

# Words That Hurt: A Qualitative Study of Parental Verbal Abuse in the Philippines

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## Abstract

This article investigated opinions on what constitute parental abuse with interviews of 30 high school students, 30 parents, and 28 counselors. Despite increased reported cases of emotional abuses and child maltreatments in the Philippines, few empirical studies have explored the exact nature of parental verbal abuses in this country. This study is designed to address this gap in the literature. The results revealed nine categories of parental verbal abuses namely: (a) Put downs and shaming, (b) Rejection, (c) Blaming, (d) Fault Exaggerating, (e) Threat, (f) Invoking harm, (g) Regrets, (h) Unfair comparison, and (i) Negative prediction. Implications for research and practice were discussed.

## Keywords

verbal abuse, parents, adolescent, Philippines

A Chinese saying goes, “The tongue is like a sharp knife. It kills without drawing blood.” Verbal abuse leaves no visible scars, but the emotional damage to the inner core of the victim’s self can be devastating (Campbell, 1989; Teicher, Samson, Polcari, & McGreenery, 2006). A growing body of research

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has shown that verbal abuse poses a significant threat to victims' emotional health (Brassard & Donovan, 2006; Hart, Binggeli, & Brassard, 1998; Kaplan, Pelcovitz, & Labruna, 1999; McCloskey, Figueredo, & Koss, 2008; Moore & Pepler, 2006). Children who were verbally abused by their parents were found to be more physically aggressive, more antisocial and suffered more interpersonal problems than those who were not verbally assaulted (Vissing, Straus, Gelles, & Harrop, 1991). Other studies have demonstrated that children who received frequent verbal abuse suffered serious emotional and behavioral problems including aggression, anxiety, depression, lack of emotional attachment and self-confidence, low cognitive abilities, and social skills (Dube, Anda, Felitti, Edwards, & Croft, 2002; Kjelsberg & Dahl, 1999; Linaman, 1997; Rekart, Mineka, Zinbarg, & Griffith, 2007; Spillane-Grieco, 2000; Treichel et al., 2006). Thus, the effects and consequences of verbal abuse can have a detrimental and long-lasting impact on the victims' psychological well-being (Wright, Crawford, & Del Castillo, 2009).

Although studies on parental abuse toward adolescents are scarce, researchers have argued that adolescents are also at high risk for abuse (Johnson et al., 2001; Olsen & Holmes, 1986; Williamson, Borduin, & Howe, 1991). For example, studies have found that incidents of parental verbal abuse toward adolescents were just as prevalent as that of younger children (Fisher & Berdie, 1978; Schaefer, 1997; Solomon & Serres, 1999; Vissing et al., 1991). A U.S. nationwide survey conducted by the American Sociological Association (2000) found that while verbal abuse happened in homes with children of all ages and the most severe verbal abuse occurred to adolescents who lived at home. In adolescence, verbal abuse is related to outcomes such as anxiety, withdrawal, low self-esteem, aggression, and poor school grades (Ferguson, 2009; Rich, Gidycz, Warkentin, Loh, & Weiland, 2005; Solomon & Serres, 1999; Vissing et al., 1991). Recent empirical studies have shown that childhood emotional/verbal abuse is positively related to adolescent and adult psychopathology (McCloskey et al., 2008; McKinnon, 2008; Simeon, Guralnik, Schmeidler, Sirof, & Knutelska, 2001; Spillane-Grieco, 2000).

The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC, 1995) provides widely recognized guidelines on what constitute child maltreatment or abuse. These guidelines include the following conceptual statements and psychological maltreatment categories:

- Psychological maltreatment refers to a repeated pattern of caregiver behaviors or extreme incident(s) that convey the message to the child that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, endangered, or only of value in meeting someone else's needs (p. 2).

