

The Social Realities of Tausug Women in Tausug Contemporary *Kalangan*

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ABSTRACT

Tausugs, one of the Muslim tribes in the Philippines, express themselves through their kalangan (songs). To explore the rich and vibrant colors of the Tausug culture, this qualitative research study employed a descriptive-analytic approach in the analysis and interpretation of thirty-one (31) Tausug Contemporary Kalangan. Through Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study revealed and discussed the literary devices evident as a textual practice in the select kalangan; the social realities about Tausug women that were being communicated by these literary devices; and the perceptions of Tausug women about their social realities. The findings revealed that there was a total of five (5) literary devices evident as a textual practice in the select kalangan. These literary devices paved way to unveiling and explaining the social realities of Tausug women evident in the select kalangan. Despite the rich and colorful cultures of the Tausugs, the social realities of Tausug women prove that a social problem exists in the Tausug society hence must be addressed and resolved. This study proved to be an original contribution to feminist studies aimed at gaining liberation and empowerment for Tausug women.

KEYWORDS

Critical discourse analysis; women empowerment; tausug kalangan; culture; realities

INTRODUCTION

Philippines is blessed with rich, colorful, and diverse cultures and languages. As defined by Ember and Ember (1995), culture is a set of shared beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, which are learned and passed on from one generation to the next which is why it is called "the way of life for an entire society". This includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, art, norms of behavior, such as law and morality, and systems of belief (LaMorte, 2016).

One of the Filipino cultures that is well celebrated is that of the Tausug's. Tausug refers to the majority Islamized group in the Sulu archipelago, their language, and culture (Velasco, 2015). Tausug music, a creative medium to exhibit and express their language and culture, has greatly influenced their lives because it either tells their story or exposes certain truths. From time immemorial, *kalangan* (songs), have been featured or showcased in seasonal festivities and have dealt with various themes, such as love in all aspects. Despite its vibrant characteristics, there have been no documented studies yet that talk about the status of Tausug women in their society as portrayed in their songs. Hence, this paper is a brave attempt to unveil the truth about how Tausug women are treated and portrayed in the society through analyzing their songs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is qualitative research that employed a descriptive-analytic approach in the interpretation of data. Through Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), thirty-one (31) Tausug contemporary *kalangan* had been subjected to an in-depth and critical analysis to identify the literary devices and expose the social realities of Tausug women in the society. In this study, CDA is defined as both theory and method. As a theory, it focused on the premise that society and language are interrelated and that discourse manifests social action. It is grounded in the idea that through analyzing text and discourse practices, one can gain access to social identities (Fairclough, 2003 as cited in Fuerzas-Caballero, 2015). Moreover, CDA, multidisciplinary in nature, stems from a critical theory of language which perceives the use of language as a form of social practice (Janks, n.d). In fact it aims to provide a vivid image of how societies work and produce both beneficial and detrimental effects, and of how the detrimental effects can be mitigated if not eliminated.

To shed light on the inquiry of this study, it sought to answer the following questions: What are the literary devices evident in the select *kalangan*?; and What social realities about women are being communicated by these literary devices? To answer these questions, the selected *kalangan* were translated into English and had undergone Critical Discourse Analysis and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Tausug women from different sectors was conducted. These songs were *Masi Malasa* (Still In-love), *Maytah na Bahah* (Why Is It), *Ha Gihtungan Miyugtu* (Broken while in the Middle) , *Iyukkil Kaw Ha Jantung* (You are Carved in the Heart), *Hikabalik Pa Ka* (Will It be Back Again), *Kahnu Kahnu Ra* (It Has Been a While), *Ikaw in Sumping* (You are the Flower), *Way na Bulirapat* (There Is No Chance), *Simahaya* (Brightened), *Di Ku Agun Mataymah* (I Could not even Accept It), *Miyaggad Nagdakop* (Eloped) , *Langit Iban Lupa* (Sky and Land), *Nabutas* (Broken Apart), *Lawag na Kaw Ganti* (Find a Replacement), *Maas Mu in Nagbayah* (Your Parents were the Ones who Wanted), *Niat sin Atay* (Intention of the Heart), *Ikaw in Namugtui sin Surat* (You Chose to End our Destiny), *Anak Miskin* (Child of the Poor), *Timangis in Atay Ku* (My Heart Cried), *Bagay Sadia* (Only Friends), *Sabalan* (Be Patient), *Suratan* (Destiny), *Susa Atay Dayang* (The Hurt of the Heart), *Oh Dayang* (Oh My Love), *Kahapon* (Yesterday), *Mayta Kita Nabutas* (Why Did We Break up), *Taymaun Ku Ra* (I Will Accept It), *Hitangis Ku Ra Kuman* (I Will Just Cry It Out), *Salaam Duwaa* (Peace Be With You), *Budjang Lingkatan* (Beautiful Lady), and *Anak Ilu* (Orphan).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literary Devices in the Select Tausug Kalangan

