



AN ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC CRIMES IN DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES

Ivy Malibiraniⁱ,
Chervin Fernal,
Cassandra Nicole Gayutin,
Jophord Aclo

College of Criminal Justice Education,
University of Mindanao,
Davao City, Philippines

Abstract:

This study aims to assess the trend of domestic crimes reported in Davao City. The study followed the quantitative research method and utilized secondary domestic/criminal violence data collected by the Davao City Police Office (DCPO). Descriptive statistics, trend analysis, and percentage change were used to analyze the data gathered. Results revealed that theft attained the highest incidence among the domestic crime cases as reported in the Davao City Police Office in 2017, 2018, and 2019 but was dislodged by rape in 2020. Meanwhile, the number of crimes reported in Davao City has decreased over four years. Implications of the findings were discussed.

Keywords: criminology, domestic crimes, descriptive study, Davao City

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is defined as a traumatic experience that can lead to physical consequences, mental disorders and financial damage. The presence of domestic violence is prevalent not only in developed countries, but also in developing ones. In Brazil, for instance, Lopes Pereira and Gaspar (2021) reported that over 18 cases per 100,000 inhabitants were reported between 2013 and 2014. Such an alarming rate of domestic violence compelled its Ministry of Health to encourage the mandatory notification of possible domestic violence cases, as it is highly rooted to also socioeconomic inequalities such as hunger, sickness, and deprivation of access to necessities.

Meanwhile, in the United States, Kaplan (2020) reported that domestic violence such as homicides is on the rise in many cities noting that in at least two major counties, rates have doubled. Such an alarming rate was attributed to the social and economic pressures of the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, data on murders may not be released

ⁱ Correspondence email: malibiranivy@yahoo.com

to account deaths from the pandemic and from violent behaviors brought by the pandemic, but cities from Milwaukee to New York have already reported spikes in domestic violence homicides.

In Davao City, an earlier study by Tamayo, Bataga and Gerodias (2009) noted that among all domestic violence cases, sexual abuse was found to be the most common form of abuse while physical and psychological abuse was found to be in the context of parental discipline. More than a decade after, a published news article by Gumba (2020) on July 3 reported that as kinds of domestic violence that mostly proliferated during the pandemic, Sexual abuses among women and children were high in Davao City. This was seen from the data from the Davao City Police Office Women and Children Protection Desk (DCPO-WCPD) which revealed that sexual abuse cases, which include rape, from January 1 to June 30, 2020, alone is at 54, compared to 65 reported cases in the earlier year pre-pandemic period.

The existence of crimes is as old as the first human beings. Through countless centuries, different flourishing civilizations came up with crime reporting as a mechanism of peace, order, and justice. While the commission of crimes by citizens cannot be totally stopped, the ability of the justice system to document, solve, and address the causes of crimes and violent behavior proves how well a city or a municipality's governance is (Madanlo, Murcia & Tamayo, 2016; Talabong, 2018). With the abovementioned scenarios, it is worthy to give the available data on domestic violence in Davao City a closer look. The researchers are eager to know if, through time, there are changes in the composition of cases of domestic violence in Davao City and draw possible insights which can be used for decision-making of the Davao City Police Office. While there are data, no study has been produced yet that reported cases of domestic violence that included the year of the first outbreak of COVID-19. Thus, the study is hereby proposed to be conducted.

2. Literature Review

Domestic violence is a largely "hidden" epidemic. Although many uncertainties lie ahead, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will bear heavily on those navigating these unprecedented circumstances while being isolated. It is important to note that often the most dangerous and potentially lethal time for a victim or survivor of an abusive relationship is immediately after leaving the relationship (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007). During this time, they are at the highest risk for serious bodily harm, injury, and homicide (Shipway, 2004), adding an additional level of complexity to an already difficult decision to leave one's abuser.

In recent years several domestic violence-related statutes and reports have endorsed a definition of domestic violence that defines domestic violence as controlling and coercive behavior (Douglas, 2015). For one, Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2011) defines domestic violence as:

“acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship. While there is no single definition, the central element of domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening. In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and their children ... Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse.”

In addition, several studies in the past reported that more than one in three women and at least one in four men have been the victim of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner (Black et al., 2011). However, women are far more likely than men to experience severe sexual and physical violence from a partner or to be killed by one (Black et al., 2011; Caldwell, Swan & Woodbrown, 2012). In the United States, intimate partner homicides make up between 40% and 50% of all murders of women (Campbell et al., 2003). Domestic violence crosses geographic and socioeconomic stratification, although studies indicate that lower-income women in rural communities experience higher rates of violence and, specifically, sexual abuse. Victims suffer from dramatic rates of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder, as well as substance abuse and suicidality.