- Psychological maltreatment includes: (a) Spurning (i.e., hostile rejecting/degrading) verbal and nonverbal acts that reject and degrade a child; (b) terrorizing (i.e., caregiver behavior that threatens or is likely to physically hurt, kill, abandon, or place the child or child's loved ones/objects in recognizably dangerous situations); (c) isolating (i.e., caregiver acts that consistently deny the child opportunities to meet needs for interacting/communicating with peers or adults inside or outside the home); (d) exploiting/corrupting (i.e., caregiver acts which model, permit or encourage antisocial behaviors); (e) denying emotional responsiveness (i.e., caregiver acts that ignore the child's attempt and needs to interact and show no emotion in interactions with the child); and (f) mental health, medical, and educational neglect (i.e., caregiver acts that ignore, refuse to allow, or fail to provide the necessary treatment for the mental health, medical, and educational problems or needs of the child).

Although some researchers considered each type of maltreatment to be independent (Kinard, 2001; Lau et al., 2005), others found some maltreatment types to co-occur with other types (Binggeli, Hart, & Brassard, 2001; Brassard, Hart, & Hardy, 2000). For example, rejection does not have a category and is embedded in all forms of psychological maltreatment (Binggeli et al., 2001; Brassard et al., 2000). Rejection embodies two distinct caregiver behaviors (Rohner & Rohner, 1980). In the first form, spurning, the caregiver reject the child through aggressive or hostile verbal and nonverbal acts. The second form, denying emotional responsiveness, the caregiver ignores or neglects the child's attempt to acquire emotional needs. Both forms produce negative effects in children from all cultures (Rohner & Rohner, 1980). The fact that rejection is embedded within all other maltreatment types implies that children who have experienced rejection may also experienced other forms of maltreatment such as spurning and/or having their emotional needs being denied (i.e., denying emotional responsiveness). Therefore, due care should be given when interpreting the findings concerning rejection, as the antecedents and consequences of rejection may be difficult to separate from the antecedents and consequences of spurning and of denying emotional responsiveness.

Different researchers have defined verbal abuse differently. Some of these are, "negative statements by significant others" (Campbell, 1989), "a verbal act that has the intent or perceived intent to symbolically hurt or threaten to hurt another" (Hyden, 1995), and "constant name-calling, harsh threats, and sarcastic comments that continually "beat down" the child's esteem with humiliation"

(Pearl, 1994, as cited in Hamarman & Bernet, 2000). Verbal abuse has also been used inter interchangeably or as a “proxy” for emotional abuse (Hart, Germain, & Brassard, 1987). These inconsistent definitions make the task of detecting, accessing, and validating verbal abuse extremely difficult.

In an effort to provide some clarity on the above issue, a number of researchers have attempted to develop a typology of verbal abuse. For instance, Shaffer (1997) asked 151 mental health professionals to complete a questionnaire describing 18 categories of parental verbalizations (based on literature) that have been associated with psychological maltreatment. Analysis indicated that 80% of the participants rated 10 of the 18 categories to be *never acceptable* parenting practices, such as: (a) rejection or withdrawal of love; (b) verbal put-downs; (c) perfectionism; (d) negative prediction; (e) negative comparison; (f) scape-goating; (g) shaming; (h) invoking harm; (i) threats; and (j) guilt trip. In another study, Hemenway, Solnick, and Carter (1994) conducted a telephone survey of 801 parents and found that a majority of the parents had used yelling either alone or in conjunction with hitting as a means to control their children. In an ex post facto review of interviews conducted with 3,346 parents, Vissing and his colleagues found that 63% of the participants reported one or more instances of verbal abuse, such as swearing and insulting the child (Vissing et al., 1991). These studies highlighted that parental verbal abuse is not only commonly practiced but that it may take different forms. Despite these studies, verbal abuse is difficult to research because there is no widely accepted definition for it presently being dependably applied.

Although substantial research has been directed toward how the definition of child maltreatment may vary across the population and professional groups (Cicchetti & Manly, 2001; Korbin, 1991; Maitra, 1996; Rose & Meezan, 1996; Shor, 1999), there is no agreement as to whether certain minority cultures hold harsher child rearing practices than others (Dubowitz, Klockner, Starr, & Black, 1998; Maiter, Alaggia, & Trocmé, 2004) or what constitutes parental verbal abuse in non-Western cultures. This is important when you consider that the Filipino culture differs considerably to that of Western cultures. More importantly, typologies of parental verbal abuses experienced by adolescents in the Philippines may be substantially different to that of adolescents in Western societies. For example, a study in the Philippines on college students’ conceptualization about parental abuse revealed some categories that are not found in the Western literature (Esteban, 2002). For example, negating one’s right to life and bossing were categories not found commonly in the Western literature (Esteban, 2002). In addition, the Philippines differs significantly from western societies on many contextual variables such as cultural values and social relationships (Hofstede, 1997; Matsumoto,