Language and culture are two separate entities that make up a certain truth that they co-exist. Their relationship is like that of a body and soul, hence the existence of another will cease without the other. As Dwight Bolinger (1980) argues, more elaborate and complex patterns of behaviors or activities and abstract ideas require knowledge for their enunciation, elaboration, and transmission: "Without language, the transmission of complex traditions would be virtually impossible, and each person would be trapped in his or her world of private sensations." (Acmaad-Ismael, 2021).

In the Tausug culture, *kalangan* have significantly influenced the lives of the people and have become their medium to share their life stories. Language is a vital instrument and a significant element in culture that speaks for an individual's identity. Language element has in certain key respects become more salient, more important than it used to be, and in fact a crucial aspect of the social transformations which are going on – one cannot make sense of them without thinking about language. The user of language gives language its power.

In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the concept of power is everywhere and no language in use can ever be 'neutral' or 'objective' (Fairclough, 1989). Power is not derived from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to provide a finely articulated means for differences in power in social hierarchical structures. Language is not powerful on its own but gains power by the use powerful people make of it. Through CDA, the linguistic properties in the Tausug *kalangan* have been critically examined to uncover and further explain the literary devices found and used in the selected *kalangan*. Central to all literary devices is a quality of connection, that is, by establishing or examining relationships between things, literary devices encourage the reader to perceive and interpret the world in new ways. By enabling new connections that go beyond straightforward details and meanings, literary devices give literature its power. They are what sets literature apart, and what makes it uniquely powerful (Glatch, 2020), hence these literary devices are used either to hide a significant truth or to better exemplify this truth and the circumstances that the prosaic language could not.

Through the in-depth analysis of the literary devices – Symbolism, Leitmotif, Irony, Hyperbole, Metaphor– found in the select *kalangan* revealed the themes such as love, adoration, heartbreak, oppression, manipulation, sorrow, dependence, power abuse of authority, Filial Piety, and strong Islamic faith.

Through the textual analysis of the literary devices in the discourses of the *kalangan*, the social realities about Tausug women that were concealed under the language of literature, or the literary devices were exposed and discussed. Through the findings of the study, among the literary devices found in the select *kalangan*, symbolism was frequently used to convey emotions, feelings, ideas, circumstances, and realities thus, it can be said that the Tausug language or Bahasa Sug is symbolic.

The Social Realities of Tausug Women

From the analysis of the select *kalangan*, the social realities that revealed about Tausug women and Tausug society were the following:

A. Tausug women are deprived of their freedom to choose the man they will marry.

According to Euripides, an ancient Greek philosopher, "The greatest pleasure in life is love." However, choosing whom to marry and spend her lifetime with has been deprived to Tausug women. The *kalangan*, which is a mirror of reality, showed how the Tausug culture in marriage – a "parental marriage or fixed marriage." looks like. Because of this and Tausug women's high respect for their parents, even if they were not asked for their opinion or that they never agreed, they still honor their parents' decision.

