

# Lived Experiences of Female Victims of Online Sexual Abuse in Naga City, Camarines Sur

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## Abstract

This study focused on the factors and drivers of online child sexual exploitation and abuse among Filipino youth and adults, with emphasis on the support of the community & government. The study aims to also identify the coping mechanism of female victims regarding online sexual abuse and exploitation in association of their relationship to parents, health and risk behaviors and their environment. In the modern knowledge-information age, various information and communication technologies provide us with many benefits and at the same time bring various side effects. The number of digital sex crimes are recently increasing violently. This study is also devoted to studying the problem of cybercrime, reviewing and analyzing the literature on this topic, and giving recommendations for individuals who frequently use social media platforms. Data regarding the lived experiences of respondents were gathered to investigate the overall characteristics of cybercrime in Naga City, Camarines Sur. Typical types of sexual abuse and exploitation crimes are distribution of illegal contents and illegal filming wherein the perpetrators are unknown and digital sex activities were less recognized by victims themselves. The problem of cybercrime is one of the most acute yet no practical measures that will protect users from different cybercrime activities. The damage caused by the cybersex crime activities to female victims lead to serious repercussions on their physical and mental health. The obligation to fight against this social curse has imposed its analysis on several ways to generate the means of protection because it is the only way to preserve every family and children particularly from being a victim of sexual abuse and exploitation.

*Keywords: Cybercrime; Online Sexual Abuse; Sexual Violence; ICT*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Online sexual abuse is a serious issue that affects individuals of all ages and genders. It involves the use of technology, such as the internet and social media platforms, to coercively or non-consensually engage in sexual activities or distribute sexually explicit material. It can take many forms, including sharing explicit images or videos without consent, grooming, sextortion, and online harassment. Online sexual abuse can have severe and long-lasting impacts on the victims, often leading to emotional trauma, psychological distress, and even self-harm or suicide.

One of the most concerning aspects of online sexual abuse is the growing number of child victims. With the proliferation of technology and the widespread use of social media platforms, children are more vulnerable than ever to exploitation. Predators often create fake accounts, pretending to be someone the child knows or trusts, to manipulate and coerce them into engaging in sexual activities or sharing explicit material. The anonymity and ease of communication on the internet provide a fertile ground for these predators to operate, making it difficult for parents and authorities to identify and intervene.

In the Philippines, before the pandemic even begun, UNICEF labeled the Philippines the "global epicenter of live-stream sexual abuse trade," with many of the victims being minors.(Malig,2022). The Philippines has emerged as the world's hub for the creation of child sex abuse materials, with 80% of Filipino children susceptible to internet sexual abuse, some of which is supported by their own parents.(UNICEF,2016). A report from Servallas, (2021) where due to poverty a mother was forced to send a video of her daughter in exchange for money. According to the groundbreaking Disrupting Harm in the Philippines study(2022), 20% of internet-using minors aged 12-17 had suffered online sexual exploitation and abuse in the year 2021.

Thus, this study is believed to be beneficial to further strengthen preventive measures. Also it would aid the victims in a manner that they would be allowed to express themselves and their viewpoints towards their experiences. Also, to help the different sectors may it be private or government in addressing online sexual abuse.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aims to determine the perception of victims of online sexual abuse specifically at Naga, Camarines Sur. Specifically it seeks to answer the following question:

1. What are the lived experiences of children female victims on online sexual abuse?
2. What are the intervention programs attended by the victims?

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This study is anchored on the following theories:

**Transformative learning theory.** Transformative learning is a type of experience that causes a shift in an individual's perspective or attitude. It's based on a learning theory propounded by Mezirow (2000) and proposes that learning is "the process of making new interpretations based on the meaning derived out of experience." What this means is that, rather than focusing on surface experiences, transformative learning challenges the simplicity behind learning. This is done by acknowledging the process of deep,constructive, and meaningful learning. Transformative learning supports critical ways in which learners consciously make meaning of their lives, beyond just learning a concept and leaving it at that.