1996). Traditional child-rearing practices in the Philippines have dictated that parents encourage children to be dependent, respectful, and submissive. Social values such as being respectful and obedient to the elderly are openly taught as well as expected in very young children. Words of deference and nonverbal behaviors such as kissing the hand (bowing slightly to be touched on the forehead by an elder's hand) are commonly practiced by Filipino children which suggests a deferential manner in conversing and dealing with the elders (Church, 1987). These nonconfrontational behaviors and parental expectations may result in Filipino children having lower self-esteem, more shame and guilt than children in the West. However, we have no way of knowing whether this assumption is true because there is no common definition of verbal abuse across cultures or even within a culture (Portwood, 1999). What constitutes verbal abuse may be very different in the Philippines than in the United States or other western cultures. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to provide an exploratory investigation on the existence of different typologies of verbal abuse in the Philippines.

To help guide us in this, the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PAR Theory, Rohner & Rohner, 1980) is employed as a useful theoretical perspective to help us conceptually understand verbal abuse. PAR Theory is an evidence-based theory of socialization and life span development that tries to predict and explain major causes, consequences, and other correlates of interpersonal—especially parental—acceptance and rejection (Rohner, 1986, 2004; Rohner & Rohner, 1980). This theory of socialization reflects a continuum ranging from parental warmth to parental rejection. Parental warmth is demonstrated through positive physical and verbal behaviors such as kissing, hugging, praising, and complimenting. In contrast, parental rejection is manifested in the form of hostility and aggression on the one hand, and parental indifference and negligence on the other. Parental aggression involves an intention to hurt either physically or verbally (e.g., sarcastic remarks, cursing, shouting, humiliating, or saying disparaging things to or about the child or youth) whereas parental indifference and neglect is demonstrated through physical and psychological unavailability of the parents. Parental acceptance-rejection theory predicts that perceived parental rejection typically has devastating consequences for the psychological development functioning of children. Children who are rejected by their parents tend to be hostile, aggressive, defensively independent, and have an impaired sense of self-esteem and self-adequacy. These victims also tend to be emotionally unstable and have a negative worldview.

More comprehensively, the PAR theory has to be considered within a basic human needs orientation model (Binggeli, Hart, & Brassard, 2001; Hart,

Binggeli, & Brassard, 1998; Hart, Brassard, & Karlson, 1996). Within this model, psychological maltreatment (e.g., verbal abuse) is postulated to hinder the fulfillment of basic human physical (e.g., food, shelter), emotional (e.g., love and esteem) and social needs (e.g., belonging). The forms of verbal abuse considered in this study are attacks on the child's esteem, love, belonging, and safety. They potentially have the power to create retardation or distortions in the development and behaviors of its victims (Binggeli et al., 2001). A number of past studies have found that children who received frequent verbal abuse suffered great emotional and behavioral problems such as aggression, anxiety, depression, lack of emotional attachment and self-confidence, low cognitive abilities, and social skills (Dube et al., 2002; Kjelsberg & Dahl, 1999; Linaman, 1997; Rekart et al., 2007; Spillane-Grieco, 2000; Treichel, 2006)

Therefore, while there has been substantial focus on verbal abuse in western societies (Kaplan et al., 1999; Shaffer, 1997; Vissing et al., 1991), there is less research which looks at this issue in Eastern societies. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this limitation by exploring the nature of verbal abuse in the Philippines. This study is guided by the following research question:

*Research question:* What are the types/categories of parental verbal abuse in the Philippine setting?