Symbols of love, heartbreak, oppression and filial piety were revealed in some discourses in the various selected *kalangan* such as the line "*Bang sadja aun hika abut ku, dayang, mga mau maas mu* (If only I have something to offer, my love to your parents)" said by a Tausug man to his Tausug lover showed the woman's parents' role in the decision-making in terms of marriage. It also meant that no matter how much they love each other, if the parents of the Tausug woman do not agree, even if the woman is of legal age, then no marriage shall push through. Another instance is revealed through this line: "*Nabutas kita dayang ha bukun kyabayaan. Naglasa kita landuh, piyapagbutas nila.* (We have been broken apart, my love, which was not what we wanted. We loved each other so much, only to be separated by them.)" The term "*nila*" or "them" refers to the intervention of other people in the relationship. These people, maybe the parents, family, relatives of the Tausug woman, or even the society are opposed to their relationship, have certainly contributed to the separation. This kind of action brought despair to a woman who loves someone with whom she would have wanted to spend the rest of her life with. Moreover,

this social reality of women is also evident in this line, “*Maas mu in nagkabayaan in suratan ta duwa bugtuan* (Your parents were the ones who wanted to break our destiny)”, where the parents of the woman decided as to whom their daughter will be married to, hence will be spending her lifetime with. Similarly, this was also the case in the discourse “*In maas mu di mabayah. In sukat nila nakabidda*” (Your parents disapprove. Their demands were impossible), which obviously showed that the parents of the woman chose someone from their own caste. It was evident how the role of the parents played in such circumstances—a man who wants to marry their daughter must be able to please them (her parents) to get their approval. This was also demonstrated in this line: “*Awn hambuuk tau nagpangasawa kaymu, tiyayma sin mawmaas mu*” (There’s one person who proposed marriage to you. Your parents accepted it.). The latter discourse shows the authority of parents in the decision-making process in Tausug marriage.

These lines from the Tausug *kalangan* showed how a Tausug woman did not have control of her life especially in terms of marriage. She must follow and obey every decision of her parents when it comes to marriage, no matter how painful it is or would get. Because of this, some consequences that arise after a forced marriage or parental marriage include physical abuse, emotional and mental damage, and divorce. This is a sad reality that needs to be addressed accordingly. In fact, according to Estrella (2012), “There are Islamic states that complicate divorce procedures for women, requiring women to prove first that they were physically battered by their husbands before they are granted the privilege to get a divorce... This kind of divorce procedure is still currently practiced in Sulu under the Sha’riah law”. Hence, in worst-case scenarios, Tausug women prefer to commit suicide to free themselves.

In relation to the life story of “Mara”, one of the FGD participants of this study, she said that she was forced to marry the man whom her parents chose for her and was forced to also leave the man she loved. Their marriage lasted only for three (3) years since the man found someone else while still married with her. He left her and their children, divorced her, and went away with his other woman. “Mara” experienced an emotional trauma because of a parental marriage that was unsuccessful.

In the same way, the woman in the song “Anak Ilu” was married off to the son of the mayor. This decision was made by her aunt who stood as her mother after the death of her parents. She was not consulted about it and was only informed on the day of their wedding and since she did not want to get married because she has a lover, she said:

“*Bang isab bihaini, marayaw pa unungan na.* (If it is just like this, then it is better to be with him.)” where she killed herself as shown in the song “*Ha kabul sin tunang nagpatay sin baran*” (On the grave of her lover, she killed herself.)

The finding in the study of Elyas, et al. (2020) was that Saudi women are depicted as active within Saudi society, driven by their beliefs, yet they present themselves as independent members of the society. This reality is contrary to the social reality of Tausug women, where Tausug women are considered dependent members of society, that is, whatever the decision of their family and society is, they must follow it despite being against it. This is a devastating and heartbreaking reality for Tausug women—to be deprived of their freedom to love and marry whom they really love. As Socrates said, “One word frees us of all the weight and pain in life. That word is love,” but that was denied to Tausug women.

In the article entitled “Women in the Quran and the Sunnah” by Prof. Abdur Rahman I. Doi, it was stated that the Qur'an admonishes those men who oppress or ill-treat women:

O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have given them - except when they have become guilty of open lewdness.

On the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike something, and Allah will bring about through it a great deal of good. (4:19)

This clearly shows how women are truly respected and valued in Islam, however, culture comes in the way. Women should not be inherited against their will, thus in marriage, women must give their approval to the marriage and this decision by the woman must be respected by the family. Clearly, some practices in the Tausug culture do not align with the teachings of the religion Islam, the one that they actually believed to be the basis in their practices.

