

Literacy of Women's Rights as Human Rights and Violence against Women among Social Work Students

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Abstract

This study investigates social work students' views on the forms and causes of domestic violence and suggestions for intervention for survivors in Malaysia. To provide quality data, recruitment of final year undergraduate students from a public university, UNIMAS, was performed. All registered students of the final semester were eligible to take part in the study. They were identified and invited as respondents to offer their views. A qualitative online interview protocol was sent to 76 students; the responses of 20 female students were deemed eligible for this research. Students were made to understand that participation was voluntary and anonymous, as the researcher was blinded as to which students completed the protocol. Focus Group Discussion FGD of selected students was conducted to augment the information gathered through the interview protocol with students. The study revealed that UNIMAS students seem to have fair knowledge about domestic violence, even though the university does not offer courses on family violence or domestic violence. The result showed that the students have a strong awareness of different types of domestic violence. Besides, the majority of respondents believed that violence against women is common in their respective communities but not reported. While most respondents recommended general counselling, some considered specific counselling, such as marital or family counselling. The study also found that the majority of the respondents encouraged strengthening of the laws and legislation on violence against women as a potential solution. This is an indication that UNIMAS students are generally law-abiding, with the mindset that law can overcome violence against women. The students suggested the need to improve the awareness of the negative repercussions of domestic violence against women on national development.

Keywords: literacy, domestic, private issue, physical violence, mental abuse, trauma

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1. introduction

The assumption that the well-being and health of a person can be affected by domestic violence makes it a serious problem attracting wider attention. Violence against women is not a respecter of gender, place, ethnicity, age, culture, economic or social status, which makes it a universal phenomenon. By this, any member of society can be a victim or perpetrator, as men are also potential victims of domestic violence. An increasing number of cases of domestic violence against women between 2014 and 2019 was alarming, as reported by the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) (Ayob, Rauf, & Chik, 2021). Most religious, community, or employment positions are held by men in mainstream society, where men are considered more powerful than women, and as an acceptable norm in some jurisdictions. It is revealed that one in three women reported experiencing a kind of abuse, such as physical and or sexual, in their lifetime. The kind of abuse in society is either a threat or violence involving sexual, psychological, economic, physical, or emotional damage to either cause harm or maintain power and control over the victim (Sharma & Borah, 2020). The Domestic Violence Act 1994 in Malaysia considers actions like intentionally placing or attempting to place the victim in fear and physical harm as a criminal act. Others that are considered under this Act include claiming the victim by force or threat to engage in any conduct or act, sexual or otherwise, confining or detaining the victim, and committing treason or damage of property intended to make the victim sad or angry (Ayob et al., 2021). Persons in close relationships with the victim, such as a husband, family member, wife, ex-spouse, friend, or acquaintances, turn out to be the perpetrators of any form of abuse or violence.

Globally, the World Health Organisation WHO (2021) revealed that about 27% of ever-married women between the reproductive ages of 15 and 49 years have experienced violence at least once in their lifetime. The current empirical evidence from 112 countries by the WHO that about 13% of women who have ever married, aged between 15 and 49 years, have experienced violence against them over the last year (WHO, 2021). On the

contrary, the UN SDG database revealed a higher percentage (nearly 18%) of abuse among women aged 15 – 49 years who experienced domestic violence over the past 12 months globally (Radzia et al., 2023; WHO, 2021). It is observed that developing and low-income countries report a higher rate of violence against women compared with high-income countries. For instance, cases of violence against women ever married reported the greatest number (30.0% to 32.2%) in regions like the WHO Africa, Eastern Mediterranean, and South-East Asia countries. On the other hand, high-income regions like Europe and the Western Pacific reported lower cases between 23 and 25% (Kadir Shahar, Jafri, Mohd Zulkefli, & Ahmad, 2020). Studies have shown rampant violence against women globally due to unemployment, especially when companies laid off workers to cut costs to deal with the pandemic (Piquero et al., 2021; Berniella & Facchini 2021). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), under Goal 5.2: Gender Equality, “Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation,” have been the target of the United Nations (UN) (Baqtutayan et al., 2021).