## Method

### *Participants*

We diversified our sample by recruiting research participants from different groups using via snowball sampling. Specifically, the researchers elicited friends and acquaintances to be involved. These friends and acquaintances then in turn asked their friends or acquaintances if they would be willing to participate in the study. These groups consist of high school students, parents, and school counselors. All the students came from families of middle and higher income levels and attended private high schools. Eighteen were male and 12 were female. Their mean age was 16.11 years old. The 30 parents consisted of professionals working in schools, banks, and multinational companies in the telecommunicating and consulting areas. There were 11 fathers and 19 mothers. The average age of the parents was 41.09 years old. In the counselor group, three counselors were employed in primary schools, 10 in high schools, and 15 in tertiary institutions. There were 10 male and 18 female counselors. The average age of the counselors was 34.2 years old.

## *Procedure and Qualitative Measure*

Participants were recruited through personal contacts and chain-referral sampling. A brief background of the study and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was given to all participants. The retrieval rate was 100% from the parents and students and 93% from the counselors. All participants were instructed to complete an open-ended questionnaire to determine what they considered constitutes parental verbal abuse. The open-ended survey was prepared in English because this language is spoken by a majority of the Filipino population and is predominantly used in organizational and educational contexts (Bernardo, 2004). We asked the participants to list down words or phrases uttered by parents that inflicted emotional pain or distress on adolescents. No time limit was given so as to allow deep reflection and recall of past events. Completed open-ended surveys were posted back to the research team.

## *Data Analytic Strategies*

We used content analysis to analyze the interview data (Neuendorf, 2002). Content analysis is an analysis technique where written texts are broken down into meaningful units using carefully design rules. Three experts with a masters' degree in counseling were invited to content analyze the qualitative responses. Specifically, two criteria were used to facilitate this process. First, level of analysis was based on a word or phrase that might inflict emotional pain or distress to victims. It should also reflect a complete thought process. For example, "I will starve you to death." Second, we counted the number of times a word or phrase was mentioned in the interviews by students, parents, and school counselors.

The data was then analyzed using a multistep procedure which involved an inductive process of developing and refining the content categories. The first stage of analysis involved a comprehensive review of all qualitative responses and a manual method of sorting portions of the data. Responses which recurred with regularity were noted. The second stage involved the three experts with master's degrees in Guidance and Counseling being recruited to help content validate the categories. A third stage of analysis was conducted to narrow down the categories to a more manageable number by combining or clustering categories with similar underlying themes or ideas. After several iterations, nine core categories were formulated that most accurately captured the responses given by the three participant groups. Each category was defined and an illustrative example was provided. There was a 100% agreement in the categories formulated by the experts.

## Results

The categories, definitions, subcategories, and the illustrative examples representing each category are listed in Table 1. Out of the remaining 412 responses elicited from the respondents, 99 responses were provided by more than one participant. Table 2 shows the 10 most common parental verbal abuses perceived by participants to be problematic.

### *Put Downs and Shaming*

Put downs and shaming was perceived by students, parents and counselors to be the most problematic and the most common. “Put downs and shaming” refers to words/phrases that devalue the self-worth of the child and included the subcategories, “name calling,” “foul language,” “sarcastic remarks,” and “derogatory remarks.” A total of 236 responses about being put down and shaming were found. Examples include, being called “dummy,” “fool,” “rascal,” and “You are a good for nothing child.”

### *Rejection*

The next most common parental verbal abuse perceived to be problematic was rejection ( $N = 59$ ). *Rejection* refers to words of phrases that express withdrawal of affection and attention.

Examples include: “I don’t love you,” “You can’t count on me,” “Go away!”

### *Blaming*

*Blaming* reflects words or phrases that accuse the child of being at fault or of making the child feels guilty for problems beyond his or her control. Example responses include: “You are the cause of our misfortune” or “I am like this because of you.”

### *Fault Exaggerating*

Fault exaggerating reflects responses that unfairly magnify the faults or weaknesses of the child. There were a total of 17 comments such as, “You are always a loser!” or “You will never accomplish anything.”



