ideal of a woman took the place of the real Filipina. Men rose to prominence as the dominant gender during the Spanish occupation, establishing a patriarchal society that has endured and outlasted generations and is now the dominant type of society that we follow. They were admonished to remain chaste until married and to concentrate on developing skills that would turn them into excellent

daughters, housewives, mothers, and servants of God.

The role of women was reduced to housekeeping and childbearing as this was stereotypical at that time. In effect, women were viewed to be reserved, shy, and submissive to men. The Spanish also established a tradition of subordinating women, which is exemplified by women's typically submissive attitudes and by a double standard in sexual behavior. In general, under Spanish rule, the Philippine education and social system contained serious discrimination in terms of caste, gender, ethnicity, and occupation, in which women were of course in a very low position (Hiep, Hung, Long, Binh, & Bao, 2021).

However, during the American colonization, many opportunities opened for Filipina women. According to Cequina (2021), women gradually began to have opportunities for self-development during the American regime. It is the time when women get to obtain proper education far from what Filipinas experienced during the period of where the Spanish regime occurred. Education played a crucial role in helping women succeed because with the rise of female mastery and literacy more and more women were armed with the right knowledge and skill, enabling them to break away from stereotyped gender roles. Filipinas soon entrenched themselves into more demanding roles such as health, law and justice, government and politics, and education. Despite US power over the Philippine population, to say Filipinas were simply victims of US influence risks omitting part of their history. To make a living in these industries, Filipinas abided by these US-preferred female characteristics to financially provide for themselves and their family (Santos, 2015).

On the other hand, when the Japanese arrived in the Philippines, they experienced a strange blow at the hands of the abusive soldiers of the Second World War. The Filipinas who are held captive by Japanese soldiers were branded as “comfort women”. They use abduction, coercion, and deception to force women and girls to provide sexual gratification to military personnel (McCarthy, 2020). Their victimization has resulted in a life of poverty; as social victims, they were forced to leave their villages and move to the city, where, deprived of an education, they were compelled to remain in low-paying jobs (Roces, Filipino Comfort Women, 2022).

But despite the tragic history of women in the Philippines, they still can rise and show the true blood of being a Gabriela or a brave Filipina. Under Pepera’s (2018) claim, women’s participation whether in politics, corporations, or in overall society results in tangible gains for democracy which include greater responsiveness to the needs of the citizens, increases cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and a more sustainable future.

The recognition of women’s rights is human rights. It is universal and indivisible to be laid bare about the adverse impact of gender construction on women and girls in families and communities. For Shuani (2018), women are capable of being anything, including managers in the corporate world, mothers who care for and adore their children, administrators, and leaders. Women who were adversely impacted by these types of catastrophes have jobs now because of women's empowerment (Doeung, 2017). To Rana (2021), women who were challenged have given voices to listen and amplify the needs of others. Any woman who is serving their role in the development of society must use the strength and potential of being a woman to be provided with equal opportunities.

Filipina Women and Their Experiences

The underlying power and strength of Filipinas are rooted in pre-colonial indigenous Philippine society where fair importance and view were given to women and men. Women were traditionally entitled to the property, to engage in trade, to have the authority to rule, or to be something else (Galila, 2020). The Colonial Period and during the Second World War imposed that the role of women are somehow opposite to the acceptance presented in the Pre-Colonial age. During the Second World War, women were left with both physical and psychological wounds, including post-traumatic stress disorder, sexually transmitted diseases, and compromised reproductive systems. Women’s experience during this time contributes to the importance of protecting human rights by providing women in the Philippines a vivid picture of emphasizing the impact of human rights violations on people’s lives (Bisland, Kim, & Shin, 2019).

Despite the Philippines’ rapid economic development and the country’s high ranking – fourth among 80 countries – for women working in management roles, according to the International Labor Organization, Filipino women are still expected to do most of the domestic chores. In the Philippines, male-dominated environments such as heavy manufacturing and production were built upon and embedded in intense racial and class struggles. These environments only provided room for a male workforce, mostly due to the traditional nature of the labor that was way back colonization era. In such heavy manufacturing and

production industries, which historically made no provision for women and even in the present day remain highly patriarchal in nature, it comes as no surprise that the role of women is still mostly confined to clerical and support roles (Martin, 2019).

In the late 1970s, women were invested in the "mail-order bride industry". Finding women from countries such as the Philippines to satisfy the needs of white men who preferred women with a traditional outlook on gender roles. The tumultuous economy in the Philippines became a great factor in why Filipinas held to this industry. Due to this, Filipinas are subjected to being sexualized and objected to by participating in these acts. It further explored the stereotypes and idealizations of both the men and the women involved. They saw Filipina women as the embodiment of tradition as Filipina women hold on to the "internalized colonization influences". Furthermore, Filipina women who participated in this industry experienced racism and exclusion from their husbands' families and the Filipino community (Demanarig & Acosta, 2016).

According to a recent survey conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (2021), the census data showed that Filipina women represent only a small percentage of high-power positions in the Filipino male-dominated household. Filipino women continue to face larger wage gaps compared to men, as well as limited representation in high-ranking positions in many industries. Moreover, policymaking remains largely male-dominated, and Filipino women lack access to the resources needed to pursue their career aspirations. However, there are encouraging signs that Filipinas are slowly gaining more access, with across-the-board progress in terms of representation in education, the workforce, and government. While the current statistics remain disheartening, with Filipina women facing greater barriers than men, it is promising to see that Filipino women are making small gains in achieving more equitable opportunities in professional, educational, and policymaking settings.