**Hirschi (1969)** however, adolescents and young people are relatively free from adult control. As a result, they experience less social control and those who exhibit an underlying tendency to pursue short term immediate pleasure often engage in cybercrimes.

**General strain theory** supports the assumption that negative experiences can lead to strain or stress. According to this theory, there are three kinds of strain, including failure to attain positively valued ambitions, eradication of positively esteemed stimuli, and the production of negatively treasured stimuli. GST primarily revolves around the notion that; strain comes from unconstructive relationships with other people. Victimization is considered a stressful experience, and according to this theory, experiences of stress or strain may cause a person to perform a positive or negative action to decrease the stress or strain.

#### **Applicable laws to Online sexual Abuse**

**Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009 or RA 9995.** This, if the perpetrators use intimate personal images and videos to blackmail, extort or harass the victims.

**Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act or RA 11930.** provide special protections to children from all forms of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation especially those committed with the use of information and communications technology (ICT), provide sanctions for their commission and carry out programs for the prevention, deterrence and intervention in all situations of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children in the digital and non-digital production, distribution or possession of child sexual abuse or exploitation material.

**The Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 or RA 9262.** The law defines violence against women and their children as any act or a series of acts that result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering, economic abuse, and threats

#### **Paradigm of the Study**

The model in table 1 illustrates the relationship between the three major parts of the research paradigm namely the input, process, and output. The input shows the data gathered that will be used to provide answers to specific objectives of the study. The input box contains the demographic profile of the respondents and the statement of the problem. The process involves the use of interview and thematic analysis to come up with the results.

INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lived experiences of children female victims on online sexual abuse</li> <li>- What are the intervention programs attended by the victims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data gathering through an informal interview to the investigator on case of the minor victim and one adult victim</li> <li>- interpretation of gathered data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- address the problems encountered by the victims regarding online sexual abuse</li> <li>- recommendations</li> <li>- strengthen the application of applicable laws</li> </ul>

Table 1. Paradigm of the Study

### Operational Definition of Terms

The following are terms operationally defined in the study:

**Sexual violence.** term we use to describe any kind of sexual activity or act that was unwanted or happened without consent

**Online Sexual Abuse.** It is the use of ICT as a means to abuse or exploit a person sexually which includes a person to be forced to make, view or share images or videos or take part in sexual activities on conversations online.

**ICT.** information and communications technology (or technologies), is the infrastructure and components that enable modern computing.

**Online.** available on or performed using the internet or other computer network.

### Review of Related Literature

This chapter includes the idea, finished thesis, generalization or conclusion, methodologies, and others. Those that were included in this chapter helps in familiarizing information that are relevant and similar to the present.

Child sexual abuse can be defined as, “forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening”. The impact of offline sexual abuse on a child or young person has been extensively studied and there are a range of potential consequences of child sexual abuse. Among others, these include

relationship difficulties, post-traumatic stress disorder, mood disorders and self-destructive-behavior. (Kloess, J. A., Beech, A. R., Harkins, L. (In Press)

Sexual violence is a widespread problem that requires the urgent attention of academics, administrators, and policymakers. (Perez-Trujillo et al. 2019) Likewise, sexual violence is notoriously difficult to measure, and there is no single source of data that provides a complete picture of the crime. (RAINN, 2023)

Understanding the concept of sexual abuse relies on the ability of an individual to define what is sexual abuse. Several studies have reported that victims of sexual abuse may not consider themselves as victims because they believe that sexual abuse must include sexual penetration. In other words, many people are unaware of the non-penetrative forms of sexual abuse such as exhibition and pornography. (Mathoma et al., 2006)

Many studies have reported that women are more likely to experience sexual abuse compared to men. The feminine appearance and small physical built of women make them more vulnerable. A woman's vulnerability is explained by the nature of the patriarchy tradition practiced in most societies. The gender distribution of sexual abuse in the context of gender-based violence where women and girls face a power imbalance in some societies. (Bower, 2014)