The survey conducted demonstrated the prevalence of domestic violence among ever-married women in Malaysia. The most recent evidence of violence against women in Malaysia, conducted by Shuib et al. (2013) among ever-married women, revealed 8% prevalence rate. The issue of domestic violence is sensitive; as such, under-reporting could be possible, or the results could have been underestimated. Domestic violence against women recorded by the Royal Malaysian Police Force constituted over 50% of all cases of violence against women in the country. Other violence recorded includes rape, incest, and abuse of domestic workers. To demonstrate the rapid increase of domestic violence, Kadir Shahar et al. (2020) found an escalating trend in the number of violence cases from 3648 in the year 2000 to 5513 in seven years interval (Kadir Shahar et al., 2020). Ghani (2014) claimed the existence of several areas in research on violence against girls and women that are underexplored in Malaysia, which include university students’ knowledge of domestic violence. There appeared to be a lack of adequate and equivalent evidence in terms of national data on domestic violence. There seems absence of data on the nature, prevalence, causes, and effects of domestic violence on women and girls (Shuib et al., 2013). The findings of this study may serve as empirical evidence that may be critical in initiating possible interventions and solutions to this issue. The Women’s Aid Organisation WAO conducted a nationwide research on domestic violence against women and girls between 1990 and 1992, in which it was discovered that Malaysian women aged 15 and above had experienced violence of any form. According to Dandavati (2017), violence against women and girls is still an issue that is largely unreported in the country.

2 Literature Review

This section presents relevant information in line with the objectives of the paper.

2.1 Domestic Violence

The phrase "domestic violence" is frequently used to characterize situations of intimate or familial abuse. The phrase is preferable because it encompasses all household interactions. Based on the unique characteristics of domestic violence at the family level, less significant abuses could also be classified as violent acts. These behaviours include physical harm that is not severe enough to qualify as serious bodily harm, coercion, denied liberty, as well as verbal and emotional abuse (Mohammed, Uddin, & Saidi, 2021). Nations across the globe, including Malaysia, view the prevalence of domestic violence as a serious problem. Violence against women is the biggest issue in this time of urbanization and modernization to handle or overcome. The media, including radio, newspapers, and television, reports several incidents of domestic abuse annually. The Malaysian Domestic Violence Act (DVA) defines domestic violence (DV) as any act committed against a spouse, ex-partner, child, incapacitated adult, or any other person with a family link (Mohammed, Uddin, & Saidi, 2020). It involves forcing the victim to engage in certain behaviour or act, confining them against their will, or purposefully causing mischief or damaging of property to upset or annoy women. Violence at the domestic level affects one in every three women, which makes it a serious violation of human rights and a public health concern. The vulnerability of women to abuse and threats of violence disregards their age, skin colour, religion, social or economic standing, and can occur everywhere, even on the streets (Guillaume et al., 2025). Additionally, it is a severe form of abuse that can emerge as physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, which triggers gender inequality that targets women and girls due to their social status. It can also have detrimental effects on women's reproductive and sexual health (Guillaume et al., 2025; Zain, 2012).

2.2 Violence Against Women

Violence against women refers to any threats, such as coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, either in public or private life. Thus, the act of gender-based violence causes or may cause physical, sexual, or psychological damage or harm to women (Kurniawan et al., 2025; Zain, 2012). Violence against women may be explained in a broader sense to include, but not be limited to, physical, sexual, or psychological molestation taking place in the

family, including beating, dowry-related abuse, exploitation, female circumcision, defilement, and marital rape, among others (Kurniawan et al., 2025; Rajaratnam & Azman, 2024). There are other forms of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse, such as sexual harassment at work, sexual violence, or forced prostitution, happening at the general community level. Most of the time, people in positions of authority, intimacy, and trust are the ones who perpetrate these abuses, where victims can be any age, gender, place of residence, or even socioeconomic status. Nonetheless, women are the ones that frequently victims than men (Awang & Hariharan, 2011). According to earlier studies, children who witness domestic abuse may have detrimental consequences on their behaviour, emotions, and cognitive abilities, which may have an impact on their future academic success (Tambawal, 2012; Awang & Hariharan, 2011).

Violence against women has gained international recognition as a major concern that affects women and their pursuit of equality, development, and peace in recent times. The issue of equality, development, and peace gained prominence during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–1985) for women's rights advocates in the region, making it a topic of feminist philosophy (Gimenez et al., 2018). This explains why governments across the globe have started to focus on the issue in recent years and also acknowledge that domestic violence has not been adequately dealt with by the instruments in place, considering the lack of a clear definition of this crime. The group believed that the lack of a precise definition made it more difficult to implement international human rights laws intended to address this issue.