The experiences of Filipino women living in male-dominated household has seen increased scrutiny by feminist scholars in recent years. Direct quote from the United Nations Human Development Report (2020), "In many countries, especially in parts of Southeast Asia like the Philippines, structural features of patriarchy—including a gendered division of labor and traditional gender roles—means that women must shoulder greater burdens in the home". According to the "Study of Housing Conditions of Filipino Women" conducted in 2016 by the Philippine Statistics Authority, Filipino women are increasingly being forced to live in male-dense housing, playing a major role in the current housing crisis. Filipino women tend to inhabit boarding houses, overcrowded bedsitters, and subdivided flats. As a result, Filipino women are often deprived of minimum living standards, such as adequate ventilation, light, and safe drinking water. This environment, without basic living standards, is detrimental to women's health, safety, and sense of well-being. The need for decent housing has become an urgent issue, and Filipino women have been calling for appropriate policies and programs from their governing bodies to rectify the situation.

Women as a group have historically been barred from widely acknowledged sources of power due to the patriarchy-based ideology that drives gender stratification in most countries. Higher education and better-paying occupations have been easier to access for men. Traditionally, this comparative advantage of men in the public arena translates to their greater power in the household. The key to the household balance of power in the Western paradigm is the ability to contribute to household income. The amount of a contribution is measured in monetary terms. Housework is an example of a non-monetary commitment that does not elevate one's status within the family power structure (Alcantara, 1994).

Women have the right to speak up and stand up for themselves, and should never let anyone underestimate their ability. The organization found more than 80 percent of women parliamentarians have experienced psychological violence, in the form of sexist attitudes and remarks aiming to silence, belittle, mock, and degrade women in politics, or to judge their physical appearance (United Nations for Human Rights, 2022). Unfortunately, there are still unseen barriers that prevent women from rising in leadership roles. Integrating leadership into one's core identity is particularly challenging for women, who must establish credibility in a culture that is deeply conflicted about whether, when, and how they should exercise authority. Practices that equate leadership with behaviors considered more common in men suggest that women are simply not cut out to be leaders. Furthermore, the human tendency to gravitate to people like oneself leads powerful men to sponsor and advocate for other men when leadership opportunities arise (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). For King (2021), an authority gap leads to women being taken less seriously than men. Gender norms create social roles and expectations of how men and women should behave. Beliefs about leadership default to

traditional stereotypes about masculine behavior and these beliefs are then used to make judgments about women at work. Women should be aware of these issues and strive to overcome them by standing up for themselves and asserting their values (Davis, 2020).

The internet is one of the most powerful and enabling platforms for an opportunity, to share ideas and build community. Women and other vulnerable groups are too often threatened, silenced, and censored because of having the courage to speak out and it was mapped up to 628 cases of online gender-based violence in the Philippines, mostly sourced from media reports. Thirty-one media-sourced reports of online gender-based violence were recorded in the first six months of 2022. Most of the mapped reports happened in the National Capital Region (10 reports), Visayas Region (7 reports), Central and South Luzon, Mindanao Region (5 reports), and one Filipino case was documented in Singapore.

The majority reported that women suffer online harassment and abuse in a form of taking intimate photos, videos, and other private information, inciting violent remarks, abusive comments, and sexual exploitation. Violence occurs through mobile phones, webcams, laptops, and even porn sites. These harms were aggravated by the lack of support they receive, which often includes discouragement to socialize and get involved in both online and offline spheres. Women also confront the terms that they have lost their privacy now that their personal and sensitive information was leaked online, redistributed, and used against them. (Foundation for Media Alternative, 2022). Women should have boundaries when receiving negative comments and not let them bring them down (Deschene, 2011). To Cuncic (2022), women should be secure in their abilities and not try to convince people to stop being negative. It is important to note that a blanket decision to ignore or delete negative comments is not necessarily always the best course of action, even though you might hear this as common advice.

According to the UN World Population Prospects 2019 (2021), the growth of the Philippines in the year 2021 has reached 1.34% which is equivalent to a population of 111,046,910 in the country. According also to this report, the number of women in the Philippines has reached 55,306,249. Every day in the Philippines there are reported cases of sexual abuse and it becomes one of the problems of every woman in the country. The continuous growth of it makes women threatened about their security in society. From what the Cameleon Association Org (2020) reported, 70% of the women's total population in the Philippines and ages 10 to 18 years old are victims of sexual abuse. Among those victims, 20% are under 6 years old. Despite the Anti-Rape Law of 1997, rape remains the most frequent type of sexual abuse, followed by incest and fondling. 98% of rape victims are women. The incest percentage is another alarming data in the range of 33%. The continuous increase in the number of these cases can give fear and dread to women, especially since they often experience it.

As the Philippine Commission on Women (2022) stated, Filipino women ages 15 - 49 have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual violence by their husbands or partner. Violence Against Women is deemed to be closely linked with the unequal power relations between women and men, otherwise known as "gender-based violence." An even greater problem due to this is the lack of concrete information to show the extent of Violence Against Women in the country, as many cases of violence against women often go unreported due to the victims' fear to express. Many of the victims are ashamed to relate their experiences while others tend to dismiss their ordeal as a result of their lack of faith in the country's justice system caused by frustrations over the lack of results in filing complaints. Many cases of Violence Against Women go unreported due to the victims' "culture of silence" and lack of faith in the country's justice system.

The Philippines reportedly has several laws to ensure the protection of women. The need to solidify policies for prostitution, cyber, and media exploitation of women gives the means to such laws that exist to protect them. One of these is Republic Act No. 9262, known as the "Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act of 2004" which seeks to address the prevalence of violence against women and their children (VAWC) by their intimate partners like their husbands or ex-husband, live-in partner or former live-in partner, boyfriend/girlfriend or ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend, dating partner or former dating partner., that provides the penalties for such offenses (Philippine Commission on Women, 2022).