Even if most sexual contacts online are voluntary and do not involve anything that might be seen as sexual abuse, there is always a possibility that children can be sexually abused online. One well studied area involving possible sexual abuse concerns unwanted sexual approaches, especially those made by an adult who contacts children for sexual purposes. Sexual approaches were experienced more often by girls than boys and were also more common among older adolescents and those defining themselves as gay, bisexual or as being unsure about sexual orientation found that the group most vulnerable to sexual approaches and grooming tend to consist of high-risk youths with a prior history of sexual abuse. (Jonsson, L.S., Fredlund, C., Priebe, G. et al, 2019)

Individuals who use chat rooms, communicate with people they meet online, engage in sexual behavior online and who share personal information online also place themselves at risk were more likely to face negative consequences such as abusive situations than those who did not engage in risky online behavior. These adolescents were more likely to be sensation seekers who have a low level of satisfaction with their lives and/or who have family difficulties found that children victims of online sexual abuse, that the abuse involved control, permanence, black mail, re-victimization and self-blame. (Baumgartner et al, 2019)

Each survivor-victim reacts to sexual violence in their own unique way. Personal style, culture, and context of the survivor's life may affect these reactions. Some express their emotions while others prefer to

keep their feelings inside. Some may tell others right away what happened, others will wait weeks, months, or even years before discussing the assault, if they ever choose to do so. It is important to respect each person's choices and style of coping with this traumatic event. Whether an assault was completed or attempted, and regardless of whether it happened recently or many years ago, it may impact daily functioning. (Borja SE, Callahan JL, Long PJ., 2006)

More than 70% of sexually abused children are between 10 and 18 years old. Among those victims, 20% are under 6 years old. Cases of child sexual abuse are one of the most common issues that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has to handle after abandonment and neglect. 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: 33%. (CAMELEON Association protects children from sexual violence (cameleon-association.org)

Most children who are sexually exploited for commercial purposes are victims of prostitution or pornography. Even though the total number of child abuse cases handled by the DSWD decreased, the number of child prostitution cases slightly increased. Most of the time, it is very difficult to have a clear view of the situation and even harder to take action since the bars and the prostitution and sexual tourism networks are controlled by influent politicians or people (locals as well as foreigners) usually connected to other criminal networks (weapons, drugs.) Likewise, while the total amount of internet pornography may seem quite low, it could be a lot higher if the victims had pressed charges or asked for help from public services. The same goes for child prostitution, sexual abuse and incest cases. Internet prostitution is more and more common in the Philippines, whether it is in urban areas or in the countryside. (CAMELEON Association protects children from sexual violence (cameleon-association.org)

It is important to note, however, that the impact of abuse on each victim is unique and many victims demonstrate considerable resilience when dealing with the impact of sexual abuse. Whether a victim experiences a particular problem or not is a result of complex interactions between a number of factors; these include how the individual victim makes sense of the abuse, the nature of the abuse, and the reactions and support given to the victim following abuse and other life experiences. Behaviors and coping strategies are often functional at the time of the maltreatment and only become dysfunctional when the immediate threat is removed (e.g., avoidant coping). (Farmer, 2010)

In addition, many young people who have been abused experience multiple occurrences of victimization and these young people are considerably more likely to experience psychological distress and trauma following abuse, than those who have experienced a single incident of abuse or no abuse at all. (Farmer, 2010)

Sexual abuse which takes place online may include a child or young person being groomed and incited to engage in sexual activity; this can include sexual chat, generating sexual photos and/or generating sexual videos. They may also (but not necessarily) be encouraged to meet up offline. Victims of internet sexual abuse struggle with additional complexities (such as, having been in their own home, the possibility of the images being distributed online and the permanence of this) when dealing with the impact of abuse, and there is a need to challenge the presumption that victims of non-contact internet abuse suffer less harm than those who experience contact sexual abuse. This includes online solicitation, which may or may not result in contact abuse. (Hillberg,, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Dixon2011)