B. Tausug women are bound by social status.

Social status is the relative rank that an individual holds, with attendant rights, duties, and lifestyle, in a social hierarchy based upon honor or prestige (Britannica Encyclopedia, n.d.). In this study, it is considered one of the domains to which the Tausug women were subjected.

Metaphor, symbolism, and irony were some literary devices evident in the select *kalangan* that showed the social reality of Tausug women – they are bound by social status. Some of the lines from the select *kalangan* show how social status has separated two people in love. In the discourse of one *kalangan*, it said: “*Langit iban lupa in hantang ta. Anak dayahan kaw, aku anak miskin*” (Sky and land is our status. You were born into a rich family, I was born into a poor family). The discrimination against social status differences was apparent. Because of their social status, pursuing the Tausug woman in the song became very difficult for the man; hence, he has decided to just let go, bear the pain, and move on, but also left the woman broken, and disappointed.

In another song, it said “*Bang sadja aun hika abut ku ha dayang mga mau maas mu, in dum di na paadlawun magpangasawa minsan in byahayaun. Laypara anak miskin kimugdan. In ikaw biyah anak sultan. Mahunit angan anganun in halgah mu. Biyah bulan bituun di maabut ku* (If only I have something to offer, my love, to your parents, I will not wait for the night to turn into day. I will marry you this instant, however, it’s just that I am poor and you are like the daughter of a Sultan. Your worth is hard to imagine. Just like the moon and star that I cannot reach.)” This meant that a woman who comes from a wealthy family, “the high class,” would be difficult to be pursued by someone who comes from the “lower class,” as in the case of the couple in the song. Moreover, it could also imply that the parents of the woman regard social status as one of the qualifications in Tausug marriage. Perhaps this decision of the woman's parents was also brought about by the pressure of society.

In another song, it said “*Di ku kyaingatan bang maytah aku kyahukawan. Saukat na baha aku anak miskin*” (I do not know why I am being disliked. Is it because I am a daughter of the poor?) which meant that the woman’s social status was the reason why she was unwelcomed in the family of the man. This was also the case in some of the circumstances in the other *kalangan* where social status discrimination was apparent, such as in these discourses – “*In sukat, di ku kagausan*” (The dowry I cannot afford.) which demonstrated a status gap between the man and the woman. In the song, the man was demanded to give dowry (the bride’s gift), which he could not comply with because of his financial incapacity. Additionally, it was said in the song “*Ha mga suysuy dayang dyungug ku in ikaw piyangasawa sin dayahan bagay ku*” (From the hearsays, my love, I heard that you were married off to my rich friend.) showed a man who was disadvantaged because of his social status. Instead of marrying his lover, she was married off to his friend, who was rich.

These lines depicted how social status affected the lives of people. In the case of this study, it affected the lives of Tausug women. The notion that the rich are for the rich and the poor are for the poor is applicable to Tausug society, hence the social reality of Tausug women. No matter how much in love two people are, if their social status in life is not the same, they will not succeed. Worst is that, because of their social status, Tausug women are bound to choose within the circle drawn by their families and the unwritten rules of society. In this case, love does not become a requisite in a Tausug marriage.

Just like what happened to “Dan”, one of the FGD participants, who might have been married to the man she loves; however, experienced unfortunate things. She was not treated well by her family-in-law because she was too young and not well-off. In addition to that, she was never liked by her in-law because they wanted their son to marry someone they chose. The woman whom his parents wanted their son to marry was a teacher in their place. Because of Dan’s social status and educational background, she faced difficulties in her marriage. After less than a year, they got divorced, and her former husband married another woman. Her story is a testament to how social status and education played a crucial role in a Tausug marriage in a Tausug society.

Some Tausug women, especially those who belong to political clans, are forced to marry men whom their families prefer through the process of fixed marriages. These women are also forced to give their dowries to their families. The dowries that the groom’s family provides should be used by the bride and not by her family; this is for the bride’s financial security, as stated under the Islamic Civil Law (Dimacisil, as cited in Estrella, 2012). Usually, if the bride belongs to a family of higher economic standing, a higher dowry is expected to be given, and more extravagant wedding rites are expected to take place regardless of the groom’s economic stature. The impact of this is seen in the social structures of the Tausugs, in which the logic of the rich marrying the rich is strictly followed. However, this resulted in a higher number of cases of couples choosing to elope, particularly when the groom cannot afford the financial burdens caused by the demands of the Tausug marriage rites (Estrella, 2012).