The challenges faced by women on reproductive health and sex positivity actively advocate the larger sum of women on their stand in society. It can be a long conversation on sexual rights in the name of broader societal issues like development and gender equality as the enraging of this issue is even more important especially since the life and health of a woman are at stake (Santos, 2021). In the long discussion regarding this, society still fails to give women the laws to prioritize women's human rights

over religious ideology and cultural stereotypes, which has led to widespread discrimination against women and hindered access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.

The express concern about the restrictions on financing modern contraceptives and the call for decriminalization of abortion in cases of rape, incest, when the health or life of the woman is at risk, and in cases of severe fetal impairments is just crucial because they see it as a sin since the Philippines is a conservative country (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2015). As Kanem (2018) stated, making reproductive health care accessible for women whether rich or poor would enable them to stay healthy, get an education, and participate in all facets of life, including economic life. Because of this, in 2012, "The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012" or Republic Act 10354 was finally enacted.

The Republic Act 10354 of the Republic of the Philippines states that "The State recognizes and guarantees the human rights of all persons including their right to equality and nondiscrimination of these rights, the right to sustainable human development, the right to health which includes reproductive health, the right to education and information, and the right to choose and make decisions for themselves following their religious convictions, ethics, cultural beliefs, and the demands of responsible parenthood.

According to the declaration of State policies under Section 12, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, it is the duty of the State to protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution and equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of women, especially mothers in particular and of the people in general and instill health consciousness among them. The family is the natural and fundamental unit of society. The State shall likewise protect and advance the right of families in particular and the people in general to a balanced and healthful environment in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. The State also recognizes and guarantees the promotion and equal protection of the welfare and rights of children, the youth, and the unborn.

Moreover, the State recognizes and guarantees the promotion of gender equality, gender equity, women empowerment, and dignity as a health and human rights concern and as a social responsibility. The advancement and protection of women's human rights shall be central to the efforts of the State to address reproductive health care." This law aims to protect the right of children to have responsible parents, protect and strengthen the family based on the institutions they follow, give women access to health care just like contraceptives and IUDs, also giving women their right to make decisions about their reproductive health and ultimately, this law aims to expand gender equity and equality so that women in the country can be more empowered (Camero, 2015).

This Senate Bill No. 2865 and House Bill No. 4244 were finally passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives and it was signed by Juan Ponce Enrile, the Senate President, Feliciano Belmonte Jr., the Speaker for House of Representatives, Emma Lirio – Reyes, Secretary of the Senate and Marilyn Barua – Yap, the Secretary General for the House of Representatives. This Bill was approved by the late and former Philippine President, Benigno Simeon Aquino III on December 12, 2012.

Respect is an important part of any relationship, whether it be in the home or at (Kids Help Line & Mind Tools, 2022). Respectful behavior helps to create strong families and workplaces by fostering warmth, care, positive attention, good communication, and a predictable environment (Raising Children Network, 2021). In this case, women had experienced at least one type of disrespect and/or abuse during labor and delivery, most common being non-consented care (100%), non-dignified care (72%), and non-confidential care (66.6%), respectively. Discriminatory care and physical abuse were experienced by 32.33% and 13.23%, respectively (Ghimire, Joshi, Pranab, & Swahnberg, 2021). Every woman has the right to quality healthcare that is dignified, respectful, violence-free, and free of discrimination. Abuse, negligence, or disrespect during the process of childbirth constitute serious violations of fundamental human rights that are recognized internationally (Mesenburg, et al., 2018). For Wool (2022), no workplace can reconcile all of those expectations of respect across 4 or 5 generations in the workforce. However, most workplaces should be able to align on a basic standard of respect. It might not always be perfect but is grounded in recognizing the individuality and humanity of each person you interact with and treating that person with care.

What women have gone through here in the Philippines is almost the same as what women have gone through in other countries. It is insignificant that men are more successful and they can belittle everyone, especially women. The Philippines is a main player in the international women's arena and this is

anchored on a very vibrant local women's movement. Numerous organizations and non – government organizations exist for the cause of gender equality and other related women's issues. This puts gender equality issues at the forefront of national discourse and precludes further downslides of women's status in modern Philippine society. Indeed, there are many handles for the changes to happen; these legal and policy gains resulted from the strong voice of women that started even during the anti-dictatorship struggle that culminated in the ascension of women to finally lead or to have its participation in the country (Anonuevo, 2000).

Review of Related Studies

Berger (1971) and his study entitled "Equal Pay, Equal Employment Opportunity and Equal Enforcement of the Law for Women" found that women face employment discrimination from state governments who implemented laws that excludes them from particular jobs. In addition, it shows that women are paid less than male workers, and rejected and discriminated against in various workplaces. This study is related to the current study because it discusses the struggle of women in the workplace.

The study of Moghissi (1996) entitled "Populism and Feminism in Iran: Women's Struggle in a Male-Defined Revolutionary Movement" found that Iranian women's post-revolutionary struggles are unique. In the pretense of keeping the authentic cultural heritage against foreign influence, old behaviors have been retained, old sexist customs have been reactivated and the women kept mum. Patriarchal power has overpowered Iranian women's rights and portrays the continual process of establishing national identity at the expense of female citizens through conventional dogmatism and religious orthodoxy. This study is related to the current study because it discusses the inequality women have experienced through out time.

The study of Guzman and Frank (2004) entitled "Policewomen and their problems: the Philippine context" This study examined gender-related workplace problems and their relationship to the work performance of female officers in the Philippines. It is also to identify the problems that the policewomen in the Philippines experience, as well as their good or bad relationships with the other officers. In this study, it was concluded that policewomen experience more problems than male officers, such as stereotypical roles, because they believe their physical capabilities were underestimated and they were given less challenging assignments or positions. Despite these problems, many women still want to be police and believe in equality, especially in a male-dominated workplace. This study is related to the current study since being a police officer is a work that originated from a male-dominated society, and the researchers' study wants to identify the problems of women in a male-dominated workplace, and this study is the best example and most relevant.