In the Philippines out of 2 in children 1 is a victim of violence on the internet (Saferkids, 2022). The Philippines is a global hotspot for OSAEC according to global law enforcement and research (ECPAT international, 2017 as cited in Roche,2023). While child protection measures and social services have grown, the prevalence and effects of OSEC in the Philippines are increasing, and there is still a struggle to meet the needs of survivors and their families. Currently, the primary interventions against OSEC include education and public awareness campaigns, as well as law enforcement measures, albeit the effectiveness of these treatments is unknown, and there is no rehabilitative help available. The lack of evidence-based programs in the Philippines was observed (Gill,2021).

Use of social networking sites (SNS) is prevalent among college students (Kennedy & Taylor, 2010). It was found that individuals reported being victimized while using online sites in two forms, sexual and nonsexual. One method is harassment, which can be accomplished by “posting defamatory or embarrassing personal information about others, impersonating others online, stalking people online, threatening violence, and physical and emotional abuse” (Mitchell, et al, 2005, as cited in Kennedy & Taylor, 2010). Additionally, the National Crime Prevention Council (2011) has provided the following list: sending threatening messages, spreading rumours, attacking someone verbally, intentionally excluding someone from the group, pretending to be someone else, and publicizing unflattering pictures of a person, circulating sexually suggestive pictures and sharing confidential information online.

During the lockdowns, many pedophiles were unable to travel to poor nations to sexually exploit the children but arranged to pay for child sex abuse shows over the internet and worse is that the parents are the main perpetrators.(UCANEWS, 2022).

According to a study by the Washington-based International Justice Mission (IJM), the children’s own mother or another female relative is often the trafficker in many cases in the Philippines. (Servallos, 2021). A study published by IJM in 2020 showed that 64% of OSEC cases filed in the Philippines from 2014 to 2017.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains the research design, data gathering procedures, sources of data and treatment of the data that the researchers used in conducting the study.

### Research Design

To unpack the experiences of victims of online sexual abuse, a qualitative research design was adopted as a useful approach specifically for its nature which is exploratory. These characteristics of experiences are difficult to quantify using numerical interpretation. Also Creswell, (2014) asserted that this design would enable researchers to have in-depth data about those who partake in the study about their perspectives and experiences regarding a matter. Specifically, Phenomenological research is utilized since it explores what people experience and focuses on their experience.

### Data sources

**Interview.** The type of interview conducted is semi-structured. A semi-structured interview includes the use of pre-determined questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer's perception of what seems appropriate. Question Wording can be changed, and explanations are given; inappropriate questions for a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones can be included (Teijlingen, 2014).

**Related literature.** Related research and studies may be used to corroborate the findings from the method utilized.

**Audio recording.** The researchers used a recorder prior to the consent of the participant in order for the researchers to transcribe the interview as well as review and re-play in order to verify the data gathered.

### Population and Locale of the Study

Convenience sampling was utilized due to the complexity of the study also because they are only the ones ready and available for the study (Creswell,2012). The subjects of this study were limited only to 3 victims from Naga, Camarines Sur which represent the population. The victims that were interviewed were a mixture of a minor and adult female. This allowed the researchers to gather data about their lived experiences on online sexual abuse in Naga. Naga is geographically located within Camarines Sur, this place was chosen as the study area considering the easy access of one of the researchers to the said area. The perception of the victims were gathered through open ended questionnaires and face to face interviews for the follow up questions.