C. Tausug women suffer emotional abuse.

Based on the *kalangan* analyzed in this study, Tausug women engage in pre-marital relationships (most of the time an undisclosed relationship, i.e. boyfriend-girlfriend relationship), as evident in the select *kalangan*, wherein the discourse displayed that two people of opposite sexes call each other using an endearment such as “*dayang*” (love), “*kakasi ku*” (my love), “*indah*” (girl), “*tuwan*” (boy), “*lasa*” (love) and “*tunang*” (boyfriend/ girlfriend). These endearments show their love for each other, but they also show how betrayal, oppression, and emotional abuse are demonstrated in the relationship. The couple committed and promised to love each other; however, when the time comes that marriage is already taken into consideration in the relationship, the man does not pursue the woman by not trying to propose marriage, nor even trying his best to ask for the woman’s hand because of some reasons, hence leaving the woman to be unwillingly married off to someone whom her parents had arranged for her. This causes emotional trauma to a woman. The stereotype in a patriarchal and conservative society is that women must abide by the spoken rule that “women must never initiate a marriage proposal no matter what,” and so she has to wait for the man to do the action and just hold on to the idea that he is really going to pursue her. As manifested in the *kalangan*, the man (her lover) tells her to have patience, or “*sabal/sab'r*,” and that there is nothing to do except to just be patient but then not pursue her at all.

Some of the literary devices that were evident in the *kalangan* that showed this social reality – Tausug women suffer emotional abuse – were symbolism and leitmotif. Just like

the *kalangan* “*Lawag na kaw ganti*” (Find a replacement) wherein the man wanted the woman to find someone else and just forget about him, and that she had to be patient and accept the reality that it was their destiny—to be separated from each other. Similarly, this painful manifestation is also apparent in these lines, where the man said “*Minsan kaw haraig ku, di tana kaw kakitaan. Hangan subay mu taymaun aku butawan.*” (Even if you are beside me, I could not see you that is why you have to accept to let go of me.) and “*Awn waktu dayang makapangasawa ha supaya makapaghambuuk kita sah way tuud mahinang. In sukat, di ku kaga-usan, di ta na kaw dayang hati masuratan*” (There will come a time that I will marry you so that we will become one. But there is nothing I can do. The dowry I cannot afford. Perhaps, I will not be your destiny, my love). These showed how a man does not honor his words or promises to the woman he loves. Betrayal, oppression, and emotional abuse toward Tausug women were seen in these circumstances.

“Mey”, one of the FGD participants said “*Sa islam kasi, bang di mu agarun in bana mu. Bang di kaw magtaat, magkakaroon ka ng sin. Madali lang kasi tayong mga babae magkaroon ng sin.*” (In Islam, if you do not obey your husband, if you will not submit yourself to him, you will be sinned. Us, women, we easily sin.). This is also revealed in the study of Pantao (2015) where Meranao women are portrayed as completely subservient to their men and as giving little importance to their role in life.

In the case of “Mara”, one of the FGD participants, she suffered emotional abuse while being married to the man who was arranged to her or chosen by her parents. In their marriage, initially they showed Sab’r (patience) and accepted their destiny to be married to each other. During the first year of their marriage, they tried to be a happy and complete family however, when she was already pregnant with their second child, she was not treated well anymore because the man found someone else. In fact, during her pregnancy, she was emotionally and physically abused. All these abuses happen because the man already wanted to divorce her but could not because she was still pregnant. “Mey” said that her family said that her husband could only divorce her once she would already give birth. The sufferings she went through, not only with the difficulties in pregnancy, but her entire marriage, were beyond what a typical person could handle. She was able to pull herself up because she is a mother—not just to one but to two lovely children.

Moreover, “Yang”, another FGD participant said “*In kamatauran bihaon babae very submissive sila ha mga bana nila. Misan saupama, pero bukun da sab totally katan. Kita babae, misan feel ta agrabyado na kita, misan sayan masakit, sumabr na sadja kita. Sah amun pag iyanun sumabar da kita karna Allah kasi bana ta yaun pero may hangganan din naman ang lahat, diba?*” (Most women nowadays are very submissive to their husbands. Even, for instance, but not totally all. We, women, even if we felt that we are disadvantaged, even if it hurts, we have to be patient. But when we say, let’s just be patient for sake of ALLAH because he is our husband, still everything has an end. Right?).