**Table 1.** Categories, Definitions, Subcategories, and Examples of Parental Verbal Abuse

Categories	Definitions	Subcategories	Examples
1. Put downs and shaming	Words/phrases that devalue the self-worth of the child	Name calling Foul language	"Dummy!" "Fool!" "Rascal!" "Son of a whore!" "Evil!" "You won't run out of men/women!" "So, you came home!" "You are only my child!" "You are a good for nothing child!"
2. Rejection	Words/phrases that express withdrawal of affection and attention	Derogatory remarks	"I don't love you!" "You can't count on me!" "Leave!" or "Go!"
3. Blaming	Words/phrases that accuse the child of being at fault or making the child feel guilty for problems beyond his/her control		"You cause our misfortune!" "I am like this because of you!"
4. Fault exaggeration	Words/phrases like "you always", "you never", that unfairly magnify the fault or weakness of the child		"You are such a loser!" "You never accomplish anything!"
5. Threat	Words/phrases that suggest physical harm or withholding material support		"I'll hit you!" "I will starve you!"

*(continued)*

**Table 1. (continued)**

Categories	Definitions	Subcategories	Examples
6. Invoking harm	Words/phrases that intend to invoke evil, harm, or misfortune to befall on the child		"I wish the lightning would strike you!" "I wish you will be dead!"
7. Regret	Words/phrases that express disappointment that something bad should have happened to the child but did not		"I should not have let you live!" "I wish I aborted you!"
8. Unfair comparison	Words/phrases that unfairly compare the child to self, siblings, or others		"Why don't you be like your sister/brother?" "Your classmate is bet-ter than you!"
9. Negative prediction	Words/phrases that forecast a negative outcome for the child		"You won't go far!" "You will go to hell!"

**Table 2.** Categories of the 10 Most Common Perceived Parental Verbal Abuses

All respondents	Students	Parents	Counselors
1. "Stupid!"	1. "Stupid!"	1. "Stupid!"	1. "Dummy!"
2. "Dummy!"	2. "Lazy!"	2. "Dummy!"	2. "Stupid!"
3. "Fool!"	3. "Leave!" or "Go!"	3. "Fool!"	3. "Stupid!"
4. "Lazy!"; "Son of a whore!"	4. "Animal!"	4. "Ugly!"	4. "You're a good-for- nothing child!"
5. "Stupid!"	5. "Dummy!"	5. "Stupid!"	5. "Useless!"
6. "Animal!"; "Leave!" or "Go!"	6. "Son of a whore!"	6. "Lazy!"	6. "Fool!"
7. "Shameless!"	7. "You're a good- for-nothing child!"	7. "I hate you!"	7. "Son of a whore!"
8. "Ugly!"; "You're a good-for-nothing child!"	8. "Rascal!"	8. "Evil!"	8. "Ugly!"
9. "Rascal!"	9. "Fool!"	9. "Son of a whore!"	9. "Shameless!"
10. "Useless!"	10. "Cad!"	10. "Shameless!"	10. "Shut up!"

### *Threat*

Words in this category suggest an intention to physically harm, intimidate, and withhold material support. Examples include: "I will hit you," "I will starve you to death," or "I will not send you to school anymore."

### *Invoking Harm*

Invoking harm reflects words or phrases which intend to invoke evil, harm, and misfortune to befall on someone. Examples include: "I wish the lightning would strike you," "I wish you will be dead," or "I wish you burn in hell."

### *Regret*

This category refers to an expression of disappointment that something bad should have happened to the child. Examples include: "I wish I had aborted you," "I should not have let you live," or "I should have killed you when you were a baby."

### *Unfair Comparison*

Unfair comparisons refer to responses which unreasonably compare the child to themselves, siblings, or others. This causes the child to feel inadequate about his or her capabilities or potentials. Examples include: “When I was your age, I did much better than you,” “Why can’t you be like your sister?” “Your classmate is better than you,” or “Our neighbor’s child behaves better than you.”

### *Negative Prediction*

This final category reflects words or phrases that forecast an unfavorable outcome for the child. Examples include: “You won’t go far,” “You will not amount to anything,” or “You will go to hell.”

## **Discussion**

In this study, interviews were conducted with 30 high school students, 30 parents, and 28 counselors to learn about what constitute parental verbal abuse in the Philippines. Our exploratory results indicated that many of the categories in the present study duplicated Schaefer’s (1997) classification of parental verbal abuse. In addition, all the forms of parental verbal abuse found in this study also agreed with the widely recognized APSAC guideline categories of spurning or a combination of spurning and terrorizing (APSAC, 1995). This implies that parental verbal abuse, in both Western cultures and in the Philippines, may have relatively similar meanings and implications. However, caution should still be taken in light of the different cultural values regarding parent–child relations and child-rearing practices.