### **Data Gathering Tool**

To gather the data, the researchers wrote an approval letter addressed to the dean of Criminal Justice Education to proceed with the study. After the approval of the dean, the researchers sent the approval letter requesting for an interview date and time for the said respondents. After receiving a response, the researchers proceed with the gathering of data itself. The researchers introduced themselves and informed the subject about the study and why the researchers are conducting it. The researchers also informed the subject about his or her rights as a respondent, and that all information that would be gathered will be kept confidential and for academic purposes only. Regardless, questions that are not clearly understood are translated depending on the preferred language of the participant. They will also ensure that there was neither a correct nor a wrong answer because answers were based on their opinion so that they would not limit the information they would be revealing. Any inquiries of the respondents were answered before the collection of data began. The researchers also asked permission to record the interview, and then begin the interview using a set of interview questions. In the end, the subject is thanked gratefully for participating in the research just after the interview was conducted. The researchers conducted the gathering procedure within August of 2023 and each interview lasted depending on the flow of the questioning and the availability of the respondents.

### **Ethical considerations**

With or without compensation, participants in this study were free to participate in the research project. For the sake of privacy, no information about the participants' backgrounds or profiles was shared, and all information about them was handled with great care. The consent of the participants was asked and was translated into a language they could understand, which served as proof that they had agreed to participate in the study and had been informed of its terms. Unfortunately, due to ethical considerations and concerns about protecting the children (and also being mindful of the child safeguarding framework adopted by this study's researchers), no interviews were conducted with children, and children's experiences were narrated mainly from the perspective of their case managers. As a result, the researcher is not obligated to force participants to withdraw from the study, as this is their right. Participants can also choose not to have their audio or video recordings made. To maintain the study's rigor and credibility, the researcher ignores his or her own feelings and opinions in favor of the findings.

### **Treatment of the Data**

The researchers analyzed the gathered data from the survey and presented a descriptive representation of the data. A technique called thematic analysis was employed in this study. It is a is a

method for analyzing qualitative data that involves reading through a set of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to find themes.(Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is an active process of reflexivity in which the researcher’s subjective experience is at the center of making sense of the data. First, the researchers carefully organized the downloaded transcript of all the responses of the participants. The analysis of the raw data provided the initial identification of the relevant codes. These relevant codes were then transferred in a separate file. The researchers continuously evaluated these codes, noting their similarities and differences to eventually group them. Based on the groups of similar codes, the categories were developed and structured to answer the central questions of this research

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

table 2. background information about the online sexual abuse

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Age at the time of abuse</b>	<b>Relationship to the perpetrator</b>	<b>Case status</b>
Respondent 1	14	friend in social media	on going
Respondent 2	14	friend in social media (facebook)	on going
Respondent 3	40	boyfriend	on going

Themes were identified from within each of the questions; thus, how we organized these themes will be categorized by each individual question. Before the interview the investigator and one of the adult female victims was asked to provide some information on what happened. Also they were asked about their coping mechanism and their lives after they report the incident which includes the emotional impact towards them where usually they answered that they experience anxiety and fear. Also both of the minors were abused through joining in social media while the other one was his boyfriend.

**TABLE 3. Mediums of online abuse**

<b>Respondent 1</b>	“ she was active way back then with facebook to the point that she easily trust my friends their not knowing that he already have bad intentions with her “	
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<b>Respondent 2</b>	“ that the suspect has extorting her and keeps on posting their videos in other group chats and from the Facebook page which she joined as a member”	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>
<b>Respondent 3</b>	“my scandalous video will be posted publicly online after our separation”	

**Social Media.** Nine percent increased in suspected child sexual abuse material from major social media sites and digital platforms were reported (Otis, 2023). All of the victims' scandalous videos were posted through social media platforms, specifically facebook. Moore and Quadara, (2013) asserted that the emergence of technologies increases the accessibility of potential victims where technologies are often used to record non-consensual sexual activity and are also used post-assault for contacting, threatening and abusing the victims. As Hirschi pointed out with the theory that adolescents and young people are relatively free from adult control. As a result, they experience less social control and those who exhibit an underlying tendency to pursue short term immediate pleasure often engage in cybercrimes thus, this evident with the minor victims since they admitted directly where one says “as curiosity drives them a lot of times, they tend to put themselves in danger”