Contrary to the findings of Sarip (2020) where female characters were portrayed as involved, sophisticated, strong- minded, competitive, independent and unconventional, Tausug women in the select *kalangan* were the opposite. They could not go against patriarchal values in the Tausug society. Moreover, in the study of Estrella (2012), he pointed out that there are some communities in rural Sulu that consider giving birth to females a curse rather than a blessing. Some Tausugs also discriminate between their kids and give more rights to male children. This attitude brought oppression and took the rights of women to life, which is why, in most cases, Tausug women become submissive to men and do things to please them.

Furthermore, “Lin”, one of the FGD participants expressed her sentiments about unfair treatment towards women. She said “*di tuud aku mabayah mag tamungun pang-babae, kabayaan ku pang-usug hadja. In pagtindug iban pagpanaw ku, biyah kunuh usug (laung*

nila)... *In pasalan sin mga yan bakas, na realized ku na, di kaw kaluhun sin kaybanan bang kaw usug. Way mambully kaymu, iban kabugaan kaw sin katan.* (I did not like to wear girly clothes, what I liked were clothes for boys only. How I stood and walked was like a man (they said). The reason why I acted like those before, I realized that, they (the society) will not fight you if you are a man. No one will bully you, and everyone will be scared of you).

D. A Tausug woman's worth is measured by her mastery in doing the household chores

In Tausug society, Tausug women are expected to do household chores; that is, at a very young age, they are already exposed to and trained to do these chores. True enough that in the Islamic point of view, "Women are the Queens of the Home" however, it does not equate to the idea that they must do all the household chores. Instead of taking this as a privilege, it has become a burden to women that even if they are tired, they still must complete the tasks at home without the help of their husband or the men.

"Yang", one of the FGD participants said "*In kita babae, subay ta paglutuan in bana ta. Dakdakan in baju. Ipatun in mga anak. Palingkatun in bay. ... Anduh isab. Biyadtu in karihasali sin babae.*" (Of course. Us, women, we must cook for our husbands. Wash their clothes. Take care of the children. Beautify and organize the house. Oh my. That is really the nature of women.) This statement clearly shows that Tausug women are well-aware of the role of women in the family, as imposed by the society.

As the song *Anak Ilu* goes "*Daakun maghugas sin lay pyagkaunan. Minsan hangka pudjut dih da pagkapinan. Sah na mangimut- ngimut sin kapin siyup-supan.*" (She is commanded to wash the used dishes. She is not left with any food, even just a mouthful of it. She just eats the leftovers). The fact that she was forced to wash the dishes even if she was not even left with anything already showed oppression against her. Similarly, the published article of CBE International stated that "While all people in poor countries may face similar issues, women are less valued, and often end up with the worst of the problem. For instance, in some countries women serve men the meal and wait to see if there is anything left. If there is, then they get to eat (Kelly, 2002).

Moreover, another *kalangan* showed how washing of clothes was tasked on a woman. The discourse was "*Awn hambuuk adlaw piya tubig nangdak-dak*" (One day, she went to the river to wash the laundry). Had it been a man who washed the clothes, he would have been celebrated for doing things out of his way, but since it was done by a woman, it showed just any ordinary and daily activity. Since it has become a tradition in the society, women do not have the chance to object to it. It has always been implied to women that they must do this, and by doing so, they will be prepared when the time comes that they will get married and that their husbands will be pleased with them.

Just like what "Ira", one of the FGD participants, experienced. A day after being married, they (she and her husband) went to her husband's family, then her father-in-law secretly asked their son if Ira knows how to cook. "Ira" overheard the conversation and thought that it was as if that was the sole basis to know a woman and her value.

This might seem like a minor and insignificant issue faced by women, but it is just like any other problem that needs to be addressed and resolved—it is in fact an act of violence against women. Instead of doing the household chores alone, is it not a pleasing initiative to also hold the men accountable for keeping the house organized, clean, and livable? Men and women must be partners, neither inferior nor superior to each other.