3. Methodology

The study employed the qualitative method because it is useful when examining various social settings and their inhabitants. Creswell (2013) indicates that a qualitative research approach is to answer the questions of how and what happens, exploration, and research topics that require answers in detail. Qualitative inquiry is often used to explore issues about which little is known. This study is intended to explore human behaviour affected by the meanings people construct through personal experiences. The explanatory case study was considered because it is useful when examining issues that involve in-depth data collection. A case study provides explanations for why domestic violence occurs and helps social work students to open the way for discoveries.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population is the first consideration before searching for the sampling frame. All registered final year social work students of the final semester were eligible to take part in the study. The sample comprised of twenty informants who met the research selection criteria. A qualitative interview protocol was sent to 76 students; 20 female students were deemed eligible for this research. They were identified and invited as respondents to offer their views. They were interviewed at different confidential locations.

3.2 Unit of Analysis

The study focused on final year social work students of UNIMAS, Malaysia, thus girls who speak fluent English. The respondents were above 18 years, able to articulate their thoughts on domestic violence.

3.3 Procedure and Instruments

The interview protocols were used by the researcher to collect notes during the interview. The protocol is a predetermined sheet on which one logs information learned during the observation or interview.

3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed for data obtained from the field. The researcher ensured that the interviews were transcribed verbatim for the analysis of the data. The method of qualitative thematic analysis across the cases, called a cross-case analysis, was used.

4 Results

4.1 Forms of Domestic Violence:

Knowledge of the various forms of violence makes students understand their susceptibility to being victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. They had ideas about violence against women through their demonstration of knowledge about the forms of violence, as presented below.

4.1.1 Psychological Violence

There are several forms of violence against women, as shared by the informants. The respondents expressed their knowledge of domestic violence by enumerating the forms of abuse they witnessed and read about. The majority of them mentioned abuses like verbal, sexual, psychological, and financial (economic) as witnessed by women in

their communities. As most of them noted sexual abuse to be the rarest violence, some think that the commonest violence is economic abuse against women in the area. Degrading and humiliating the wife in public, ignoring the wife's needs, intentionally bringing other women to their matrimonial home are some of the forms of psychological violence against women as reported by the informants.

I often see pictures and read about the issue of violence against these women displayed in the mass media, such as women being scolded in public, beaten, kicked in a humiliating manner, and some belittling attitude.

The informants describe husbands who abuse women as irresponsible and weak for taking advantage of women's vulnerability. A responsible person will not use or take women as their victims of abuse because they think that women are physically weak but still abuse them. It is irresponsible to hurt women by physical attack since that leads to the women feeling insecure staying together in the same house with the perpetrator.

The respondents describe mental violence as someone being angry with their partner or wife without reason, and trying to coerce the woman to engage in behaviour or activities she does not want to do. Women who depend on their spouses for everything are unable to avoid abuse and are highly prone to violence. According to respondents, women who are stable in their jobs, have money or resources, may be able to live even without the husband's support, which may be a source of abuse. As part of students' literacy of domestic violence, they stated that psychological abuse has actually been recently reported in newspapers, which they described as a new generation abuse. On the contrary, an informant shared that:

The respondents were also quick to mention that this kind of abuse is common and can be perpetrated against men or women as the victim. Even though there are more reports on women, especially between married couples.

It was revealed that women need to be multitasking; if not, they cannot achieve happiness, because society, and for that matter, women consider the family (husband and children) as the only thing they have after marriage to avoid abuse.

However, men can still have their friends to hang out with at all times without any restrictions.

4.1.2 Physical Violence

The respondents expressed knowledge of violence against women. The informants expressed knowledge of domestic violence against women by first indicating the types or forms of abuse against women at home. The forms of abuse identified include physical abuse, which they said may lead to the women being hospitalized or death if severe. Others are indicating they have never witnessed a woman being beaten, even though they witness violence between other members rather than between women. For instance, one respondent indicated that:

I once saw my neighbor being beaten by his son using a broom. My neighbor was also locked up and not allowed out of the house. So far, I have not seen or witnessed any domestic violence that involves women or happens near me. But it is yes when I saw some of the news regarding the domestic violence women face.