**Table 4. Victim’s initial action**

<b>Respondent 1</b>	“she said that she was hesitant since she knew that if she would report it the views of people with her will be bad”  “The incident was initially discussed with her teacher. Together, they reported the incident at Regional Anti Cyber Crime Unit (RACU5), Naga City”	
<b>Respondent 2</b>	“ she opened the incident with one of her friend who	

	<p>incidentally knows someone from the PNP”</p> <p>“at first she shared that she is afraid since if it goes out she might get kick out from her school specially that she is from catholic school”</p>	<p><b>FEAR OF LOSING CONTROL OF THE SITUATION</b></p>
<p><b>Respondent 3</b></p>	<p>“I kept the issue within myself since I have work and I don’t want to wreck my image but then I realize that I should have the courage to face the situation.”</p>	

*Fear of losing control of the situation.* All of the respondents expressed their strong brief that if they told anyone; they would lose control of the situation. A study conducted by Caron and Mitchell, (2021) also concluded that victims being silent will have more control over their autonomy which encompasses the answers of the respondents where it turned out that they are afraid that their image will be ruined and that one might get kicked out.

**Table 5. Responses of Agencies**

<p><b>Respondent 1</b></p>	<p>“ The office upon report immediately conducted an entrapment operation on the perpetrator. The suspect has been arrested and imprisoned while trial is ongoing.”</p>	
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		<b>SWIFT ACTION</b>
<b>Respondent 2</b>	“They were referred to the Women and Child Protection Desk upon reporting the incident at Regional Anti Cyber Crime Unit (RACU5), Naga City. The investigator, as part of their investigation process, instructed her to continuously make a conversation with the suspect while they already wire tapped her device on our line.	
<b>Respondent 3</b>	“the office immediately conducted an investigation. They also gave me some instructions that would help them frame-up the suspect for entrapment operation and during those times, the cybercrime office guaranteed me the sense of security and protection until the perpetrator was arrested and imprisoned while trial is ongoing”	

*Swift Action.* In the Philippines, poverty has driven a surge in online sexual abuse against children. However, cybersecurity experts at the country’s largest telecommunications firm are working tirelessly to prevent access to exploitative images of children online(Ramos, 2023). With the help of the agency all of the respondent’s perpetrators were arrested through their efforts.

**Table 6. Coping Mechanism of victims**

<b>Respondent 1</b>	“As a member of Citizen Army Training (CAT) in our school, it developed her to have a solid strong personality both in emotional and psychological aspects”	
<b>Respondent 2</b>	“she underwent counseling which was	

	facilitated by her school (catholic school). The counseling even involves her classmates through the assistance of their teachers”	<b>SUBLIMATION</b>
<b>Respondent 3</b>	“The presence of my children helped me overcome this traumatic experience”	

**Sublimation.** As Freud suggested, sublimation is usually considered a healthy and mature way of dealing with urges that may be undesirable or unacceptable. Rather than act out in ways that could cause us or others harm, sublimation allows us to channel that energy into things that are beneficial. All of the respondents were able to redirect their frustrations into positive ones as they tried to join into groups and they focused on their families.

**Table 7 Government Intervention**

<b>Respondent 1</b>	none	<b>NO INTERVENTIONS</b>
<b>Respondent 2</b>	none	
<b>Respondent 3</b>	none	

**No Government Interventions.** Gatchalian (2023) said in his message that the DSWD which is one of the signatories IRR will be one to craft relevant plans, policies, and programs to address the evolving need for better protection, recovery, and reintegration of victim-survivors yet all of the survivors weren’t able to receive any interventions coming from the DSWD. DSWD mandate on child protection specifically Article 1, Section 2, provides that "it shall be the policy of the State to protect and rehabilitate children gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances which affect or will affect their survival and normal development over which they have no control." Yet the minor’s usual interventions come from the school.