Given the significant harm associated with repeat domestic violence for victims and their families, preventing the recurrence of domestic violence is vitally important (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005). This requires identifying offenders who are more likely to re-offend, as well as victims who are at greater risk of being revictimized and targeting responses at these high-risk individuals and relationships.

There are different explanations, however, for why the risk of violence remains elevated following a domestic violence incident. It may reflect the frequent, repeated acts of violence perpetrated by a violent, controlling partner (Johnson, 2006). It might also be a consequence of the situational factors or stressful events experienced by an offender, victim or couple that were present during the initial act of violence — such as the excessive consumption of alcohol (Marcus & Braaf 2007), separation or infidelity (perceived or actual), the male partner losing his employment and the female partner obtaining employment (Krishnan et al., 2010; Riger & Staggs, 2004; Roberts et al., 2011), the death of a loved one (Roberts et al., 2011), pregnancy (Devries et al., 2010) or the birth of a child (Bowen et al., 2005). Reoffending may be driven by the offender’s desire to seek revenge on the victim, retaliating against the victim’s perceived transgression of contacting the police and getting them in trouble (Felson, Ackerman & Gallagher, 2005). Finally, it might be a function of the criminal justice response — specifically, repeat offences that relate to a breach of a protection order, which may or may not coincide with other offences.

Domestic violence (DV) usually occurs in a domestic space when one individual holds power over another. DV is a broad term and typically includes intimate partner violence (IPV) (e.g., usually occurs between current or former intimate partners and includes stalking, psychological, sexual, and physical violence) elder abuse (e.g., involves negligent or intentional acts which cause harm) and child abuse (e.g., includes neglect,

physical harm, sexual violence, and emotional harm) (Huecker & Smock, 2020). However, for the purpose of the report we will primarily refer to DV as it pertains to IPV. According to the CDC, approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men report experiencing some form of IPV each year (Smith et al., 2018).

Domestic or intimate partner violence is alarmingly prevalent, and, for victims, a major contributor to depression, anxiety, and other forms of mental illness. Psychological problems and psychiatric syndromes often are the antecedents of domestic violence for the perpetrator and can be risk factors for becoming a victim. Remarkably, the two dominant mental health fields, psychiatry, and clinical psychology — the ones charged with investigating and attending to the mind, brain, and behavior — are largely absent from domestic violence research and intervention (Chapman & Monk, 2015).

A typical occurrence of domestic violence involved the abuse of women. Violence against women is generally practiced in every society and recognized as a global concern as 10 out of 70 women are hit physically by their partners in their lives. In fact, they experience hostile behavior starting right from their childhood. They mostly face depression, and poor physical, psychological, and mental health. The consequences of all this have affected their lives and that of their children ultimately posing a great threat to the well-being of society (Lombard & Mcmillan, 2013). There are many reasons behind not registering the cases as most women keep in view the honor and fear of society, as well as the so-called reputation of their family. Generally, police and judges are also reluctant to register violation cases involving women and consider them as family matters or problems which can be solved at the family level (Ashraf, Abrar-ul-Haq & Ashraf, 2017).

Women are facing widespread violence around the world because of the considerations of their gender alone. Domestic violence can be explained as a pattern of behavior which is used by a person to control the other person through physical violence, threats, sexual, emotional, and economic abuses, isolation, and intimidation. Violence is a continuum ranging often escalating economic, sexual, emotional, and physical mostly occur and the husband is often the perpetrator (Bahl, 2007). Women mostly suffer due to the social-cultural and traditional norms, their subordinate social status, as well as misinterpretations of religious teaching and economic dependence. Unequal power distribution between men and women is accountable for the violence perpetrated against women. The cultural customs in society are the main obstacles in the way of women's socio-economic empowerment (Weiss, 1985).

The police have an important role to play in the prevention and de-escalation of domestic violence. Although the efficacy of specific police responses to domestic violence appears mixed, there is little doubt that police presence provides at least short-term protection to victims of domestic violence, particularly when the response involves the removal of the perpetrator (Felson, Ackerman & Gallagher, 2005; Dowling et al. 2018; Maxwell, Garner & Fagan, 2002). They may also have a role in preventing domestic violence in the longer term. In many jurisdictions, police have the power to implement emergency and interim protection orders and have a role in supporting victims' applications for protection orders through the court (e.g., through the provision of

statements). Police may also act as a gateway for victims to access other services that can provide them with longer-term support and access to resources to prevent future violence.

3. Material and Methods

This study used the descriptive research method as a design used to obtain information concerning the status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Punch, 2013). This method fits in this study because it seeks to assess the domestic and criminal violence in Davao City.