E. Tausug women are subject to judgment based on their beauty.

Beauty is one of the criteria by which a person is judged; however, this criterion has also

become a way for biases and misjudgments to arise, and at worst, traumatic experiences to occur. From the select *kalangan*, Tausug women are described and judged based on their physical attributes. Like in the song *Anak Ilu* wherein the mayor decided to marry off his son to the woman because of her physical beauty. It said “*Lingkat way sali, budjang umbul satu . Bang mu Yan kitaun, maraih kaw mayah ... Kita sin mayor budjang landuh lingkat piya-urul pa tubig...*” (The only girl whose beauty has no comparison. If you see her, you would probably like her. The mayor saw the very beautiful lady, he ordered someone to follow her.) This shows that a Tausug woman is sought after based on her physical beauty. Because of her beauty, she was forced to marry the son of a prominent political figure, with or without her consent. Her beauty, instead of bringing her happiness, has caused her pain. Just like the kissa “The Abduction of Napsa,” wherein Napsa, a married Tausug woman, was abducted by the Sultan to add to his other wives because of her physical beauty and beautiful voice. Her husband simply failed to get her back. Napsa can only faint and submit to the Sultan, who is exercising his power over his subjects (Ortega, 2020). In a worst-case scenario such as this, Napsa is a proof of how a Tausug woman’s beauty could also be the reason for a woman to undergo a traumatic experience, such as being abducted and mistreated.

Looking at the other side of the coin, despite the pain that physical beauty could do to a woman, many Tausug women still try to reach the standard of beauty of the Tausug society because of the favor they might get from the society. The use of the *janggalay* or the *passal* is one of the acts done by Tausug women. “Ira”, one of the participants said “*Yung passal (henna tattoo), icon ng mga Tausug bride.*” (The henna tattoo is an icon of a Tausug bride). “Lin” also said “*Yung janggalay, naging beauty standard ng mga elders.*” (The *Janggalay* (long nail) has become a beauty standard.) These statements from the FGD participants tell that Tausug women conform to the beauty standard of the society because they know that reaching that beauty standard would mean better treatment.

Just like the experience of one of the participants, she said that the dowry (the bride’s monetary gift) of the bride was questioned by the man’s family because they believed that the amount the woman’s family asked was not equal to her beauty. Considering the beauty standard of the Tausug society, man’s family regarded her beauty less highly, and so they believe that her dowry must be low. Because of beauty, it showed oppression against a Tausug woman.

The disheartening social realities of Tausug women in the select *kalangan* were confirmed and validated by Tausug women themselves through the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). These social realities include Tausug women are deprived of their freedom to choose the man they will marry; Tausug women are bound by social status; Tausug women suffer emotional abuse; A Tausug woman’s worth is measured by her mastery in doing the household chores; and Tausug women are subject to judgment based on their beauty.

CONCLUSION

After an in-depth and critical discourse analysis on the thirty-one (31) Tausug *kalangan*, the findings of the study led to the following conclusions:

First, the literal as well as figurative meanings of language used in literary forms must be analyzed and understood well in order to better explain and discuss circumstances. By merely reading the lyrics of the songs, only one meaning is generated, but with intensive and repetitive reading, the core of the songs is understood;

Second, the revealed social realities of Tausug women in the *kalangan* are just the tip of an iceberg of all the sufferings of Tausug women. Had it not been for the testimonies of the research participants during the Focus Group Discussion, these sufferings would be kept

only to themselves;

Third, the social realities of Tausug women are not only true to the Tausug society, but also true to the other women across the globe. Women's sufferings must be addressed and resolved immediately.

Fourth, despite all these, Tausug women are strong and significant members of the society, only that they have become victims of their own society that does not want to adapt to the changes of the world and at some points, misunderstood and/or overlooked the teachings of the religion Islam. The society has been too comfortable with their practices and standards, not realizing that Tausug women have been compromised because of these. Due to the stereotypes about them, Tausug women themselves have adapted to these; and

Lastly, through women empowerment, that is, by exposing the social realities of Tausug women and acknowledging their roles, rights, and significance, they will be able to stand strong and believe that they are not just women, but they are women – strong and significant.

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