In sharing with the researcher, knowledge on the forms of physical violence was mentioned to include physical attack on the woman's body that can cause physical harm, such as bruising or bleeding. Physically abusing women by beating them until the woman gets injured. Some men will physically attack their spouse by hitting for no reason, turning the woman into a punching bag in the name of being upset or angry over the woman's actions and inactions.

The types of violence that I know are physical, sexual, emotional, and economic. Usually, we will know about the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The common one or form of violence I know was where a man hit a woman. I see women with black eyes or with bruises.

Besides that, the husband might also abuse the wife until the victim is too weak to fight, and at such time, they beat or physically abuse the victim. Some of the informants also expressed limited knowledge about domestic violence, as they talked about abuse to mean only physical, sexual, and emotional.

Based on my understanding, violence against women consists of three types: physical, sexual, and emotional. We usually hear about many cases that involve women, especially domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and emotional violence.

4.1.3 Economic Violence

They indicated that women without a stable or regular income may face problems in providing their own needs and will have to rely on their husbands. Husband capitalized on this vulnerability and abused women, knowing well that they had nowhere to run to or seek financial support for their needs. A respondent shared that:

This kind of violence happens when a wife does not have any money because of a lack of job or not working or working as a housewife because of a money problem, or the husband does not give any allowance or pocket money to the wife to spend on leisure.

Women, particularly, have always been blamed for being the cause of the predicament she passes through, as women are the ones who annoy the husband to trigger such abuse. This actually affects the women's health as they engage in overthinking, stress, or bad feelings. The women from a poor family are often not well educated and might not get a well-paying job, which in turn leads to poor income. The woman with a meagre income might depend on the husband for all the basic needs. If such demand comes as extra stress apart from those from the workplace and other relatives are unbearable, making the wife a victim of circumstance.

If family background is not family is not good, I'm not sure, but I think maybe the individual cannot think rationally, so they act out of bounds and vent their anger on the woman. I think it is all about money.

4.1.4 Sexual Violence:

Women faced a lot of sexual harassment both at home and at the workplace, and this is always a top issue all over the world and in the country. Information gathered from the field revealed forms of violence against women in the community, including physical, sexual, and emotional. The most violent perpetrated against women is sexual violence, with which they end up being physically or emotionally abused. It was revealed that most of the information about abuse were those reported on social media, even though respondents also expressed knowledge of women being abused as eyewitnesses to certain violence against women in their communities. For instance, this respondent shared knowledge acquired through the media:

I always read it through different social media platforms. There was one time I read about a married couple who had been married for five years with two children. But when the husband was transferred to a new company, he recently got hooked up with a new woman, who was his own colleague, and ended up wanting her. When his desire had not been fulfilled, he beat up the one who was close to him, which was obviously his wife, to work out his anger.

The respondents expressed knowledge of various forms of abuse. The forms of violence mentioned by respondents include mental, physical, emotional, and sexual violence. Sexual abuse was described as a situation where the woman does not usually show any consent in engaging in any sexual activities and ends up being abused.

The few instances of violence against women that I know include one of them sex violence at the workplace, marital abuse, emotional abuse, and physical abuse.

Sexual violence, like incest or rape, or sleeping with women without consent, is also reported in the community, and sometimes no action is taken against the perpetrator, especially when it is a relative or parent. The reports revealed that some of the men are compelled to engage in such violence against women. An instance like when the spouse already declares she is not in the mood for a sexual affair or conditioned to any conjugal affairs as part of her duty as a wife, may force the man to resort to other possible ways of getting satisfaction. One informant shared.

From what I know, the forms of domestic violence are sexual, physical and mental violence. I think one of the forms of violence against women, which always happens in our world right now, is rape. Some of the guys who do not have any responsibility in their lives rape women just for their self-satisfaction without thinking about what happens to the victim.

All these types of violence against women occur when someone uses a part of their body or sells or lends the woman to other people without consent. For this respondent, sexual violence against women is so common in their community, and they explained further that violence against women, especially regarding sexual issues or being forced by someone who attacks women, is just for sexual gratification.

4.2 Causes of Violence Against Women

It is critical to examine students' literacy on the causes of violence against women in Malaysia. Radzia et al. (2023) found inadequate national data on domestic violence against women and girls, considering the lack of information on the prevalence, nature, causes, and effects of violence. The current data on students' literacy of violence against women bridge the gap to some extent.