The study by Pollard (2007) which is "A Critical Analysis Gender-based Workplace Challenges Facing Women: Gender and Compensation" explores the discrimination against women in different aspects, including the job, sexual harassment, and career opportunities, such as a lack of promotion opportunities. It focuses on women in the workplace and challenges both their personal and business-related gender inequality. It also focuses on educating the public about gender equity and equality and reducing gender discrimination in male-dominated industries. Just like the study of the researchers, it is to identify the struggles of women and to conduct and make gender equality in various forms, such as the workplace and household.

The study by Pokharel (2008) entitled "Gender Discrimination: Women's Perspective" discusses that Nepal, a country with a predominance of men, is not the only one that discriminated against women. In Nepal, discrimination against women is ingrained in the traditional ethos of the nation, which upholds a hierarchy between men and women. Women accept discrimination as a cultural tradition and men usually use it as a social norm. Nepal is a predominantly male, religious nation where women are viewed as inferior. Sons are preferred above daughters almost universally. Shortly after birth, gender discrimination takes many different forms and persists throughout the entire life cycle. It is related to the current study because it shows how women are discriminated against in many areas. After all, they are viewed in society as weak, fragile people. And even in other nations, women were still perceived as weak and socially dominated by men.

To address prostitution as a problem impacting women, feminist organizations in the Philippines established "The Filipino Woman" between 1985 and 2006. In the article of Roces (2009) entitled "Prostitutions, Women's Movements and the Victims Narrative in the Philippines", discourses of Filipino femininity have long been characterized by continual contradiction of the woman as victim/agent, martyr/advocate, activist/martyr, etc. Feminists struggled in a complex, contradictory, and ambiguous way with these binary categories. The argument against victim status is crucial since deconstructing the

grand narrative on women pointed to victim hood as the cause of the bad reputation of the "second sex". Women's organizations turned "survivors" into activists by using theater and oral histories as advocacy tools. Feminists, on the other hand, embraced the victim narrative in their fight for reform. Their findings are comparable to those of the current study because they reflect how women behave in the modern societies in which they live, which supports the notion that men rule women.

From the study of Al-Ahmadi (2011) named "Challenges facing women leaders in Saudi Arabia" identifies the main obstacles that women face especially in leadership roles such as in government sectors are structural barriers, limited access to resources, and lack of empowerment. This study is related to the researchers' study because just like women in Saudi Arabia, here in the Philippines, women also lack empowerment which makes them seen as vulnerable and underrepresented in many forms.

In a similar study by Trask (2013), entitled "Women, Work, and Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities" stated that it was found that social class and social location have a significant effect on women's experiences, opportunities, and obstacles in terms of work-life balance. Despite these factors, the study notes that women from all backgrounds face similar challenges in balancing their roles at home and at work, and often confront societal expectations for women to take on primary caregiver roles in families. Additionally, the study highlights that as globalization spreads, the struggle for work-life balance has become increasingly common for women worldwide who often struggle with reconciling the conflicting ideologies of working for empowerment and the expectation of taking care of their family. It is also related to the current study because it discusses how women should be represented and deployed. Women can be more than just what society dictates; they can even be more than just a housewife.

This study conducted by Hrenyk (2016) with the title "Women in a Men's World: A Narrative Inquiry of the Experiences of Women Working at a Men's Correctional Facility" identifies the experiences of women correction workers working in a men's correctional facility. It is stated that women who enter a men-dominated occupation suffer difficulties due to informal barriers. This is because of the differences between treating women prisoners and men prisoners. Professions like this have struggled to recruit and to retent female professionals. This study is related to the current study because it reflects on how women working in a men-dominated societal place make a change in how they are seen as professionals.

Bernarte, Acedebega, Fadera, and Yopyop (2018) wrote in their study entitled "Violence Against Women in the Philippines" identifies that violence is one of the challenges that women encounter in the country. The inequalities between men and women limit woman's freedom, choices, and opportunity. Factors such as family, economic and social standing affect violence against women. The state of violence against women in the Philippines recognizes the contributing factors, the perpetrators, the number of cases, and the forms of abuse. Additionally, this study showed that family, economic and social factors already exist in the Filipino community that causes the occurrence of violence against women in a different settings. This study is connected to the current study because it tackles the narrative of women who experiences violence in the country, especially in the area of Muidsayap, North Cotabato. It appears that the current study reflects on how violence against women is still a big problem in society.

This study from Santiago (2018) entitled "PHILIPPINES: Country Gender Profile" suggests that in Asia, the Philippines is the only country to have closed the gender gap in education and health and believed that women have parity with men in senior management roles. However, in the current situation in the Philippines, women still suffer from domestic violence, economic disadvantages, discrimination in the workplace, and many more. This study is related to the current study because it shows how women face the challenges brought by a conservative and patriarchal country. It is relevant because it reveals what are the experiences of women in the societal place they are in.

The article written by the United Nation (2022) entitled "Women", says that due to the lack of representation and limitations based on freedom, women from racial or ethnic groups are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. They also suffer racial discrimination and sometimes are explicitly targeted because of their racial or ethnic background. Forms of violence and abuses such as rape, sexual harassment and such have been used as a weapon of men to violate women's rights throughout history. This study is relevant to the current study since women in Midsayap, North Cotabato has a lot of ethnic groups that reside within the area and it is connected to the study because the current study explores the diversity of women from different walks of life.