Our results showed that put down and shaming was perceived by participants to be the most common type of parental verbal abuse in the Philippines. In fact, put down and shaming a child represents well over half of all the combined verbal abuse categories found in this study. Church (1987) noted that shaming and teasing in the Philippines are methods of social control to discourage independence and induce anxieties should members deviate from the group norm. In such a culture, a person is more likely to be under the influence of group defined norms and roles than in an individualistic culture. Therefore, shaming may be used by some Filipino parents to elicit dependency and conformity from their children (Medina, 1991). Considering that well over half of the participants in this study perceived put down and shaming to be a form of verbal abuse, future research should investigate why Filipino

parents chose this form to discipline their children. In other words, what is the motivation behind this type of verbal abuse in the Philippines?

Regret, a peculiar type of parental verbal abuse found in the local setting could stem from some unmet expectations of parents. Bulatao's survey (cited in Medina, 1991) revealed that Filipino parents looked to their children to provide companionship, love and happiness, play, fun and distraction from their worries. Since a child's parents, particularly the mother, brought the child into the world, the child owes them a debt of gratitude and submission (Guthrie & Jacobs, 1966). Filial piety or respect for elders and reciprocity (*utang loob*—i.e., giving back what one has received) is not only expected of younger family members but is an integral part of Filipino family life (Andres & Ilada-Andres, 1987). Thus, children may be seen as some kind of investment for social mobility and one prominent value of children as perceived by Filipino parents is the help they provide (Medina, 1991). When the opposite happens or when the child does not live up to his or her parents' expectations, it is likely that the parents get frustrated and may utter words that express regret over the investment they have made on the child and wish that something bad should have happened to the child.

Disciplining children comes in many forms. In the Philippines where a strong sense of family solidarity exists (Church, 1987), individuals are embedded within their wider kinship group. As a result, the way Filipino parents discipline their children may reflect this. Guthrie and Jacobs (1966) described the Filipino child as an extension of his or her parents. Children serve as a mirror image of their parents. For instance, the more well behaved the children, the better the reputation of the parents in their social standing. This is likely to pressure the parents to raise children according to the standards of their societies. Medina (1991) explained that "parents are dedicated to child-rearing not only because of genuine love and concern for the child's welfare but also because of community expectation and legal prescription" (p. 196). Parents consider the institution of discipline and good manners as one of their primary responsibilities.

Yelling and silence were mentioned in some Western literature as types of verbal abuse. However, these did not appear in our analysis because the researchers asked for specific words or phrases that were considered abusive. Yelling is a manner of expressing verbally whereas silence is withholding expression. Both are regarded as behaviors so it is not expected that they would be mentioned by the respondents.

To conclude, what constitutes parental verbal abuse in the Philippines is analogous to that in Western countries. The categorizations may vary but the content themes are similar. Drawing from the study results, parental abuse in

the Philippines may be defined as utterance by a parent that devalues the child's self-worth, undermines the child's capabilities, threatens the child with harm, withholds or withdraws attention, love, and support or make the child feel unnecessarily guilty and not worthy of living.

### *Limitations*

As in all studies, a number of limitations exist in the present study. First, the findings of the present study were based on self-report and there is no way to validate if any of the negative verbal expressions were indeed verbal abuses. However, it was also felt that self-report is the best means of eliciting answers to sensitive questions and in enabling the development of a general understanding of the issues (Bachiochi & Weiner, 2002). Second, our sample of students studied in private schools and they as well as their parents may on average have a higher social economical status (SES) than the general Philippines populations. Thus, this could have affected how their perception of what constitutes verbal abuse and how they dealt with it. Future research may do well to ask participants from different SES for participation. Third, while the use of snowball sampling is beneficial in quickly locating people who are experts in their fields (e.g., counselors, parents), it is unclear as to whether the sample is an accurate representation of the greater population. Fourth, future researchers interested in replicating our study may consider including a second set of experts and possibly lay persons to sort the response items and ensuring increased face validity as well as reliability of the categories. Fifth, future research should conduct larger-scale study to further validate the different categories of parental verbal abuse. Finally, there is a lack of significant study on parental verbal abuse in any socioeconomic income level in the Philippines. Researchers interested in this topic should consider conducting research with adolescents from different socioeconomic income levels because what constitute parental verbal abuse may be different for adolescents living in different socioeconomic income levels.