Secondary data was used in this study; hence, no survey involving the human population was involved. Secondary data used was approved for release and utilization by the Davao City Police Office (DCPO). Data of crime types covering CY 2017 to 2020 were used for further analysis. To obtain this, a letter of endorsement signed by the research adviser and the Dean of Criminal Justice Education was forwarded to the Davao City Police Office (DCPO).

Upon the approval of the DCPO Chief, the researchers obtained the data containing a summary of crime incidences in frequencies and sum. The researchers encoded the data in Microsoft Excel before submitting it to the data analyst for further statistical analysis. The researchers also generated a line graph. In the analysis of the data, the relative frequency was used to determine the profile of domestic and criminal violence in Davao City by determining the distribution of each type over the sum of crime incidences for that year; the mean was used to determine the average number of incidences per calendar year; percentage change was used to determine the rate of change of total crime incidence in the four calendar years, and line graph was used to visually present the rate of change of each domestic/criminal violence types.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the descriptive summary of the domestic violence or crimes in Davao City reported from the years 2017 to 2020. The presentation of the findings is based on the secondary data provided by the Davao City Police Office (DCPO). The table shows the yearly presentation of crime distributions with overall distribution and an average number of incidences of such crimes.

Results revealed that theft is the most frequent crime in 2017 (626 cases) representing 39.6% of all volume of cases. This was followed by physical injury (364 cases) representing 23.02% of the total crime volume, rape (220 cases) representing 13.92%, and robbery (200 cases) representing 12.65%. While the number of cases in 2018 and 2019 is lower, the distribution of cases remained consistent. Still topping the list is theft (33.95% in 2018, 35.38% in 2019), followed by physical injury (23.33% in 2018 and 24.36% in 2019), rape (17.72% in 2018 and 17.90% in 2019), and robbery (12.19% in 2018 and 9.85% in 2019). However, when the COVID-19 pandemic happened in 2020, theft now came second of all the number of documented cases (113 of 503 cases) representing

22.47%. A closer look of the numbers revealed that rape overtook theft as the most frequent crime in Davao City for the said year. The number of rape cases in 2020 accounted for 30.82% of all the cases. After theft (being the second) are physical injury (104 cases) accounting for 20.68% of the cases, and murder (62 cases) which is 12.33% of the cases lodged in DCPO.

Table 1: Distribution of domestic violence/crimes in Davao City (2017-2020)

Crime	2017		2018		2019		2020		Overall		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Average
Murder	130	8.22	94	8.25	70	7.42	62	12.33	356	8.54	89
Homicide	16	1.01	13	1.14	14	1.48	11	2.19	54	1.30	14
Physical Injury	364	23.02	266	23.33	230	24.36	104	20.68	964	23.13	241
Rape	220	13.92	202	17.72	169	17.90	155	30.82	746	17.90	187
Robbery	200	12.65	139	12.19	93	9.85	47	9.34	479	11.49	120
Theft	626	39.60	387	33.95	334	35.38	113	22.47	1460	35.03	365
Motornapping	18	1.14	33	2.89	30	3.18	10	1.99	91	2.18	23
Carnapping	7	0.44	6	0.53	4	0.42	1	0.20	18	0.43	5
Total	1581	100	1140	100	944	100	503	100	4168	100	

In summary, theft accounted for 35.0% of all domestic violence/crime incidence, with an average of 365 annual cases covering the four-year period, followed by physical injury (23.13%) with an average of 241 cases, and rape (17.9%) with an average of 187 cases. The least among the committed crimes is carnapping, averaging 5 cases only. In fact, Baculinao and Ceballos (2019) reported that Region XI, where Davao City belonged, is associated with theft using correspondence analysis. This means that the number of cases reported in Davao City comes as no surprise.

Figure 1 shows which domestic crimes in Davao City have increased or decreased over time. A line graph of the percentage of representation was plotted from the years 2017 to 2020. There are two crime types which increased based on the figure: rape and murder. Rape has grown from 17.9% of all crimes in 2019 alone to 30.82% in 2020, while murder also grew from 7.42% in 2019 to 12.33%. On the other hand, other crime types have decreasing trends.

Table 2 shows the rate of change in domestic violence or crimes in Davao City reported from the years 2017 to 2020. The rate of change documents the change in crime volume, whether the total crimes documented by DCPO increased or decreased over time. Based on the analysis, there was a 27.89% reduction in crime volume in 2018 compared with 2017, a 17.19% reduction in crimes in 2019 compared with 2018, and almost half (46.72%) reduction of crimes in 2020 (COVID-19 pandemic year). Such a finding is consistent with the report of Gumba (2020), quoting the statement of DCPO-WCPD Desk Officer P/Maj. Elisa Ramirez reported that the majority of the rape cases in 2020 happened inside the victims' homes and are committed by either family members or relatives. Ramirez also pointed out that restricted movement during community quarantines is a major factor in the commission of this domestic crime.