The study by Amaratunga, Haigh, Shanmugam, Lee, and Elvitigalage, (2022) entitled "Construction Industry and Women: A Review of the Barriers" stated that organizations and companies contribute to a wide range of female difficulties due to the environment's masculine culture and male predominance. For example, women in engineering fields continue to be underrepresented in a career that is largely affected and pushed by a culture of masculinity. The engineering course itself is gendered. Men are still perceived as the qualified ones rather than women because of gender stereotypes. The study is connected to the current study because workplaces like this need to be more diverse, especially in hiring women. This study might relate to the current study because it values the representation of women, especially in jobs dictated by society that are only for men.

Methodology

Qualitative research is used in this study to illuminate the topic, specifically, narratology. The narrative research design was chosen by the researchers because it consciously or purposefully structures an experience.

Participants. The researchers selected the participants through non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The participants of this study are women in the areas of Midsayap and North Cotabato. The study came up with five (5) participants in the area of the study. Therefore, the study had five (5) participants in total. The researchers ensured that the participants are women who have experience living and working in men-dominated societal spaces.

Instruments of the Study. The researchers selected the participants through non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The participants of this study are women in the areas of Midsayap, and North Cotabato. The study came up with five (5) participants in the area of the study. The researchers ensured that the participants are women who has experiences living and working in men dominated societal spaces.

Procedure

A letter was submitted to the principal asking permission to conduct the study.

Before a one-on-one interview was conducted, the Senior High School principal was given a letter for approval.

Researchers performed a one-on-one interview with the chosen participants.

During the one-on-one interview, the researchers used a voice recorder to document the responses of the chosen participants, which was used for the results and recommendations.

Ethical Considerations. A letter of consent was given to the prospective participants to ask permission. When the permission was approved, a letter of consent was given to the chosen participants, asking for their permission as the study's participants and their parents if the participant was still a minor. The researchers ensure the confidentiality of the responses of the participants.

Result

Experiences of Women in Men-Dominated Societal Places

The emergent themes which arose from the data by the participants are as follows: (1) Degrading Treatment, (2) Gender Inequality, and (3) Gender Stereotyping.

Table 1. *Themes on the Experiences of Women in Men-Dominated Societal Place*

Experiences of Women in Men Dominated Societal Places	*Brief Description of the Women's Experiences*
Degrading Treatment	Women tend to experience some form of degrading treatment from people in the household or their workplace
Gender Inequality	Since this social phenomenon was brought about by colonization, women have a gap in the basis of keeping up with men in the society
Gender Stereotyping	It limits women's capacity to develop their personal abilities and make choices about their lives

Figure 1. .

Degrading Treatment

Degrading treatment is the way you treat someone in a disrespectful way that is extremely humiliating and undignified. These are violations of human dignity. Most of the participants in this study revealed that they had also experienced this kind of humiliation. In fact, W4 recounted:

"Sa na encounter ko sa first day ko kay naay isa ka lalaki ang nangayo ug number nako and ako as a professional na lady guard kay gipasa-walang bahala ko lang siya pero murag na bastosan man nuon ko sa iyaha e. The way siya mag approach sakua kay murag gina-hampangan lang ko ba and may time man pod na dili dali ang akuang trabaho kay tungod sa anang mga tawhana. Dili man gud na siya maiwasan kanang may mga bastos na tao." In my first day, I encountered a guy who kept on bugging me for my cellphone number, but as a professional lady guard, I kept calm and handled the situation professionally, even though I was offended by his act. The way he approached me is kind of disrespectful, for I felt like I was being played by him. There are times that my work is difficult because of those kinds of people. We can't deny the fact that there are still disrespectful people like them. (Doja, W4, Q1.2)

The responses above showed that women are being considered entertainment for men. Everyone is entitled to human rights, but across the globe, many women still face discrimination based on sex and gender. The Philippines reportedly have several laws to ensure the protection of women. The Republic Act 10354, states that *"The State recognizes and guarantees the human rights of all persons, including their right to equality and nondiscrimination in human rights."* This means that all people have the right to be treated equally and ensures that no one is denied their rights because of factors such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national or social origin, property, or birth.

Degrading treatment can relate to the work of Arinder "The Feminist Theory" (2020) they determine how women were treated in any type of household or workplace, it is intended to show the positive or negative experiences of women in any societal place. And also in work of Sanden (2019) said that emphasizes the oppression or life experiences of women in male-dominated societal places. This study is focusing on the experiences of women by group or individual.

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is an act of discrimination based on sex or gender that regularly favors or prioritizes one sex or gender over another. As our study focuses on women's experiences this signifies the unfair treatment a woman experiences because of his/her sexuality or gender in a social setting. Because of this social phenomenon, it has been revealed the gap women go through with keeping up with men in society. Participant 1 recounted,

"Tapos always na sya mahitabo pag naa mi discussion or bisag conflict sa akong kuya na always niya ko gina be little ba kay babae daw lang daw ko, wala kaayo ko mabuhat sa pamilya ana gud." This usually happens when I have a discussion or or an arguements with my brother, he always belittle me because im just a girl, and I can't do anything for our family. (Anne, W1, Q1.1)

The response above showed that women have been experiencing inequality at home that affects their quality of life. United Nations Human Development Report (2020), stated that countries in Southeast Asia like the Philippines have a patriarchal system at home and women must shoulder burdens at home. The extracts above show that gender inequality starts at home where gender discrimination is present. This is supported by the Feminist Theory of Arinder (2020) which highlights the oppression and inequality the participant had experienced at home with the hurtful and belittling words from her brother.