### *Implications*

Literature on abuse indicates that many victims and perpetrators do not recognize the abusive circumstances they are in or what constitutes verbal abuse. By providing a classification of what verbal abuse entails, victims and perpetrators can be made more aware of this problem and seek appropriate help as required. Future research should consider conducting studies to investigate what motivates parents to verbally abuse their children? Different

motivations point to the need for different interventions. In the Filipino context, put down and shaming seems to constitute a popular form of discipline. It may be important then that training programs in the Philippines be geared toward identifying the motives behind this. Why and what would make Filipino parents want to put down and shame their children? Furthermore, information on the prevalence and negative effects of parental verbal abuse can be dissemination in schools, churches, and other community settings as a preventive measure to increase public awareness.

Parents who lack effective parenting skills may be taught how to discipline their children with more appropriate techniques such as providing more positive parent-child interaction, emotional communication skills, proper use of time-out, and consistency in parenting (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008). Obviously, these skills should be adapted appropriately to the age of the child. In contrast, if parents are verbally abusing their children out of anger or simply to shame their children into behaving, then the intervention might be aimed at helping parents manage their anger, developed a more authoritative as opposed to more authoritarian and improve their interpersonal skills (Webster-Stratton, 2000). Counselors could facilitate these skills through group discussion, videotaped vignettes for modeling, role-play, and rehearsal intervention techniques (Webster-Stratton, 2000). Behavioral and nonbehavioral techniques should be taught together in the program to promote positive child rearing practices and authoritative parenting beliefs and attitudes respectively.

In China, there is a Chinese idiom which states that hitting is affection, scolding is love. In the west, many parents may be motivated or believed that to spare the rod is to spoil the kid. Therefore, it is important to educate parents on the detrimental impact verbal abuse can have on their child's mental and physical development. Research has found that verbally abused or rejected children who experienced emotional rejection from their parents through hurtful words that belittled them suffered serious emotional and behavioral problems such as low self-esteem and poor academic results (Rekart et al., 2007; Treichel et al., 2006); and that these effects continue on later in life (Simeon et al., 2001; Wright et al., 2009). Schools shall consider developing intervention programs for verbally abused children to boost their self-esteem, enhance their relationships with peers, and improve their academic performance. For instance, the counselor can enhance the adolescents' self-esteem by providing alternative sources of affirmation and approval, helping them set achievable goals, encouraging and guiding them to participate in activities wherein they will experience success. The counselor can coach the adolescents on social skills required to sustain close relationships. To provide hands

on experiences in relating with peers, the counselor could encourage the verbally abused adolescents to join groups or organizations that promote camaraderie and collaboration. In doing so, abused adolescents will develop skills on how to relate to others. Finally, in coordination with the subject teachers, the counselor should monitor the adolescents' class attendance and class performance closely. They may recommend peer tutoring to help adolescents who may not be performing well in school.

The findings from this study are consistent with the conceptual framework of the PAR theory (Rohner & Rohner, 1980) and a basic human needs orientation model (Binggeli et al., 2001; Hart, Binggeli, & Brassard, 1997; Hart, Brassard, & Karlson, 1996). The assumptions here are that people tend to view themselves as they imagine "significant others" view them, and if their parents as the most significant of "others" rejected them as children, they are likely to define themselves as unworthy and inadequate human beings. This may bring along all kinds of negative emotions and psychological thoughts which can cause abused adolescents to feel bad about themselves. If these negative thoughts and emotions are not handled properly, vulnerable adolescents may run the risk of developing longer term psychological or physical problems. From a practical point of view, the results suggest that parents have to be aware of the deleterious impact of parental verbal abuse on their children. In raising our concerns and providing a list of verbal abuse to parents, parents-to-be, and counselors, we hope to better guide and teach parents how they can discipline their children without resorting to abuse. In so doing, we hope that parents in the Philippines and around the world can provide appropriate discipline which does not harm the child's self-esteem and self-efficacy.

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