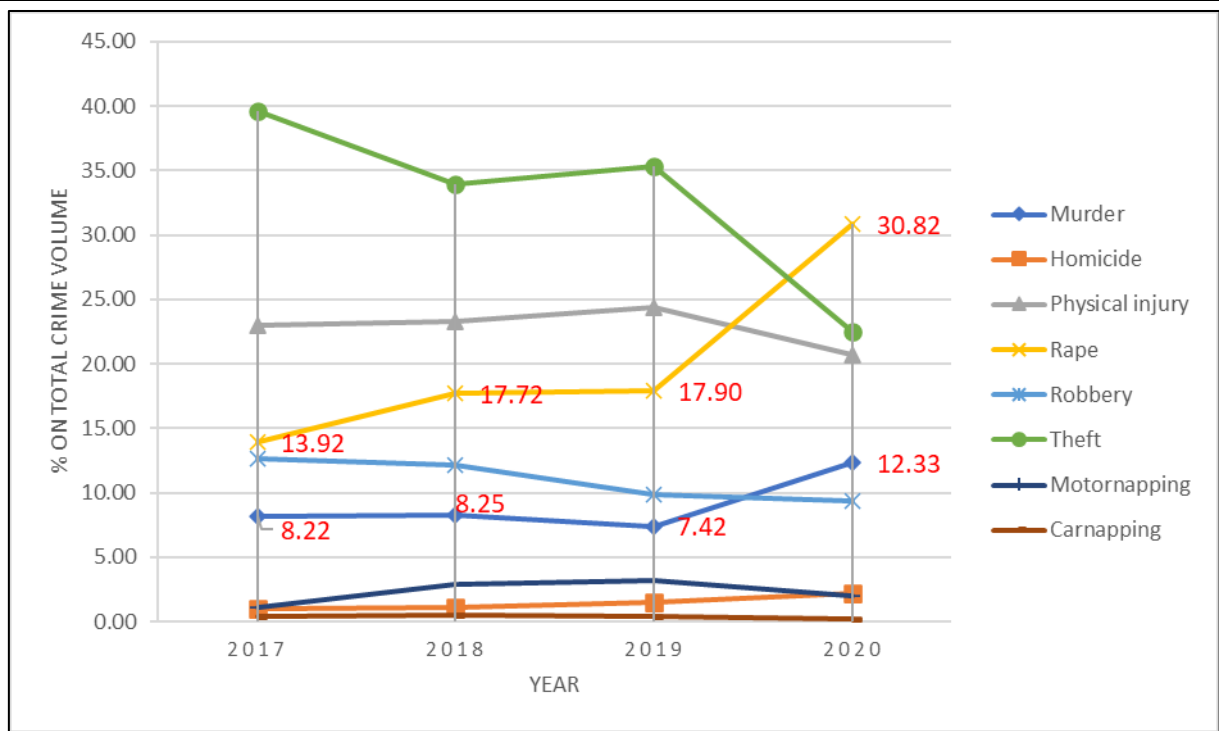


Figure 1: Line graph showing the trend of domestic crimes in Davao City

Table 2: Rate of Change of Domestic Violence/Crime in Davao City from 2017 to 2020

Statistic	2017	2018	2019	2020
Crime Volume	1581.00	1140.00	944.00	503.00
%Δ Crime Rate	-	-27.89	-17.19	-46.72

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that officials of the City Government of Davao City would look into the findings of the study as a basis for decision-making with regard to how to combat crime incidences in the city. The City Government is encouraged to intensify police presence and barangay monitoring. Moreover, the Davao City Police Office (DCPO) shall conduct orientations and programs which will benefit the public so that the latter would be informed of the importance of reducing and preventing crime.

Further studies are also encouraged to know the geographic distribution of all crimes in Davao City, know the profile of each case lodged, and create a system that records and reports crime incidence using a specific system. These studies can base the findings of this study as input for future research.

6. Conclusion

Theft attained the highest incidence among the domestic and criminal violence cases as reported in the Davao City Police Office. While it topped in 2017, 2018 and 2018, it was dislodged by rape in 2020. Also, the number of crimes reported in Davao City has a decreasing trend over the course of four years.

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About the Author(s)

Ivy Malibiran is a faculty member of the College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE) of the University of Mindanao, Philippines. She holds a bachelor's degree in Criminology from University of the Visayas and a master's degree in Criminology major in Law Enforcement Administration.

Chervin Ferenal is a graduating Bachelor of Science in Criminology students at the University of Mindanao, Philippines.

Cassandra Nicole Gayutin is a graduating Bachelor of Science in Criminology students at the University of Mindanao, Philippines.

Jophord Aclo is a graduating Bachelor of Science in Criminology students at the University of Mindanao, Philippines.

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