Meanwhile, participant 5 recounted:
"Uhm common encounters is that sa mga household chores, ang gender discrimination with household chores kay very ano present, kay ingnon nila tungod babae ka ikaw dapat mag himo ani." The common encounter that I experienced is gender discrimination with household chores. They said that I— being a girl, should be the one cleaning and maintaining our home. (Rihanna, W5, Q1.2)

Responses above clearly show that there is gender discrimination at home regarding the division of responsibilities. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (2021), census data showed that women only have a lower position in Filipino male-dominated households. This is connected with Martinez and Paterna's Theory in 2009 which states that there is an existing conflict with the division of household chores that most of the work inside the house is given to women the same feeling woman 5 has been feeling.

Another participant shared:

"Siguro kuan baba kaayo ang lantaw nila sa akoa pero sa tinuod mas daghan man kog mabuhat gud." But now believe I that they just said it because I've done so much more work than they have. (Anne, W1, Q1.1)

Shuani (2018) says that women are capable of doing anything. The women of today can now keep up with the patriarchal system of our society despite the gender discrimination experienced by them.

In light above accounts of the participants, it can be deduced that several of these women have experienced gender discrimination at home and their workplace.

Gender Stereotyping

Gender Stereotyping is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by, women and men. This study shows how the participants experience gender stereotyping in their homes or even in the workplace. Because of these kinds of stereotyping, women's ability and capability was given a limit. This led in making their confidence drop. For example:

"I often experience being underestimated for being a woman because of the belief of others na porket babae, wala na kaayo mahimo di parehas sa lalaki." I often experience being underestimated for being a woman because of the belief of others that being a woman doesn't have a lot to do, unlike men who have a lot to prove. (Anne, W1, Q1.2)

The response above shows that gender stereotyping is present and many women have been experiencing this. Hiep, Hung, Long, Binh, and Bao (2021) claimed that this is due to the Spanish colonization that the society sees women as subordinate to men because the people are taught that men are much more important than women. This is supported by the Feminist Theory of Arinder (2020), Woman 1 has experienced underestimation because of her gender and it shows the oppression from the ideology that women are weaker and less capable than men.

Another participant stated:
"For me, ang gusto nako i-instill is that dili tungod babae ka dili lang ikaw maglihok sa isa ka panimalay, dapat ang responsibility ma-instill sa bawat isa nga dapat naa pud kay buhaton, and also dapat mawala sa mind sa mga tao nga dili maka less of a person nga babae ka kay we have so much more to do pud." For me, i want to instill to everybody is not because you are a woman you are the one responsible at home alone, everyone— regardless of gender should have the initiative and have the responsibility to do something. Also, we should end the mentality that being a woman makes us less of a person, because in reality we can do more and we are capable in doing so. (Rihanna, W5, Q3)

The responses above clearly implied that the responsibilities at home should be fair for everyone to do them since women have taken on more responsibilities at home as Martinez and Paterna Theory (2009) assert that women are expected to do the household chores because it is considered feminine. This is also supported by the study of Fernández Sánchez, et al. (2016) that there is a division of responsibilities at home because of the gender role nuclei.

Women should speak out when something doesn't feel right and always share their thoughts in one situation to be heard. Women should stop thinking their voice isn't important. In the United Nations Human Development Report (2020), it was claimed that in many countries, especially in parts of Southeast Asia like the Philippines, structural features of patriarchy, including a gendered division of labor and traditional gender roles, mean that women must shoulder greater burdens in the home.

Coping Mechanisms of Women to Overcome Challenges in Men-Dominated Societal Places

Shuani (2018) claimed that women are capable of being anything and so, despite the experiences women have gone throughout history or during this 21st Century, women are capable of overcoming it. To Rana (2021), women who were challenged have given voices to amplify not only their needs but also others. There are three (3) emergent themes identified regarding the coping mechanisms of women from their experiences. There is (1) Respect, (2) Verbally expressing their opinions, and lastly, (3) Ignoring People's Negative Comments.

Table 2. *Coping Mechanisms of Women to Overcome Challenges in Men-Dominated Societal Places*

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Research Article

Coping Mechanisms Of Women To Overcome Challenges	*Brief Description of Coping Mechanisms*
Respect	Respecting people in your household or even at work is everything, no matter what individual differences you have with each other. It builds a sense of humanity and a strong relationship with your family and companions.
Verbally expressing their opinions	Women have to speak up and stand up for themselves. Women should never let anyone underestimate their ability and instead fight for equality.
Ignoring People's Negative Comments	Women should have boundaries when receiving negative comments. They should be more positive and never let negative comments about them bring them down.

Figure 2. .

Respect

Respect is what people need for them to develop, redevelop, and make people close together. So respecting people in your household or even at work is everything, no matter what individual differences you have with each other. It builds a sense of humanity and a strong relationship with your family and companions. And W4 shared an answer with us that she said:

"As a lady guard, ang maingon ko lang kay dili dapat nato i-disrespect ang isa ka tao kay tungod lang babae sila. Mag show pod dapat ta sang respect sa ilaha kay kis-a man gud sobraan na ang ilahang gina himo biskan ang abi nila kay good ang intention nila pro para gali sa imohang gina approach kay kanang nabastosan na diay toh siya. Dili ta mag-ingana kanang mamilit mo sang isa ka tao nga dili niya gusto." As a lady guard, all I can say is that we shouldn't disrespect the person based on his or her gender. Let's show them some respect too and be mindful in our actions toward them, even if you think your intention is good but the way you approach someone is kind of offending. Don't force someone to do things you don't want them to do. (Doja, W4, Q3)

The feminist theory of Arinder in 2020 aims to undermine oppression that affects people in society, which relates to the experience of woman 4 and to her statement in question 3, which says that we should be mindful of our actions and show respect too. Concerning this, the statement means to lessen maltreatment in the workplace.