4.2.1 Inadequate Punitive Measures

The respondents talked of a lack of adequate punishments for offenders that make them repeat the abuse. Men

use violence because of the belief that women are weak and cannot defend themselves. An informant shared that:
power that occurs among a few men think that women are weak person tend people to abuse women, and less knowledge about the effects of violence against women, and punishments are not deterrent enough for offender that make them kept repeating

The majority of the respondents identified a lack of enforcement of laws that address the abuse of women, abuser drug use and mental disorders, and harmful gender norms that limit the autonomy and privileges women enjoy as some of the causes of violence against women. Besides that, violence against women happens because of gender discrimination in institutions and a high level of unemployment among women. The respondent thinks that:

I think that society assumes that to be a good wife, you must do this and that, or your husband will go to other women. Plus, women are not condemning their spouses' wrongdoing even if it costs them their lives. Keeping to yourself can cause mental illness and will lead to suicide or killing their children.

The causes of violence against women will be the same as the reasons for violence against young girls because cause and reason are synonymous with one another. As indicated by the informants, it may be because of stress factors which lead to unstable emotions of the male partner for which violence may occur, or maybe because their relationship is bedevilled with problems or experiences.

4.2.2 Lack of Effective Communication:

Lack of communication between couples and more so the people around them, such couples thought violence may be the solution for their issues. Such thoughts cause domestic violence, which demonstrates a hot-tempered attitude among perpetrators. This act of physical aggression tends to be more severe and more likely to lead to serious harm when the perpetrator is drunk. The respondents also identified miscommunication on the part of the couples and the channel of communication through which women get information, biological factors, which are the root of family violence, are part of this. Besides, they are sometimes influenced by social media, as they turn to individuals' ways of life that are not compatible with local norms and values. Even if they are good values but not well communicated, they might not yield good results, as the husband tends to resort to a local interpretation of such foreign behaviour. Miscommunication or ineffective communication can lead to issues of anger, money, jealousy, and obsession that can lead to violence against women.

4.2.3 Differing Family Background

The difference in the family background of the couples is another issue that results in violence, particularly against women. As indicated, if the woman is from a well-to-do family and wants to show off without being submissive to the husband, the man will not tolerate any arrogant attitude from the woman and may bring about violence. So, differences in family background, financial issues, and lack of understanding between partners on how to handle issues of attitude result in abuse.

Some of the causes of violence against women could be due to a lack of understanding between partners, different family backgrounds, unemployment that causes financial problems, frustration, stress, mental problems, sexual dissatisfaction, jealousy, and other factors, depending on each individual.

The informants also attributed domestic violence to poverty, thus the inability of the husband to meet the daily needs of the family. This leads to abuse if the woman is unreasonably on her demands, which puts much stress on the man for his inability to provide. They said it leads to violence against women as their partners feel depressed and stressed with their demands, coupled with pressure from the workplace. The situation of this nature leads to misunderstanding between them and their partner. One respondent shared that:

As I mentioned before, most domestic violence always relates to poverty. When a husband fails to bring adequate living to his family and become stress because of it, they need to release the stress and anger, so the women always become victims. leak of power status within society or a family hierarchy.

Second, childhood experience of violence involving parents could be an abusive factor during adulthood. Informants attest to the fact that the violent behaviour of some husbands could be because they have been exposed to parental violence while growing up.

5. Discussion

This study was conducted on university students in Sarawak, Malaysia, to explore their literacy of violence against women. Domestic violence, as a term favoured by policymakers, is the most commonly employed in describing intimate violence, and so did this study too. Domestic violence against women is not new in Malaysia, as reports and issues of abuse on social and other media are increasing. Most of the respondents in this study acknowledged the source of information about domestic violence from the media, particularly social media. A recent report by KPWK (2020) revealed a total of 2,287 cases recorded in 2020, especially after the advent of the pandemic. Several factors could be the reason for the prevalence of domestic violence in the country,

including gender-based issues and culture. For instance, the Women's Centre for Change WCC) attributed the rise in abuse to social, psychological, and economic pressure experienced by the people as a result of COVID-19 layoffs (Baqtayan, Hassan, Hashim, Zaini, & Salleh, 2021). The nature of violence against women in the home may include verbal and emotional aggression, deprivation of liberty, coercion, and infliction of physical injuries not serious enough to cause severe bodily damage. The students suggested the need for effective legal provisions in addition to the existing ones to grant women legal capacity in order to uphold their rights.