**Table 8. effects with the victim**

<b>Respondent 1</b>	“With her experience, she learned to distance herself in using her social media account and rather give focus on her studies and CAT involvement is her own way of self-healing and recovery”	<b>REDUCE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA</b>
<b>Respondent 2</b>	“ she shared that her experiences allowed her to realize that being active and involved in any social media platforms is not beneficial especially to them, minors.”	
<b>Respondent 3</b>	“I also deactivated my Facebook account and loss self- confidence.”	

**Reduced use of social media.** Resilience theory argues that it’s not the nature of adversity that is most important, but how we deal with it. When we face adversity, misfortune, or frustration, resilience helps us bounce back. It helps us survive, recover, and even thrive in the face and wake of misfortune.(Moore, 2019). All of the respondents portrayed positivity where they learned from their experience where they were able now to feel at ease this debunks a study at the University of Pennsylvania (2023) found that high usage of Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram increases rather decreases feelings of loneliness. Conversely, the study found that reducing social media usage can actually make you feel less lonely and isolated and improve your overall wellbeing since in fact with the reduced use of social media they were able to socialize and join with groups.

Overall, the data suggests that online child sexual abuse and online child sexual exploitation involving the use of information and communication technology (ICT) towards sexually abuse and/or sexually exploit activities are not a matter being discussed to children. The lack of proper guidance and information that should address the curiosity of every child is an obligation for the government and the society to work on.

As defined, sexual abuse and exploitation is when the child is being used as an object for the older child’s or adult’s sexual needs and carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure or involves other sexualized acts that involves an exchange of some kind (e.g., affection, food, drugs, and shelter).

Convincingly, children are facing a lot of challenges and problems. The role of the parents to assist their children from the impact of its environment and socialization with others is important. Likewise, good education for children and parents to understand the danger of using social media platforms is necessary especially when nowadays, children spend most of their time using devices. The monitoring of the activities of the children at home or school is also significant to understand.

The government in coordination with the different sectors of the society should strengthen to equip child victims with different activities that would help them recover from their traumatic experiences such as counseling, rehabilitation, psycho social services or other support services that would serve as a coping mechanism of the child victim.

The community should also be informed that the production and sharing of online child sexual materials can be facilitated not even by foreigner offenders but also by Filipino themselves.

The significance of this study was to have a better understanding on how to prevent children from becoming a victim of online sexual abuse and exploitation. It is imperative that child sexual abuse and exploitation will be addressed to make a better place for the children in the coming years.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of this research titled “lived experiences of female victims in Naga, Camarines Sur”.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Below are the conclusions based on the findings of the study:

1. Sexual abuse are prevalent through the use of social media platforms. Despite the hesitations to report due to the fear of losing control of the situation they were able to do it. With the experience of the victims which caused them to change their perception in life in a manner where they were able to use sublimation as their defense mechanism and they took it as a lesson where they became vigilant and reduced the use of social media.
2. Even though there's noticeable swift action by the PNP to catch the perpetrators it cannot be denied that the victims haven't received any after care from the DSWD instead they receive it from the school and personal efforts for treatment.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below are the recommendations based on the findings of the study:

1. Provide rehabilitation/temporary shelter to child victim: Through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DWSD) as one of the main agency protecting the rights of Filipino children, should have a separate facility and psycho-social services for the recovery and healing of every child victim on online sexual abuse and exploitation.
2. Education and awareness: Raise awareness about online sexual abuse among children, teenagers, and adults. Schools should integrate digital literacy and internet safety programs into their curriculum to help students recognize the risks and consequences of online sexual abuse. Parents should be educated about potential dangers and ways to protect their children online.
3. Reporting mechanisms: Encourage and facilitate easy reporting of online sexual abuse incidents. Online platforms and social media networks should have clear and accessible reporting systems to quickly respond to abusive content and behavior.
4. Digital citizenship education: Promote responsible and ethical online behavior. Teach individuals about the importance of respecting others' privacy and consent when engaging in online activities also we can collaborate with technology companies where they will work closely with tech companies to develop and implement tools that would help in combatting online sexual abuse.

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