"Sa totoo lang, hindi ako nakaranas ng discrimination sa mga co-guard ko pero may na experience ko sa isa ka tao nga akuang gina inspection na walay respeto sa akua kay tungod lady guard ko. Biskan amo na sila kay gina-treat ko giyapon sila ug tarung and tungod ana kay nakadawat ko ug award and awardee man gud ko sa SM City Davao and walang customer complain and maayo ang panan-aw sa akua sang mga co-guard ko kay diba, awardee ko. And dri sa SCC kay pantay-pantay ang treatment sa amoa biskan babae ka or lalaki." To be honest, I haven't experienced any discrimination at work, but instead, I received disrespectful treatment from a person who I've encountered as a lady guard. Even though he treated me badly, I still gave him the opposite treatment he was giving me, and because of that, I received an award and became an awardee in the SM City Mall of Davao. I received no customer complaints, and some of my co-guards started to admire me. But here in SCC, they have an equal treatment policy, not minding if you are male or female. (Doja, W4, Q1.1)

Also her statement in question 1.1, is related to the feminist theory of Arinder, whereas in this statement she receives oppression and maltreatment in her workplace before, which challenges her individuality as a woman.

Respect is the other way of showing yourself to others and how you communicate with them. According to Mesenburg, et al. (2018) say that even in male-dominated works women and men should show respect even if it's male or female work.

And W2 also shared that:
"Syempre ma-kuan jud ka imohang… Kumbaga, ang imohang kakayahan, ma-challenge jud ka kay ang imong mga kauban mga lalaki tapos iba-iba ug mga ugali. So, kailangan makitungo ka sa ilaha according sa ilahang ugali, mga pamatasan nila. Syempre, sa makita nimo sila na nagarespeto sa imoha bilang usa

ka babae ug leader nila, ma-kuan pud ka sa imong kaugalingon e. Proud pud ka nga makaya diay nimo i-manage ang ing ana na sitwasyon bisag mga lalaki imong kauban, bilang usa ka-leader." Of course, you will be… like your abilities, it will definitely challenge you since your companions are mostly men with different attitudes. So, you need to deal with them according to their attitudes. Of course, if you see them respecting you as a woman and as their leader, you will be… to yourself. You will be proud of yourself as a leader because you can manage that kind of situation even though your companions are almost men. (Camila, W2, Q1.2)

The statement of woman 2 in question 1.2 is related to the feminist theory of Arinder in 2020, where it shows from her statement that she is definitely challenged but still proud of herself. This shows the feminist theory of Arinder, where the woman learns how to interact with individuals and provides ways to challenge and destroy the oppressive systems and structures in her workplace.

Verbally expressing their opinions

This is one of the coping mechanisms of women having to speak up and stand up for themselves. Women should never let anyone underestimate their ability and instead fight for equality. And it indicates that all human from all perspective needs to respect even if everyone is not the same. Martinez and Paterna's Theory in 2009 indicates that traditionally feminine women do most of the household chores. This is related to woman 3's experience in her household, where she wants to fight for her rights as a woman and speak up.

When the researchers asked their five (5) respondents there are answers that they have a different coping mechanism that they do, first is W3, who said:
"My coping mechanism is first; lift yourself; have the courage to fight for your right as women; never stop learning; and last, speak up." My coping mechanisms are first, you have lift yourself, dare to fight for your rights as a woman, never stop learning and last, speak up. (Camila, W3, Q2)

Women have the right to lead and learn, according to Cequina (2021) women in the time of the American Regime, women have the opportunity to self-develop as this can relate to the answer because everyone has the right to learn and lead.

W3 also shared that:
"Show them that women can also do what men can do, women have the freedom and right to do what they want, being controlled by a man is not easy because sometimes lead to a psychological problem." Show them that women can also do what men can do. Women have the freedom and right to do what they want, being controlled by a man is not easy because sometimes it leads to psychological problem. (Camila, W3, Q2)
"Women can do what men can do", that's according to Pepera (2018). It claimed that women can participate in any male-dominated workplace and have the freedom of what they want to do. And show their capability to lead and conquer our world in a responsive and the sustainable future.

W5 said that:
"Uhm common encounters is that sa mga household chores, ang gender discrimination with household chores kay very ano present, kay ingnon nila tungod babae ka ikaw dapat mag himo ani, but maisip nako nga aren't we all living in the same house so we have, tawag ani, naa tay mga responsibilidad ani nga balay, dili tungod babae ko, ako lang ako ang maglihok dapat kamo pud nga gapuyo sa balay regardless of the gender maglimpyo pud kamo." The common encounter that I experienced is gender discrimination with household chores. They said that I— being a girl, should be the one cleaning and maintaining our home. But I think that we all have responsibilities as people who live under the same roof so we should not expect that only girls should clean. (Rihanna, W5, Q1.2)

The study of Fernández Sánchez, which states that there is still a division of household chores by gender that is experienced by women, is eager to say that women also have the freedom to do what they want to do. Martinez and Paterna's theory in 2009 is related to the experience of woman 5, where people in her household think that she should do the household chores because she is a girl and it is her responsibility.

Women should be equal to men in household work, according to McCarthy (2020). Women were captive in their households as a worker and men were just freely doing what they want in their life it is unfair to women to do all things.

Ignoring People's Negative comments

Women should have boundaries when receiving negative comments. They should be more positive and never let negative comments about them bring them down. Everyone should be disregarding the unsolicited pieces of advice coming from irrelevant people who

just want to meddle in anyone's life.