Violence against women emerging from gender inequality is a common social phenomenon that cuts across boundaries of both developed and developing countries; Malaysia is no exception. Studies have shown that domestic violence can happen to anyone irrespective of social, economic, cultural, racial status, or class distinction, or either male or female of all races, religions, incomes, and ages (Turhan, 2020; Reif et al., 2020; Radzia et al., 2023). The abuse of power is often engaged by men to control their spouses, which may be considered a solution to the formation of attitudes of the victim. However, Asian traditions abhor acts of violence and describe it as a misconduct act, even though the stigma glorifying men and the fear of divorce prevented women from finding a solution and therefore chose to stay in the abusive relationship (Dolunay-Cug et al., 2017). Studies have shown variation in domestic violence prevalence in Southeast Asian countries. The prevalence estimates include 13.7% in Cambodia, 14.8% in the Philippines, and as high as 34.3% in Timor Leste. In Malaysia, the prevalence of domestic violence ranges from 8% as per the national household survey to 87% in women's shelter reports (Hanafi, Ismail, Ghazali, Sulaiman & Daud, 2022). Domestic violence can be attributed to patriarchal norms that create power dynamics and eventual instability in relationships, which is worsened by monetary pressure and future uncertainties.

Despite the laws designed by the authorities to protect the people, including women and girls, violence against women is still viewed as a private issue and therefore a taboo for public discussion in the Malaysian community due to their culture. For example, a recent report of increasing numbers of domestic violence by (KPWKM, 2020) stands at a total case of 2,287 as reported in 2020 (Baqtayan et al., 2021). The respondents in this study expressed knowledge of domestic violence and the support system available in the country, even though with expressed reservations about whether the measures are effective enough to curb violence against women. Attalla, and Bt Rome (2020) found that a lot of cases of violence against women have been reported in the mass media, such as news on television, social media, newspapers, and radios. So, it is not out of place when the number of violence cases reported in the mass media leads students to know about the predicament of women and girls in the domestic sphere.

The women also experience mental abuse when there is no understanding in situations where the women need to do all the work, taking care of their children, doing the house chores like cleaning, cooking, bathing, among others. According to Kadir Shahar et al. (2020), women are expected to have primary responsibility towards the family in supporting the husband or nurturing the children, as well as maintaining femininity and being subservient to the husband. There are at times when the women work too, so the question the students ask is who has more work here. The husband still expects the woman to fulfil her conjugal obligation, without which results in violence. In some situations of resistance, the husband finds other women for his pleasure when the wife chooses to stay away from him. Need to understand that marriage would never survive without hard work, and the contribution of the other partner is important. The woman with fewer resources has less power, and the more she is entrapped in a marriage to suffer in the hands of the husband (Baqtayan et al., 2021; Randawar & Jayabalan, 2018). Domestic violence could also happen due to a mental problem, as indicated that when a spouse cannot think straight result in yelling at each other. Each partner starts using harsh words or starts to hit in a certain area to show power, which can sometimes lead to suicide.

6. Conclusion

The objective is to investigate the students' literacy of domestic violence against women. Violence against women refers to any form of violence between couples or any behaviour in an intimate relationship that can cause physical, psychological, or sexual harm to the parties involved. However, the seriousness of domestic violence has been overlooked by most societies despite the number of reported cases on the increase in the news. The victim may be affected negatively by experiencing certain kinds of violence. Based on the findings, most of the students have a strong knowledge of the different forms of domestic violence, which include physical, psychological, economic, emotional, and sexual violence. All the respondents strongly recognised physical violence as a common form of domestic violence, and referred to stalking and hitting or beating as the most prevalent. The respondents are aware of the efforts of the authorities working diligently to curb the incidence of violence against women in the country. The findings of the study are crucial to reflect public awareness on how to deal with domestic violence in Malaysia. They also expressed knowledge of increasing rates of domestic

violence in the country and think some cases are not even reported to the authorities due to their sensitive and private nature. Therefore, knowledge on issues about domestic violence needs to be developed among the younger generation, especially social work students, to create a framework that is more comprehensive and focuses on the prevention of violence against women, and design an intervention system. There is also the need to raise public awareness and the understanding of domestic violence from the societal perspective to combat the normalization of violence against women and increase public knowledge of available services.

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