From W4, 5, and 1, they shared commonalities like:
"Ang coping mechanism ko kay murag ginpabay-an ko lang siya sa iyang mga gina-ingon and wala ko nalang gud siya gina-mind kay para di na mag-dako ang problema ba para maka-iwas gud sa gulo. Kalain man pod abi pag mag-reklamo pako sa iyaha nga nabastosan ko kay basi malainan pod siya ba sa akua and maglala pa ang situation namo." My coping mechanisms include ignoring what the guy is saying to me and not minding his statement because maybe the problem will get worse and also to prevent chaos in this situation. It's awkward to say it properly to him that I felt disrespected by his action towards me because I think that he will get offended by my words and this situation will get worse. (Doja, W4, Q2)
"So akoang coping mechanism is di nalang ko mag istorya. So I supress what I think or what I need to say, di nalang ko mag speak out sa akong opinion kay di man gyapon ko mapaminawan." My coping mechanism is suppressing what I think and what I need to say, because I feel unheard. (Rihanna, W5, Q2).
"Siguro sa sunod or sa mga maka experience, dili lang gid magpadala ug dapat tungod ani nga situation. Unta dili ni maging rason na mag hinder sa ilang nga para maka seek pa ug mga ways or mag seek pa ug mga ku-an or mag go beyond pa dyud tah para makuha lang ilang gusto or ug gusto nila maging unsa sila in the future, mao lang." Maybe the next time, or those who have been there, don't put us in these circumstances. I sincerely hope that these are not the motivations behind people expressing their desires and that in the future, our desires will be greater than that. (Anne, W1, Q3)

Ignoring the comments from others will prevent any conflict or chaos to people but not unless they believe that it is constructive criticism which makes a person aware of the things they do. Deschene (2011), says that women should set boundaries against the negative comments of being a woman. It is important to reflect on all the comments from others because they don't know what the things you are capable of than them.

And also W1 said that:

"So after nako na ma experience, so syempre nasakitan ko pero mas gina-isip nako na, siguro kuan baba kaayo ang lantaw nila sa akoa pero sa tinuod mas daghan man kog mabuhat gud, basi tungod dyud na sa ilang expectation kay mahadlok gud sila nga malamangan gud ug murag mao na ilang pride nga pagkalalaki kay murag ku-an sila mas daghan sila ika provide nga were in fact nga masdaghan gid ang babae." And because of all I've gone through, I was upset by what they said, but now believe I that they just said it because I've done so much more work than they have. They were also afraid of being considered inferior to me because of their pride in being men. However, women actually have more to offer than men do. (Anne, W1, Q1.2)

For Cuncic (2022), she says that women should secure their abilities and not try to convince people to stop negative. It is important to ignore negative comments or maybe, reflect on them as it will help them to become constructive as they continue.

In a societal context, women have the right to speak up for themselves in the free world, and when they do not use it, they give up their power and freedom. Women also have a responsibility to speak up for equality and fairness in society. According to the Feminist Theory of Arinder (2020), the term feminism can be seen as a movement to put an end to sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression and to achieve full gender equality in law and practice. This theory falls under critical theory, which aims to undermine oppression and other systems that affect people in society.

Insights of Women into Overcoming the Challenges in Men-Dominated Societal Places

During the American Colonization by Cequina (2021), women obtained proper education and began to claim the rights they have been deprived of during the Spanish Colonization. However, today, as women continue to fight for their rights, their initial insights have been one of the greatest factors why this society continues to evolve and change. The emergent theme formulated out of this is (1) the Power To Have a Choice.

Table 3. *Insights of Women into Overcoming the Challenges in Men-Dominated Societal Places*

Insights of Women Into Overcoming the Challenges	*Brief Description Of Insights*
Power To Have a Choice	Women should have the power to make choices, whether about their decisions in life or their reproductive health.

Figure 3. .

Power to Have a Choice

The power to have a choice is one of the rights we should be claiming. This gives us the right to choose and do something that may have a positive outcome for someone. Having options on something might end up with the outcome positive or negative because it is our right to choose and pick. The Feminist Theory of Arinder (2020) focuses on the critical examination of oppressive systems and structures in society, to challenge and destroy these systems to promote equality and fairness. The power to have a choice aligns with this goal, as it highlights the need for individuals especially women to have the ability to make decisions for themselves without being controlled or dominated by others.

From the answer to W3, it says that:
"Show them that women can also do what men can do, women have the freedom and right to do what they want, being controlled by a man is not easy because sometimes lead to a psychological problem." Show them that women can also do what men can do. Women have the freedom and right to do what they want, being controlled by a man is not easy because sometimes it leads to psychological problems. (Camila, W3, Q3)
"My coping mechanism is first; lift yourself; have the courage to fight for your right as women; never stop learning; and last, speak up." My coping mechanisms are first, you have to lift yourself, dare to fight for your rights as women, never stop learning and last, speak up. (Camila, W3, Q2)

Women should have the right of choice from mental to physical. According to Philippine Commission on Women (2022), every woman has the right choice to talk about their mental and physical situation in male-dominated societal places, as well as if they are experiencing violence or discrimination. Similarly, the text "Power to Have a Choice" mentions the right of women to choose and the need to fight for their rights. It emphasizes the importance of self-empowerment and speaking up and highlights the role of mental and physical choice in women's rights. This aligns with feminist theory, which takes into account the lived experiences of individuals and groups and aims to challenge oppressive systems and structures that limit their freedom and choices. In conclusion, the Feminist Theory of Arinder (2020) and the concept of power to have a choice share a common focus on the importance of freedom, choice, and the right to make decisions for oneself. They both highlight the need to challenge oppressive systems and structures and promote equality and fairness in society.

Discussion

It can be concluded that the underlying existence of inequality and other forms of negative treatment against women in this 21st century was evident proof of power dominance and a lack of wider understanding of the rights and proper interaction of women by some men. The overall findings and results may lead to the proper dissemination of these deep-rooted issues yet unresolved until now to at least be given attention by some organizations focusing on women's rights and even educating properly the students about the integrated and explored challenges faced by women.

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